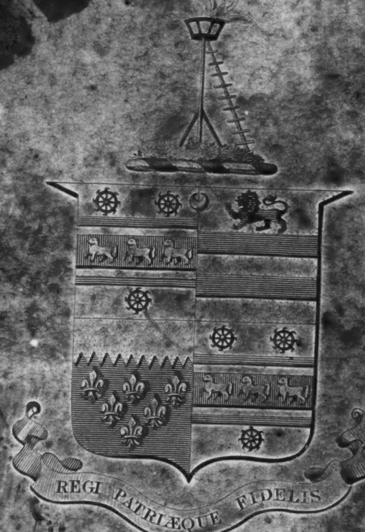
Ann Jones

November 9 1818



REGI PATRIÆQUE FIDELIS

George Henry Cussans Scott

3753 ee 4

# THE WHOLE
# WORKS
Of the Reverend
## Mr. JOHN FLAVEL,
Late Miniſter at *DARTMOUTH* in *DEVON*,
In Two VOLUMES.

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## VOLUME II.

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CONTAINING,

- *England*'s Duty, and Mount *Piſgah*.
- The Myſtery of Providence; *with ſome New Additions*.
- *Antipharmacum Saluberrimum*.
- Tidings from *Rome*; or, *England*'s Alarum.
- Husbandry Spiritualized.
- Navigation Spiritualized.
- The Seaman's Compaſs.
- A Saint Indeed.
- The Touchſtone of Sincerity.
- A Token for Mourners.
- An Offer of Help to Suffering Saints.
- The Balm of the Covenant.
- An Expoſition of the Aſſemblies Catechiſm.
- A Treatiſe of Baptiſm.
- Sacramental Meditations.
- The Reaſonableneſs of Perſonal Reformation.
- His Remains.
- A Table or Scheme of the Sins and Duties of Believers.

To which are added,
Alphabetical TABLES and INDEXES of the *Texts of Scripture* Explained in the Whole.

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Now Firſt Collected together.

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*LONDON:*
Printed by *R. J.* for *Tho. Parkhurſt*, at the *Bible* and *Three Crowns* in *Cheapſide*; *Hugh Newman*, at the *Graſhopper* in the *Poultrey*; *Andrew Bell*, at the *Bible* and *Croſs-Keys* in *Cornhill*; and *Tho. Cockerill*, at the *Bible* and *Three Legs* in the *Poultrey*. M.DCC.I.

# ENGLAND'S DUTY
## Under the Preſent
## Goſpel Liberty.

FROM
*REVEL.* III. *Verſ.* 20.

To which is added,
*MOUNT PISGAH*; Or a Thankſgiving Sermon for
*England*'s Deliverance from Popery, *Feb.* 168$^{8}_{9}$.

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## AN
## EPISTLE to the READER;

Candid Reader,

T*HE following Diſcourſe comes to thy hand in that native plainneſs wherein it was preached. I was conſcientiouſly unwilling to alter it, becauſe I found by experience, the Lord had bleſſed and proſper'd it in that dreſs, far beyond any other Compoſures on which I had beſtowed more pains. Let it not be cenſured as vanity or oſtentation that I here acknowledg the goodneſs of God in leading me to, and bleſſing my poor Labours upon this Subject. Who, and what am I, that I ſhould be continued, and again imployed in the Lord's Harveſt, and that with ſucceſs and encouragement; when ſo many of my Brethren, with their much richer Furnitures of Gifts and Graces, have in my time been called out of the Vineyard, and are now ſilent in the Grave! 'Tis true, they injoy what I do not; and 'tis as true, I am capable of doing ſome Services for God which they are not. In Preaching theſe Sermons I had many occaſions to reflect upon the myſtical ſenſe of that Scripture,* Amos 9. 13. The Plowman ſhall overtake the Reaper, and the Treader of Grapes, him that ſoweth Seed. *Sowing and Reaping times trod ſo cloſe upon one another, that (in all humility I ſpeak it to the praiſe of God) it was the buſieſt and bleſſedeſt time I ever ſaw, ſince I firſt preached the Goſpel.*

England *hath now a day of ſpecial Mercy: There is a wide door of Opportunity opened to it; O that it might prove an effectual door! 'Tis tranſporting and aſtoniſhing, that after all the high and horrid provocations, the Atheiſm, Profaneneſs, and bitter enmity againſt Light and Reformation; this ſweet voice is ſtill heard in* England, Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock. *The Mercies and Liberties of this day are a new Trial obtained for us by our potent Advocate in the Heavens: If we bring forth Fruit, well; if not, the Ax lieth at the root of the Tree. Let us not be ſecure.* Jeruſalem *was the City of the great King: The Seat of his Worſhip, and Symbols of his Preſence were fixed there. It was the joy of the whole Earth, the Houſe of Prayer for all Nations; thither the Tribes went up to worſhip; the Tribes of the Lord, unto the Teſtimony of* Iſrael. *For there were ſet Thrones of Judgment, the Thrones of the Houſe of* David, Pſal. 22. 4, 5. *Theſe Privileges ſhe enjoyed through the ſucceſſion of many Ages, and had remained the glory of all Nations to this day, had ſhe known, and improved, in that day, the things that belonged to her peace; but they neglected their Seaſon, rejected their Mercies, and miſerably periſhed in their ſins: for there ever was and will be found an inſeparable connection betwixt the final rejection of Chriſt, and the deſtruction of the Rejecters,* Matth. 22. 5, 6, 7. *The contemplation whereof drew thoſe compaſſionate Tears from the Redeemer's eyes, when he beheld it in his deſcent from the Mount of Olives,* Luke 19. 41, 42.

*Let all that are wiſe in Heart henceforth depoſe their animoſities, ſadly reflect on their paſt Follies, encourage and aſſiſt the Labours of their Brethren in the Lord's Harveſt; and rejoice that God hath ſet them at liberty by Law, whoſe aſſiſtance, in ſo great an opportunity, is ſo neceſſary and deſirable. It is againſt* *the Laws of Wiſdom and Charity, to envy the Liberty, and much more the Succeſs of our Brethren,* 1 Cor. 13. 4. *If the Workmen contend and ſcuffle in a catching Harveſt, who but the* Owner *ſuffers damage by it? If after ſo miraculous, recent, and common a Salvation as this, we ſtill retain our old prejudices and bitter envyings; if we ſmite with the Pen and Tongue when we cannot with the Hand; and ſtudy to blaſt the Reputations and Labours of our Brethren; and ſtill* hate *thoſe we cannot* hurt: *In a word, if we ſtill bite and devour one another, we ſhall be devoured one of another. Let us not lay the fault upon others, we our ſelves have been the Authors and Inſtruments of our own ruin; and this muſt be the inſcription upon our Tombſtone,* O *England,* thou haſt deſtroyed thy Self. *I am more afraid of the rooted enmity, and fixed prejudices, that are to be found in many againſt Holineſs, and the ſerious Profeſſors of it; and inflexible obſtinacy and dead formality in many others, (the tokens of a tremendous Infatuation) than I am of all the whiſpered fears from other Hands, or common Enemies upon our borders.*

*To prevent theſe miſchiefs, and promote zeal and unanimity among the Miniſters of the Goſpel, I have preſumed to addreſs them in the following* Epiſtle. *I judged it neceſſary on ſeveral reaſons to write it in* Latin, *as what allowed me a greater freedom of expreſſion, than might ſeem convenient in the common Language. I am conſcious of my own unworthineſs to be their* Monitor, *and of the defects their judicious Eyes will eaſily diſcern in the ſtile wherein it is written; and yet can promiſe my ſelf a becoming reception of what is ſo faithfully, ſeaſonably, and honeſtly deſigned for their good. I am ſatisfied that no candid and ingenuous Perſon will put Words upon the Rack, quarrel a Similitude, or expoſe a Trifle, when he finds the deſign Honeſt, and the matter Good and Neceſſary.*

*As to the Treatiſe it ſelf, thou wilt find it a* Perſuaſive *to open thy Heart to Chriſt. Thy Soul, Reader, is a magnificent Structure built by Chriſt; ſuch ſtately Rooms as thy Underſtanding, Will, Conſcience, and Affections, are too good for any other to inhabit. If thou be in thy unregenerate ſtate, then he ſolemnly demands, in this Text, admiſſion into the Soul he made, by the conſent of the Will: which if thou refuſe to give him, then Witneſs is taken that Chriſt once more demanded entrance into thy Soul which he made, and was denied it. If thou haſt opened thy Heart to him, thou wilt, I hope, meet ſomewhat in this Treatiſe that will clear thy Evidences, and chear thy Heart: Pray, Read, Ponder, and Apply.*

I am  
Thine and the  
Churches Servant,

*JOHN FLAVEL.*

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## *EPISTOLA Dilectiſſimis, & in Chriſto perquam Reverendis Evangelii Miniſtris; nunc demum miranda Dei providentia libertati reſtitutis: Senioribus quidem ſupplex, Junioribus vero & Candidatis Parænetica.*

*Patres, Fratreſq; in Chriſto Colendiſſimi;*

QUamvis nobis non convenit pro arbitratu noſtro cudere Metaphoras, eas tamen amplecti convenit, quas ipſe Spiritus Scriptura ſignavit: ſignavit autem & graphice depinxit exulantis Eccleſiæ liberationem, ingruentis & amœni veris ſuavibus deliciis, *Cant.* II. *v.* 11, 12.

Sub ſole vernali tellus velut parens benigniſſima ſinus ſuos recludit, herbas varias expromit, prata florum copia condecorat; arbores prioribus viduatæ, novis frondibus ſe induunt: pulſo frigore, aer tepet; pecudes ubera tumentia domum referunt,

*Avia tunc Avibus reſonant virgulta Canoris.* Virg.

Revireſcunt, & rident omnia. Tempus quidem propitium, beneficum; & rebus omnibus, præcipue viventibus, mirifice commodum ac amicum.

Quæ omnia a *Brightmanno* noſtro, ſumma quidem induſtria, ac miro ingenii acumine, accommodantur inſigni iſti temporis periodo, qua *Cyrus* Edictum ſuum (nunquam ſatis laudandum) de liberando populo emittebat. Conſimilis providentiæ radii animantes, veluti Sol *Arietem* ingrediens, nos ſemi-mortuos revireſcere fecerunt.

Non nos latet (adhuc enim crudeſcunt vulnera) quam dura & acerba a multis retro annis conſcientiæ cauſa ſuſtinuimus; heu! quæ non vidimus! quæ non perpeſſi fuimus indigna! Durante hac hyeme aſpera, triſti, & omnimodè moleſta, vidimus æquora horridis tumentia procellis; quibus aliqui territi ac attoniti, cuilibet vento vela dedere. Vidimus arbores tam fructu, quam forma aliis præcellentes, nimboſis ventis proſternatas; alias ſine fructu vel fronde quaſi ſideratas: Montes crebris pruinis albicantes, flumina glacie concreſcentia, terras nivibus obrutas, imo ſepultas: Alituum pecudumque greges famelicos undique diſperſos & anguſtiis preſſos: aucupes aſtutos retia ſua non ſine ſucceſſu diſpandentes. Ut verbo abſolvam, vidimus eheu! Eccleſiam Chriſti propriis pennis transfixam: Rempublicam legibus fundatam legibus fere ſubverſam, inauſpicata omnia, & in deterius indies vergentia.

Diu direq; in hoc malorum pelago agitati fuimus. Juvenes inibamus, Senes emergimus; idem nobis evenit quod in obſidione *Tyri* recordatur, *Ezek.* XXIX. 18. *Omne caput decalvatum, & omnis humerus depilatus eſt.* Attamen hæc omnia moleſta potius quam miranda illi videntur, qui ſerio perpendit verba fatidica magni *Apoſtoli*, 2 *Tim.* III. 1. ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις ἐνστήσονται καιροὶ χαλεποί. De quibus temporibus formidoloſis ita *Lactantius*: *Propinquante igitur hujus ſeculi termino, humanarum rerum ſtatum commutari neceſſe eſt; & in deterius nequitia invaleſcente prolabi: ut etiam noſtra hæc tempora quibus iniquitas & malitia uſque ad ſummum gradum crevit, in illius tamen inſanabilis mali comparationem fælicia & prope aurea*

*Lact. lib. 7. de divino præmio, p. 578, 579.*

*poſſint judicari. Ita enim juſtitia rareſcet, ita impietas, & avaritia, & cupiditas, & libido crebreſcent, ut ſi qui tum forte fuerint boni, prædæ ſint ſceleratis, ac divexentur undique ab injuſtis. Soli autem mali opulenti ſint, boni vero in omnibus contumeliis atque in egeſtate jactentur. Confundetur omne jus, & leges interibunt, nihil quiſquam tunc habebit niſi aut male quæſitum, aut manu defenſum, audacia & vi omnia poſſidebunt. Non fides in hominibus, non pax, non humanitas, non pudor, non veritas erit; atq; ita neque ſecuritas, neq; regimen, neq; requies a malis ulla; omnis enim terra tumultuabitur, frement ubique bella. Omnes gentes in armis erunt, & ſeinvicem oppugnabunt, Civitates inter ſe finitimæ præliabuntur; tunc peragrabit clades orbem metens omnia, & tanquam meſſem cuncta proſternans: cujus vaſtitatis & confuſionis hæc erit cauſa, quod Romanum nomen quo nunc regitur Orbis, (horret animus dicere, ſed dicendum, quia futurum eſt) tolletur de terra.*

Quid tibi videtur Lector? noſtrane heic tempora deſcribuntur, an longius expectandum donec hoc hominum genus peſtiferum in Scenam prodeat? nemo ſane de iis dubitet quæ ſanis ac illæſis ſenſibus perſentiſcit.

Cæterum Deus tandem noſtri miſertus, virum pietatis amantem, & veri ſtudioſum excitavit; qui ſummis laboribus & maximis periculis cauſam ſuam fortiter aſſeret, & faciem terræ renovaret. *Secundum hoc tempus dicetur, quid operatus eſt Deus!* Nunc omni impedimento ſublaturo, horrida procella ſedata; (quæ nos huc illuc ſicut ſtipulas diſpergebat) Deus noſter propitius nos ita alloquitur, *Surge Amica mea & veni, ecce enim hyems tranſiit, pluvia præteriit, flores conſpiciuntur in terra, tempus minuritionis advenit; & vox Turturis auditur in terra noſtra.* q. d. jam ſatis domi latitaſti, potes in publicum prodire. Signa ſalutis, & incitamenta laboris undiquaque apparent. Sic Hyemis aſperitas nobis commendat ſuavitatem Veris.

Ad me quod attinet, quamprimum vox læta libertatis aurem attigerat, proprio & exoptato operi meipſum ſtatim accingere cœpi. Si enim tanta Dulcedo in mathematicarum artium ſtudiis invenitur, ut cum quis eam deguſtaverit, quaſi Circeis poculis captus ſe non ſinit ab illis divelli: dulciſſimum erit labores noſtros quamvis exantlatos, gloria Chriſti, & animarum ſalute ultro impendere. Gaudio igitur non vulgari gaviſus ſum, quod demum ſalcem meam fere rubigine exeſam, in meſſem Domini μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μȣ *immitterem.* Gratias ago Deo meo benigniſſimo, qui opportunitatis oſtium non tantum tempeſtive aperuit, quin etiam (mihi ſupplicanti) ſalubrioris doctrinæ πορίσματι ſuppeditavit; multiſque jamdudum benedixit.

Haſce ergo primitias reſtitutæ libertatis, quales, quales, quas autem non pauci acrius efflagitarunt, ut in apricum feram; vobis perquam humillime offero. Venia ſit fratri, omnium minimo; ſeque infra omnes Chriſti Legatos merito æſtimanti; ſi ſignata & celeberrima hac occaſione, audacius paulo quam pro eruditionis aut experientiæ modulo, ſeſe efferat Chriſtianus fervor.

Pompaticam eloquentiam non ambiit Concionator veſter. Oratione populari, non polita; preſſa, non præculta, per totum uſus fui. Non minus enim de rebus Theologicis dicendum duxi, quam de Philoſophicis *Cicero.* Iſtiuſmodi res dicere ornate puerile eſt; plane autem & perſpicue expedire poſſe, docti & intelligentis viri. Merito diſpliceat, ſi doctrinam Chriſti crucifixi; ſtylo non crucifixo, hoc eſt turgido, pertractarem.

*Hiſce præmiſſis.*

### I.

Lætemur libertate noſtra lætitia debite temperata: lætitia dico, ſuis ponderibus æque librata; & utrinque munita, peccatorum ſc. præteritorum mœſtitia, nec non futurorum metu. Legimus *Jer.* XXIX. 12. de voce gemitus ac fletus qua ſub tempus liberationis agnoſcerent fideles priſtina ſua peccata, quibus Deum laceſſiverant; & eadem emollitis Cordibus ex animis lugerent. Et quam congrua fuit vox iſta Eccleſiæ, vel ad jacta fundamenta redivivi Templi? vox læta vociferatione, ac uberi fletu æqualiter miſta, *Ezra* III. 10. *Multi flebant voce magna, multi vociferatione ex lætitia efferebant vocem; ita ut populus non internoſceret ſonum vociferationis ex lætitia, a voce fletus populi.* Nec pudet ſanctos lapſus ſui & dedecoris ad gloriam Dei meminiſſe; nihil enim nobis decedit, quod cedit in illius honorem. Venuſtæ admodum & amabiles conſpectu ſuo erunt facies noſtræ, cum lachrymas plorantes gratulabundis lachrymis ſupervenientes viderit! veri pœnitentis eſt flere commiſſa, ne flenda committeret.

Præceſſit nobis *Aſaphus* laudabili ſuo pœnitentiæ exemplo, *Pſal.* LXXIX. 8. Ne recorderis (inquit) iniquitatum priorum, &c. Recordari Deus dicitur iniquitatum, cum peccata quaſi ad calculum vocans, & tam magnitudinem quam multitudinem horum æſtimans, punire conſtituit. Loquitur de Deo more humano, homines enim gravius offenſi, & pœnas de liberis ſuis ſumpturi; in memoriam ſibi vocant priora delicta omnia quæ liberi commiſerunt: Revocemus itidem, & ex animis ploremus deſidiam noſtram præteritam, libertatem male concomitantem. Ardenti deſiderio non ita flagravimus; ex imo pectore non ingemiſcimus: Ex cerebro ſæpe, non medullitus proloquuti fuimus. Nimis frigide de rebus vere tremendis inter orandum & prædicandum diſſeruimus. Anteceſſores ſuperioris ſeculi non æquis paſſibus ſequuti ſumus. Gravitate morum, & utilitate ſermonum majeſtatem religionis non conſervavimus. Quorum cauſa Deus noſter juſtam concepit iram, eamque præteritis calamitatibus patefecit, & patefaciendo de futuro nos palam admonuit.

### II.

*Secundo.*

Proinde Fratres in viſceribus Chriſti enixe poſtulo, ne excidat vobis illud Paulinum, *Si fieri poteſt, & quantum in vobis eſt, cum omnibus hominibus in pace viventes,* Rom. XII. 18. Duplex additur limitatio. Prima, *Si fieri poteſt,* nempe ſalva juſtitia, pietate, ac veritate: Ratio veritatis non eſt ſic habenda, ut pacis cura prorſus negligatur, nec unitas talis ambienda qua veritas deſeratur: ſed ἀληθεύετη ἐν ἀγάπῃ, ut ipſe loquitur, *Eph.* IV. 15. Neutram enim ex animo diligunt (ut recte *Davenantius* noſter) qui utramque non diligunt. Chriſtiani ergo, εἰρηνεύοντες ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, ϗ ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ, maxime ornant Chriſtianum nomen. Altera, *quantum in vobis eſt,* i. e. omnium amici eſte, ſi fieri poteſt; ſi non poteſt utrinque, certe ex veſtra parte amici eſte. Veritas inter improbos odium parit, & pietas ſemper inviſa eſt; cujus rei hanc rationem reddit *Lactantius,* *Quod is*

Lact. de juſtitia l. 5. p. 382, 383. *qui peccat vult habere liberum peccandi locum, non aliter ſe putat malefactorum voluptate ſecurius perfrui poſſe, quam ſi nemo ſit cui delicta non placeant. Ergo tanquam ſcelerum & malitiæ ſuæ teſtes extirpare funditus nituntur, & tollere; graveſque ſibi putant tanquam vita eorum coarguatur: horum igitur amicitia pietas periclitatur.*

Bernardi Sermo 33. in Cantic. Alios habemus formam pietatis induentes, ſed qui vim ejus abnegarint. De his ita queſtus eſt *Bernardus: Væ generationi huic a fermento* Phariſæorum *quod eſt hypocriſis! ſi tamen hypocriſis dici debet, quæ jam latere præ abundantia non valet, & præ impudentia non quærit. Serpit hodie putida Tabes per omne corpus Eccleſiæ: & quo latius, eo deſperatius; eoque periculoſius, quo interius. Nam ſi inſurgeret apertus inimicus hæreticus, mitteretur foras. Si violentus inimicus, abſconderet ſe forſitan ab eo. Nunc vero quem ejiciet, aut a quo abſcondere ſe? Omnes Amici, & omnes Inimici; omnes Neceſſarii, & omnes Adverſarii. Omnes domeſtici, & nulli pacifici. Omnes proximi, & omnes qui ſua ſunt quærentes. Miniſtri Chriſti ſunt, & ſerviunt Antichriſto. Honorati incedunt de bonis Domini, cum Domino honorem non deferunt, &c.* De his dicam, In Concilium eorum non veniat anima mea, in Cœtu illorum non ſit gloria mea.

Multi vero ſunt pacis & veritatis ſtudioſi, in fundamentalibus conſentientes, & contra communes reformatæ religionis hoſtes pariter conſcripti; qui nihilominus, proh dolor! in non neceſſariis diſſiliunt, & ſuos utrinque ad partes & pugnas vocant. Dum pugna hæc hoſtilis gliſcit inter fratres, hoſtibus ſuis perpetuas inſultandi & nocendi opportunitates ſuppeditant. Si quis huic morbo epidemico medicamentum reperire poſſet, bene de Eccleſia mereret: ac cum tot annorum experientia ſit compertiſſimum, illud vix, aut ne vix fieri poſſe pulvere ſcolaſtico luctando, aut conſcientiam pœnis premendo; conſultius eſſet omnia hæc certamina conſopire, quam fruſtra luctando Eccleſiam dilaniare; & tandem ad utiliſſimam, ſi non unicam iſtam pacis regulam redire, *Phil* III. 16. *In eo ad quod uſque pervenimus, eadem incedamus regula*, &c. cui convenit ſaluberrimum iſtud *Toſſani* conſilium, *Academiæ Tubingenſi* his verbis traditum.

*Tollenda merito omnis criminandi & maledicendi amarulentia, & judicium filio Dei domino noſtro Jeſu Chriſto ipſiſque poſteris noſtris, qui certaminis non auctores, ſed ſpectatores, æquius ſepoſitis affectibus judicaturi ſunt permittendum. Adverſarii noſtri etiamnum vivunt, & quotidie audaciores fiunt. Noctes & dies hoc agunt & meditantur, ut exortum Evangelii lumen extinguant, antiquaſq; tenebras revocent. Interea nos qui initio unanimos per Dei gratiam Evangelium enunciavimus, converſis armis in mutua vulnera ruimus; gratumque hoſtibus ſpectaculum exhibemus: qui plus præſidii atque fiduciæ in concertationibus noſtris, quam inani cauſæ ſuæ fundamento collocant.*

Iterum iterumque reſpiciamus illud Apoſtoli, *Gal.* V. 15. *Quod ſi alii alios mordetis ac exciditis, videte ne viciſſim alii ab aliis conſumamini.* Quod enim *Cicero* de clarorum virorum diſcordiis dixit, id *Davenantius* noſter de Eccleſiarum diſcordiis non dubitat affirmare; non alios ſolere eſſe illarum exitus, niſi aut univerſarum interitum, aut victricium in reliquas injuſtum dominatum. Valde metuendum eſt ne hiſce diuturnis & funeſtis contentionibus (quod Deus avertat) ſuum omnes accelerent interitum. Nec dubito diſcordias inter pios extingui poſſe, quicquid in contrarium aliqui obtendant, ſi quorundam mentes ab omnis ſuſpicionis, iræ, ac invidiæ ſpumis & ſcoriis bene expurgatæ eſſent. En Fratres, quam propriam tempeſtivamque παρηγορίαν prudentiſſimus noſter Medicus nobis omnibus hoc tempore adaptavit! det Deus effectum deſideratum, ne *Vulnus in antiquum redeat male firma cicatrix.*

Pii ubique gemunt præſentem & deplorandum Eccleſiæ ſtatum: & ex clade nonnullorum, conjecturam faciunt quid periculi immineat univerſis.

*—— —— En quo diſcordia gentes*
*Perduxit miſeras!*

Nec poteſt quiſquam inficias ire ſanctos & ſapientes ex utraque parte (quantum inter ſe diſſentiunt) in hoc ſaltem unanimos eſſe, quod hæc non ſunt litigandi, ſed orandi, & redintegrandi tempora; tales enim voces ubique effundunt: *Convertat Deus cor patrum ad filios, & cor filiorum ad patres; ne veniens percutiat terram anathemate. Suis non recte conſulunt, qui ob Controverſias nunquam fortaſſe inter doctos terminandas, perpetuis diſſidiis lacerant Eccleſiam. Fratres noſtri qui ſerio profitentur ſe nulla alia cauſa a nobis diſſentire in minutioribus Religionis, quam formidine peccandi; ambabus ulnis ſunt amplectendi: Cito igitur tollantur omnia offendicula, ne bis impingeremus in eundem lapidem. Si iterum collidimur, fruſtulatim frangimur; nolumus illis hanc laudem concedere, quod illi pacis & concordiæ ſtudioſiores quam nos evaderent; in fundamentalibus & neceſſariis conformitatem exigite, in* ἀδιαφόροις *& non neceſſariis debitam, amplam & non hamatam libertatem concedite. Nemo ſibi arroget licentiam dividendi Eccleſiam, & diſſolvendi fraternam unitatem ex ea cauſa quam nec Chriſtus, nec Apoſtoli, nec Eccleſia pure primitiva unquam approbaſſet.*

Omnes Controverſias e medio tolli non poſſe concedimus, ſed omnibus diſcordiis valedicere poteramus; Opinionum enim varietas, & Opinantium unitas non ſunt ἀσύστατα. Quid facit in pectore Chriſtiano Luporum feritas, Canum rabies, venenum lethale Serpentum, cruenta ſævitia Beſtiarum? ut olim *Cyprianus.* Nova atque inaudita (inquit *Gregorius*) eſt iſta prædicatio, quæ verberibus exigit fidem; faceſſat ergo omnis criminandi & maledicendi amarulentia; tranquillus Deus tranquillet omnia.

### III.

Præcipue ac præ omnibus ſuppliciter vos rogo, ut ſepoſitis omnibus levioris naturæ ſtudiis, hoc unum intendatis, quomodo animas vobis commiſſas, (quibus omnia terrena ſunt longe poſtponenda) Chriſto lucrifaciatis: Hic labor, hoc opus eſt.

Procul abſit a vobis deteſtanda illa donorum parſimonia, mundanorum immunda cura, corporis viliſſimi nimis cautela; non magnum nobis videatur vilem ſudorem noſtrum illarum gratia diſpendere, cum Chriſtus pretioſiſſimum ſuum ſanguinem tam libere ac libentiſſime effudit. Si Domini talenta ſudario abſcondimus, ubi ſudaria inveniemus cruentas lachrymas noſtras pro tanto facinore exſiccare?

Recolligite Fratres, omne tempus nobis impenſum, requiretur a nobis qualiter ſit expenſum. Quantum temporis inutili ſilentio jamdudum amiſimus!

ſimus ! Sed inter omnia gravamina ſub quibus diu gemuiſtis, nullum perſuaſiſſimum habeo ægrius tuliſtis quam oribus occluſis inter animas-egenas tam diu latitaſſe; præſens opportunitas labilis eſt, quod ad futurum attinet, nubes poſt pluvias revertantur. Surgite ergo viri optimi, agite hoc negotium, & erit Dominus vobiſcum. Communes carnis querelas deſpicite, Coronam iſtam Cœleſtem proſpicite. Splendebunt prudentes quaſi ſplendor expanſi, & qui multos inſtituunt, quaſi ſtellæ in ſempiterna ſecula.

Hac ſpe labefactantes animos erigamus & muniamus adverſus irriſiones & moleſtias quas Evangelii nomine expectandas habemus; quæ non induenda viſcera miſericordiæ, cum tales de ſalute recuperanda, & exitio ad quod in inſtanti abripi poſſunt, vitando, cum interim nihil minus de ſe cogitant; alloquimur? Conqueritur apud *Ameſium* Author laudatus, *Verba vitæ in quorundam doctorum & prædicatorum labiis quantum ad virtutem & efficaciam, moriuntur. Adeo enim tepide, adeo remiſſe verba Dei enunciant, ut extincta in labiis eorum penitus videantur; unde ſicut ipſi frigidi ſunt & extincti, ſic frigidos & extinctos relinquunt. Novi quendam propter hoc de civitate Pariſiaca aufugiſſe: Dicebat enim ſe prædicationibus & lectionibus Pariſienſibus de die in diem, amplius & amplius infrigidari, & ſe timere ſi moram diuturniorem ibi traheret, ne tandem ſpirituali gelicidio extingueretur: propter quod tranſtulit ſe ad viros ferventes, velut ad carbones vivos, ut inter eos converſans ardorem nutriret, & augeret.*

*Caſus Conſc. lib. 3. p.16.*

Attollite oculos, & regiones ſpectate; albæ enim jam ſunt ad meſſem. Nonne videtis voſmet eſurientium animarum turmis undique ſtipatos, hianti ore, ſolicitiſque oculis, a vobis panem poſcentibus? ſi viſcera Paſtorum Principis nobis inſunt, paſcamus oves ſuas. Nonnulli ſenectute & variis ærumnis pene confecti ſunt, alii minutiis Scripturæ majeſtatem minuunt; aureſque vulgi vano verborum ſtrepitu complent, aut lenociniis titillant. Interea, ſi vos quoque qui omnigena donorum copia locupletati eſtis, & opportunitatem tam commodam & amicam habetis, zelo Dei & animarum non ardeſceretis, horreſcam proſpicere funeſtiſſimum ac vere miſerabilem omnium exitum.

## IV.

Poſtremo, paucis expediam quæ neceſſaria dicenda duxi junioribus Theologis, & ſacri Miniſterii Candidatis; qui tempore perneceſſario huic operi ſeipſos libentiſſime dederunt, vel daturi ſunt: Nos æſtum pondusque diei longe portavimus: Milites pene emeriti ſumus; dabit poſterior ætas tractabiliores fortaſſe animos, mitiora pectora quam noſtrum habet ſeculum.

Fauſtis Natalitiis veſtris ergo congratulor; præſertim ſi veſtra γέννησις διὰ παλιγγενεσίας nobilitata & ſanctificata ſit vel fuerit; idque eo magis; quia jam omnes præſtantiſſimi Chronologi, & temporum Indagatores qui computationi operam dederunt, evaſerunt ſimiles mulieri gravidæ temporis pariendi computum ſuum prætergreſſæ; quæ ſingulis horis partus dolores expectare neceſſe habet. Valde probabile eſt diem illum de quo omnes Prophetæ prophetarunt, & quem omnes boni, quaſi exerto capite, expectarunt, præ foribus jam eſſe.

Quapropter, Juvenes ſpectatiſſimi, ſpes & expectatio renaſcentis Eccleſiæ, hanc opportunitatem mordicus arripite mentes veſtras omnigena donorum copia ditare. Lectionibus aſſiduis ac precibus ferventiſſimis reſerate diem, & obſerate noctem: Qui proſtratus ſtudet, optimus Theologus evaſurus eſt. Nudati donis, non poſſumus veritatem propugnare, aut veritatis inimicos oppugnare. Non bona indoles, nec elocutionis gratia; non geſtus decor, aut converſationis urbanitas pro egeſtate donorum compenſare queat.

Utcunque Fratres, præ omnibus cavete, ne germinante indies Arbore ſcientiæ, ſola ſterileſcat Arbor vitæ, ut eximius Theologus ſatis appoſite loquitur; ne ſint apud vos ultima prima, & prima viciſſim ultima; tam peſtifera inverſio, toto converſionis operi exitialis erit; caput regulatum eſt valde deſiderandum, ſed cor ſanctum abſolute neceſſarium. ζηλοῦτε τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ κρείττονα ϗ ἔτι καθ᾽ ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν υμιν δείκνυμι, 1 *Cor*. XII. 31. Vigeant χαρίσματα, ſed emineat χάρις: altius radices figant cordibus veſtris verba illa magni Apoſtoli, 1 *Cor*. IX. 27. ἀλλ᾽ ὑποπιάζω μου τὸ σῶμα ϗ δουλαγωγῶ, μή πως ἄλλοις κηρύξας, αὐτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι. Quid enim prodeſt peritum eſſe, & periturum? Aliud eſt erudiri de veritatibus Chriſti, aliud edoceri de eo, ſicut veritas eſt in Jeſu.

*S. Ford Ambitio Sac.*

Noctes atque dies mentibus veſtris inſideat gravis iſta cautela literatiſſimi *Reynoldi* noſtri; ne nobis nimium adblandiamur, ſi forſan exquiſitiſſimis naturæ dotibus, ingenii acumine, ſermonis elegantia, varia lectione, longo rerum uſu, artium, linguarum, ſcientiarum omnium peritia, judicii gravitate, & rationis pene angelica perſpicacia nos Deus ornaverit: niſi ſimul accedat Spiritualis gratiæ adjutorium, quo Cœleſtis myſterii cognitionem dilectionemque adaptemur. Quamvis enim ſplendidiſſima hæc χαρίσματα merito nobis in animis & affectibus hominum famam gratiamq; conciliant, quamvis magnum inde Reipub. literariæ, & Eccleſiæ Chriſti emolumentum accedat; nullum tamen ex ſeſe aut ad Dei favorem, aut ad Cœleſtis beatitudinis mercedem conſequendam momentum conferunt. Det Deus dona miniſtrantia & ſanctificantia, ut Chriſti propugnatores, & inimicorum ejus expugnatores voſmet comprobetis. Sed manum de tabula, Epiſtolam hanc levidenſem, & pingui (ut aiunt) *Minerva* contextam; benevole tamen excipite ὡς μνημόσυνον debitæ obſervantiæ,

**Animalis homo.**

*A Conſervo veſtro in*

*Evangelio Chriſti,*

Johanne Flavello.

To

# To the READER.

*THE Worthy Author of the Diſcourſe emitted herewith, is one whoſe praiſe is in the Goſpel throughout all the Churches. His other Books have made his Name precious and famous* in both Englands. *Nor can my Teſtimony add any thing to one every way greater than my ſelf. Nevertheleſs, a ſingular Providence having caſt my Lot to be at preſent in this great City; I could not withſtand the importunity of them, who deſired a few* Prefatory *Lines to manifeſt the Reſpect I owe to this Renowned and Learned Man.*

*It was a wiſe Reproof which a grave Divine adminiſtred to a young Preacher, who entertained his Auditory with an elaborate Diſcourſe: After he had commended his parts and pains, there was (ſaid he) one thing wanting in the Sermon*; I could not perceive that the Spirit of God was in it. *And tho* Morality *is good and neceſſary to be taught and practiſed, yet it is much to be lamented, that many Preachers in theſe days have hardly any other Diſcourſes in their Pulpits than what we may find in* Seneca, Epictetus, Plutarch, *or ſome ſuch Heathen* Moraliſt. *Chriſt, the Holy Spirit, and (in a word)* the Goſpel *is not in their Sermons. But bleſſed be God, that there are ſome (and great is their Company in this Land of Light) who preach the Truth as it is in Jeſus: And he who has taken the Book out of the Right Hand of him that ſits on the Throne, and is worthy to open the Seals thereof, has been pleaſed in wonderful ways to ſet open and keep* open a door of Liberty *to the Goſpel, that they, unto whom he has given a Heart to preach Chriſt, may do it. This is the Lord's doings; This is a* Spirit of Life from God. *When* Cyrus *proclaimed Liberty for the free Exerciſe of Religion, the Lord's Servants, who for ſome years had* lain dead, were brought out of their Graves, *Ezek.* 37. 12, 13.

*This Treatiſe is a word in ſeaſon: God has made the Author to be a* wiſe Maſter-builder *in his Houſe, and according to the Wiſdom given him of God, he has inlarged on a Goſpel-ſubject very proper to be inſiſted on at ſuch a day as this. I am inform'd by unqueſtionable hands that there was a remarkable pouring out of the Spirit when theſe Sermons were* viva voce *delivered, a great number of Souls having been brought home to Chriſt thereby. The Lord grant that the ſecond preaching of them to far greater Multitudes by this way of the Preſs, may by the ſame Spirit be made abundantly ſucceſsful for the Converſion and Salvation of God's Elect. The Fruit brought forth by the Holy Apoſtles in reſpect of the Writings of ſome (as well as the Doctrine preach'd by all) of them, does ſtill remain. The fruitful Labours of this faithful Servant of Chriſt will promote the Glory of God, and the good of Souls, when he himſelf ſhall ceaſe from his Labors, and his Works ſhall follow him. Let the Lord's People be thankful to him for that he has ſent ſuch a Labourer into the Harveſt, and pray that he may be continued long therein, and that many ſuch (for there are but few ſuch) may be raiſed up, and be made eminently ſucceſsful in their holy Endeavours, to the enlargement of the Kingdom of Chriſt and of God; and let him reign in this Land for ever and ever, which is the Hearts Deſire and Prayer of one who is*

London,
1689.

*Leſs than the leaſt of all Saints,*

INCREASE MATHER.

# SERMON I.

## Revel. III. 20.

[*Behold*] *I ſtand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and ſup with him, and he with me.*

THIS day hath our compaſſionate Redeemer opened unto us a door of liberty, liberty to us to preach, and liberty for you to hear the glad tidings of the Goſpel. This is a day few looked for: how often have I ſaid in the years that are paſt, God hath no more work for me to do, and I ſhall have no more ſtrength and opportunities to work for God? And how often have you ſaid in your Hearts, we have ſinned our Miniſters out of their *Pulpits*, and our Eyes ſhall no more behold thoſe our Teachers? But lo, beyond the thoughts of moſt hearts, a wide and (I hope) an effectual door is now opened in the midſt of us. Oh! that it might be to us as the Valley of *Achor* was to *Iſrael*, *for a door of hope*, Hoſea 2. 15. (*i. e.*) not only making the troubles they met with in that Valley an Inlet to their mercies, as ours have been to us; but giving them that Valley *pignoris nomine*, as a pledg of greater mercies intended for them. Upon the firſt appearance of this mercy, my next thoughts were how to make the moſt fruitful improvement of it amongſt you, leſt we ſhould twice ſtumble at the ſame ſtone, and ſin our ſelves back again into our old bondage.

In the contemplation of this matter, the Lord directed me to this Scripture, wherein the ſame Hand that opened to you the door of liberty, knocks importunately at the doors of your Hearts for entrance into them, for union and communion with them. It will be ſad indeed if he that hath let you into all theſe mercies, ſhould himſelf be ſhut out of your hearts: But if the Lord ſhould help you to open your Hearts now to Chriſt, I doubt not but this door of liberty will be kept open to you, how many ſoever the adverſaries be that envy it, and will do their utmoſt to ſhut it up, *Ezek.* 39. 29. The mercies you enjoy this day, are the fruits of Chriſt's interceſſion with the Father for one tryal more: if we bring forth fruit, well; if not, *the Ax lieth at the Root of the Tree.* Under this conſideration I deſire to preach, and even ſo the Lord help you to hear what ſhall be ſpoken from this precious Scripture, *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock*, &c.

Theſe words are a branch of that excellent Epiſtle dictated by Chriſt, and ſent by his ſervant *John* to the Church of *Laodicea*, the moſt formal, hypocritical and degenerate of all the ſeven Churches; yet the great *Phyſician* will try his skill upon them, both by the rebukes of the Rod, *ver.* 19. and by the perſwaſive power of the Word; *ver.* 20. *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock*, &c.

This Text is Chriſt's wooing voice, full of Heavenly Rhetorick to win and gain the Hearts of Sinners to himſelf; wherein we have theſe two general parts.

1. Chriſt's Suit for a Sinners Heart.
2. The powerful Arguments enforcing his ſuit.

Firſt, *Chriſt's Suit for a Sinner's Heart*, wherein we have (1*ſt*) the ſolemn Preface, uſhering it in, *behold:* (2*dly*) the Suit it ſelf. The Preface is exceeding ſolemn: for beſide the common uſe of this word *behold*, in other places, to excite attention, or exaggerate and put weight into an affirmation; it ſtands here, as a Judicious *Expoſitor* notes, as a term of *notification*, or *publick record*, wherein Chriſt takes witneſs of the moſt gracious offer he was now about to make to their Souls, and will have it ſtand *in perpetuam rei memoriam*, as a teſtimony for or againſt their Souls to all Eternity, to cut off all excuſes and pretences for time to come.

*Durham in loc.*

2. The Suit it ſelf, wherein we have,
   1. The *Suitor*, Jeſus Chriſt.
   2. His poſture and action; *I ſtand at the door and knock.*
   3. The Suit it ſelf, which is for opening, *if any Man open.*

1. The Suitor, Chriſt himſelf, *I ſtand*; I that have a right of Sovereignty over you; I that have ſhed my invaluable Blood to purchaſe you, and might juſtly condemn you upon the firſt denial or demur, *behold I ſtand:* this is the Suitor.

2. His poſture and action, *I ſtand at the door and knock*; the word is in the *Preter Tenſe*, I have ſtood, but being here joined with another Verb of the Preſent Tenſe, it is fitly tranſlated, *I ſtand*, yet ſo as that it notes *a continued Action.* I have ſtood, and do ſtill ſtand with unwearied patience; I once ſtood perſonally and bodily among you in the days of my fleſh, and I ſtill ſtand ſpiritually and repreſentatively in my *Ambaſſadors at the door*, (i. e.) the mind and conſcience, the faculties and powers which are introductive into the whole Soul.

ἕςηκα.

The word *Door* is here properly put to ſignify thoſe introductive faculties of the Soul which are of a like uſe to it, as the Door is to the Houſe. This is the *Redeemer's* poſture, his action is *knocking*, (i. e.) his powerful eſſays, and gracious attempts to open the Heart to give him admiſſion. The word *Knock* ſignifies a ſtrong and powerful knock; he ſtands patiently, and knocks powerfully by the Word outwardly, by the convictions, motions, impulſes, ſtrivings, and inſtigations of his Spirit inwardly.

*κρȣ́ω à κέρας Cornu, & ſic fit κερȣ́ω, & per ſyncopen κρȣ́ω.*

3. The deſign and end of the Suit, it is for *opening* (i. e.) conſenting, receiving, embracing, and hearty accepting of him by Faith. *Acts* 16. 14. *The Lord opened the heart of* Lydia, (*i. e.*) perſwaded her Soul to believe; implying, that the Heart by nature is ſtrongly barr'd and lock'd up againſt Chriſt, and that nothing but a power from him can open it.

Secondly, The powerful Arguments and Motives uſed by Chriſt to obtain his Suit, and get a grant from the Sinners heart; and they are drawn from two ineſtimable benefits accruing to the opening or believing Soul, *viz.*

1. Union.
2. Communion with Chriſt.

1. *Union, I will come in to him*, that is, I will unite my ſelf with the opening believing Soul; he ſhall be myſtically one with me, and I with him.

2. *Communion, I will ſup with him, and he with me*; that is, I will feaſt the believing Soul with the delicates of Heaven: ſuch comforts, ſuch joys, ſuch pleaſures as none in the World but Believers are capable of.

And to ſet home all, theſe ſpecial benefits are propoſed by Chriſt to all ſorts of Sinners, great and ſmall, old and young; *If any Man hear my voice and open the door:* that ſo no Soul might be diſcouraged from believing, by the greatneſs or multitude of his Sins, but the vileſt of Sinners may ſee Free Grace triumphing over all their unworthineſs, upon their conſent to take Chriſt according to the gracious offers of the Goſpel.

The words thus opened, afford many great and uſeful points of Doctrine, comprehending in them the very ſum and ſubſtance of the Goſpel. The firſt, which ariſeth from the ſolemn and remarkable Preface *Behold*, will be this:

Doct. 1. *That every offer of Chriſt to the Souls of Sinners is recorded and witneſſed with reſpect to the day of account and reckoning.*

Here we ſhall enquire into three things.

1. Who are God's Witneſſes to all Goſpel tenders?
2. What are the object matters they witneſs to?
3. Why God records every offer of Chriſt, and takes witneſs thereof?

1. Who

I. Who are God's Witneſſes to all the tenders and offers made of Chriſt by the Goſpel, and they will be found to be more than a ſtrict legal number; for,

1. His Miniſters by whom he makes them, are all *Witneſſes* as well as *Officers* of Chriſt to the People. Acts 26. 16. *I have appeared unto thee for this purpoſe, to make thee a Miniſter and a Witneſs.* Here you ſee Miniſters have a double office, to propoſe and offer Chriſt, and then to bear witneſs for or againſt thoſe to whom he is thus offered: They are expreſly called God's Witneſſes, *Rev.* 11. 6, 7. Their Labours witneſs, their Sufferings witneſs, their ſolemn Appeals to God witneſs; yea, the very duſt of their feet ſhaken off againſt the refuſers of Chriſt, turns to a teſtimony againſt them, *Mark* 6. 11. Every groan and ſigh, every drop of ſweat, much more of blood, are placed in God's Book as Marginal Notes by all their Sermons and Prayers, and will be produced and read in the great day againſt all the refuſers and deſpiſers of Chriſt.

2. The Goſpel it ſelf, which is preached to you, is a Teſtimony or Witneſs for God, for or againſt every one that hears it: *John* 12. 48. *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the Word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judg him in the laſt day.* And this is the ſenſe of Chriſt's word, Mat. 24. 14. *And this Goſpel of the Kingdom ſhall be preached in all the World, for a Witneſs to all Nations, and then ſhall the end come.* Ah Lord, what a ſolemn record is here! Every Sermon you hear, yea, every reproof, perſwaſion and conviction is a Witneſs for God to caſt and condemn every Soul in Judgment, that complies not obediently with the calls of the Goſpel: So many Sermons, ſo many Witneſſes.

3. Every man's own Conſcience is a Witneſs for God, that he hath a fair offer once made him: the very Conſciences of the Heathens that never ſaw a Bible, that had no other Preachers but the Sun, Moon and Stars, and other works of Nature; yet of them the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 2. 15. *That they ſhew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and their thoughts the mean while accuſing or excuſing one another.* Certainly if ſuch vigour and activity was put into the conſciences of *Heathens*, who could only read the will of God by the dim Moonlight of natural Reaſon; how much more vigorous and active will Conſcience be in its accuſing office againſt all that live under the bright beams of Goſpel-Light? Their Conſciences will be ſwift Witneſſes, and will ring ſad Peals in their ears another day. Ezek. 2. 5. *You ſhall know that there hath been a Prophet among you.* This ſingle Witneſs is inſtead of a thouſand Witneſſes for God.

4. The Examples of all thoſe that do believe and obey the Goſpel, are ſo many Witneſſes for God againſt the deſpiſers and neglecters of the great Salvation. Every mourning trembling Soul among you is a Witneſs againſt all the dead-hearted, unbelieving, diſobedient ones, that ſit with them under the ſame ordinances. Hence it is ſaid, 1 Cor. 6. 7. *Know ye not that the Saints ſhall judg the World?* They ſhall be *Aſſeſſors* with Chriſt in the great day, and condemn the world by their examples, as *Noah* did the old world. Thus *John*, Mat. 21. 32. *came unto you in the way of righteouſneſs, and ye believed him not, but the Publicans and Harlots believed him; and ye when ye had ſeen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him.* q. d. What ſhift did you make to quiet your conſciences, and ſtifle your convictions, when you ſaw *Publicans* the worſt of Men, and *Harlots* the worſt of Women, repenting, believing, and hungering after Chriſt! Their examples ſhall be your Judges. Theſe are God's Witneſſes.

II. Next let us conſider what are the *object matters* unto which they give their Teſtimony, and that will be found two-fold, according to the two-fold event the Goſpel hath upon them that hear it: of both which the Apoſtle gives this account, 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. *Unto ſome we are the ſavour of life unto life, and unto others the ſavour of death unto death.* Accordingly a double Record is made,

1. Of the Obedience and Faith of ſome, which Record will be produced to their joy and comfort in the day of the Lord, *when he ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, becauſe our teſtimony among you was believed in that day.* Miniſters are Inſtruments of eſpouſing Souls to Chriſt, and Witneſſes to thoſe eſpouſals and contracts made betwixt him and them, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. Both theſe Offices are exceeding grateful and pleaſant to every faithful Miniſter.

2. A Record is made, and Witneſs taken of all the refuſals, diſobedience, and ſlightings of Chriſt by others. Thus *Moſes* will be the accuſer of the Jews; *Joh.* 5. 45. *Do not think I will accuſe you to the Father; there is one that accuſeth you, even* Moſes *in whom you truſt.* This is the ſaddeſt part of a Miniſters work; the forethoughts of it are more afflictive than all our Labours and Sufferings. There is a three-fold Record made in this caſe: (1.) Of the time Men have injoyed under the means of Salvation; how many years they have ſat barren and dead-hearted under the labours of God's faithful Miniſters; *Luke* 13. 7. *Behold, theſe three years I come ſeeking fruit on this Fig-tree, and find none.* Behold, the ſame term of Notification with that in the Text, applied to the time of God's patience towards them. And again, *Jer.* 25. *From the thirteenth year of* Joſiah *even unto this day, (that is, the three and twentieth year) the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have ſpoken unto you riſing early, and ſpeaking, but you have not hearkened.* O conſider, all the years and days you have ſpent under the Goſpel, are upon your Doomſday-book. (2.) Records are alſo made of all the Inſtruments that ever God employed for the Converſion and Salvation of your Souls. So many Miniſters, whether fixed or tranſient, as have ſpent their labours upon you, are upon the Book of your account. Jer. 25. 4. *The Lord hath ſent unto you all his ſervants the Prophets, riſing early, and ſending them; but ye have not hearkned, nor enclined your ear to hear.* They have waſted their Lungs, dropt their compaſſionate tears, and burnt down one after another as Candles to direct you to Chriſt and Salvation, but all in vain. (3.) Every Call, Perſwaſion and Argument uſed by them to eſpouſe you to Chriſt, is likewiſe upon the Book of account. Prov. 1. 24, 25. *Becauſe I have called and you refuſed, I have ſtretched my hand, and no man regarded, but you have ſet at nought all my Counſels, and would none of my Reproofs.* Theſe Calls and Counſels

ſels are of too great value with God (tho of none with you) to be loſt and left out of your account.

III. We ſhall in the laſt place inquire into the grounds and reaſons of theſe judicial procedures of God, why he will have every man's Obedience and Diſobedience regiſtred and witneſſed for or againſt him under Goſpel-adminiſtrations; and there are two weighty reaſons thereof.

1. That wherever the end of the Goſpel is attained in the Converſion of any ſoul, that ſoul, and all that were inſtrumentally employ'd about the Salvation of it, may have their proper reward and comfort in the great day: 2 *Cor.* 1. 14. *As alſo you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye alſo are ours in the day of the Lord Jeſus.* This will be matter of joy unſpeakable, both to you that ſhall receive, and to them that ſhall give ſuch a comfortable teſtimony for you. O the joyful Congratulations that will be in that day between laborious Faithful Miniſters, and their believing obedient Hearers! Lord, this was the bleſſed Inſtrument of my happy Illumination and Converſion; tho I might have ten thouſand Inſtructers in Chriſt, yet not many Fathers; for by the bleſſing of thy Spirit upon this man's Miniſtry, my Soul was begotten to Chriſt. And on the other ſide, Lord, theſe are the Souls for whom I travelled as in Birth until Chriſt was formed in them. 'Tis a glorious thing to ſay as the Prophet, *Here am I, and the Children God hath given me.*

Nay, thoſe that were but collaterally uſeful to help on the work of God begun by others, muſt not loſe their reward in that day. *John* 4. 36. *And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that ſoweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.*

2. Records are now made, and Witneſſes taken, that thereby the Judicial Sentence of Jeſus Chriſt in the laſt day may be made clear and perſpicuous to all the World; that every mouth may be ſtopt, and no Plea or Apology left in the mouth of any condemned Sinner. For Chriſt in that day cometh, *Jude* 15. *to convince all that are ungodly*; to convince by demonſtration, that all that are Chriſtleſs now, may be found ſpeechleſs then, *Mat.* 22. 12. Hence it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 1. 5. *That the wicked ſhall not ſtand, or riſe up in the Judgment.* And no wonder when ſo many full Teſtimonies and unexceptionable Witneſſes ſhall come point blank againſt them, the Miniſter that preached, the Word they preached, their own Conſciences, and the Examples of all Believers will be produced againſt them.

1ſt Inference. *The undoubted certainty of a day of Judgment is hence evinced.* To what purpoſe elſe are Records made, and Witneſſes taken, but with reſpect to an Audit-day? This is a truth ſealed upon the conſciences of the very Heathens, *Rom.* 2. 15. *Their Conſciences bear witneſs.* But in vain are all theſe Records made, unleſs there be a day to produce and plead them; and of that day the Prophet *Daniel* ſpeaks, *Dan.* 7. 10. *The Judgment was ſet, and the Books were opened.* And again, *Rev.* 20. 12. *And I ſaw the Dead ſmall and great ſtand before God, and the Books were opened, and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the Books according to their works.* Believe it Friends, theſe are no deviſed Fables, but moſt awful and infallible truths: according to the ſaving effects the Goſpel now hath, it will be a time of refreſhing to our Souls, *Acts* 3. 19. to all others a day of terror, wrath and amazement, 2 Theſſ. 1. 7, 8. *The day in which the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels in flaming Fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

2*d* Infer. *What a ſpur is here to Miniſterial diligence and faithfulneſs?* 'Tis an awful work that is under our hands; the effects of the Goſpel which we preach, will be the ſavour of life or death to them that hear us. If the Lord proſper it in our hands, we ſhall be Witneſſes for you, it will be an addition to our glory in Heaven; *Dan.* 12. 3. *They that turn many to righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever.* But if we be ignorant, lazy, Men-pleaſers, our people will come in as ſwift Witneſſes againſt us, and their blood will be required at our hands; it will be an intolerable aggravation to our miſery in Hell, to have any that ſat under our Miniſtry thus upbraiding us! *O cruel Man! thou ſaweſt my ſoul in danger, and never dealt faithfully and plainly with me; the ſame time and breath that was ſpent in idle and worldly diſcourſe, might have been inſtrumental to have ſav'd me from this place of torment.* Let Miniſters conſider themſelves as Witneſſes for God, and their People as Witneſſes for or againſt them; and under that conſideration, ſo ſtudy, preach and pray, that they may with *Paul* take God to record, that they are free from the blood of all men; no ſort of men upon earth have more ſpurs to diligence and faithfulneſs than we have.

3*d* Infer. *What a Pill is this to purge Formality out of all that hear us?* Every Sabbath, every Sermon is recorded in Heaven for or againſt your Souls; at what rate ſoever you attend to the Word, all that you hear is ſet down in the book of your account: think not you ſhall return as you came, the Word will have its effect and end, it ſhall not return in vain, *Iſa.* 55. 11. but ſhall accompliſh the end for which it is ſent. The decrees of Heaven are executed by the Goſpel, ſome ſouls ſhall be quickened, and others ſhall be ſlain by the Words of God's mouth. The Goſpel is a River of the waters of Life, which quickens and refreſhes every thing that lives; but the miry and marſhy places ſhall not be healed. How weighty therefore is that caution of our Lord, *Luke* 8. 18. *Take heed how you hear?* When you come under an Ordinance, you are ſowing ſeed for eternity, which will ſpring up in the world to come. Preaching and hearing may be conſidered two ways, *Phyſically* or *Morally*: in the former reſpect, theſe acts are quickly over and paſs away. I ſhall by and by have done preaching, and you hearing; this Sermon will be ended in a little time, but the conſequences thereof will abide for ever. Therefore for the Lord's ſake away with formality, no more drowſy eyes or wandering thoughts. O when you come to attend upon the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, that ſuch thoughts as theſe might prepare your minds! The Word I am going to hear will quicken or kill, ſave or damn my Soul; if I ſit dead under it, and return barren from it, I ſhall wiſh one day that I had never ſeen the face of that Miniſter, nor heard his voice that preached it.

4. Infer. *What a dreadful condition are all thoſe in that are real and profeſſed Enemies to the Goſpel, and them that preach it!* That inſtead of embracing and obeying the meſſage of the Goſpel, reject and deſpiſe it; inſtead of opening their Hearts to receive it, open their blaſphemous Mouths againſt it, to deride it, and hiſs it (if it were poſſible) out of the world. Ah, what a Book of Remembrance is written for ſuch men? I fear there never was an Age ſince Chriſtianity bleſſed this Nation, that was more deeply drench'd in the guilt of this ſin than the preſent Age. How are the Meſſengers of the Goſpel ſlighted and rejected? What have we done to deſerve it? Is not our caſe this day much like that of the Prophet? *Shall evil be recompenſed for good? for they have digged a Pit for my Soul; remember that I ſtood before thee to ſpeak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them*, Jer. 18. 20. What brutiſh madneſs hath poſſeſt the Souls of theſe men? but alas, it is not ſo much they, as Satan acting in them; he is a jealous Prince, the Goſpel alarms him, his Subjects are in danger of revolting from him: No wonder therefore he makes an outcry at the liberty of the Goſpel, as is uſed to be made when an Enemy invades a Kingdom. In this caſe Chriſt directs his Miniſters to ſhake off the duſt of their Feet for a teſtimony againſt them, *Mar.* 6. 11. The ſignification and meaning whereof is this, that look as you ſhake off the duſt of your feet, even ſo Jeſus Chriſt will ſhake off thoſe men that deſpiſe the Goſpel, and abuſe its Meſſengers.

5. *Infer.* Hence it likewiſe follows, *that the caſe of the Pagan World will be eaſier in the day of Judgment, than theirs that live and die unregenerate and diſobedient under the Goſpel of Chriſt.* There are more Witneſſes prepared, and Records filed againſt the day of your account, than can poſſibly be againſt them: they have abuſed but one Talent, the light of Nature; but we thouſands, even as many thouſands as we have had opportunities and calls under the Goſpel. Upon this account Chriſt ſaith, *Whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear your words, ſhake off the duſt of your feet. Verily, I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of* Sodom *and* Gomorrah *in the day of Judgment, than for that City*, Mat. 10. 14, 15.

Ah, what a fearful Aggravation doth it put upon our ſin and miſery, that we are not only accountable for all the Light we had, but for all that we might have had in the Goſpel-day! *Capernaum* was lifted up to Heaven in the enjoyment of means and precious opportunities, *Mat.* 11. 23. and had an anſwerable downfal into the depth of miſery from that height of mercy; as the higher any one is lifted up upon a Rack, the more terrible is the jerk he receives by the fall.

6. *Infer.* Laſtly, hence it appears, *That the day of Judgment muſt certainly take up a vaſt ſpace of time:* For if God will bring every thing into Judgment, *Eccleſ.* 12. 14. not only ſinful actions, but words, *Mat.* 12. 36. not only words, but heart-ſecrets, *Rom.* 2. 16. If all the Records and Regiſters now made, ſhall then be opened and read, all the Witneſſes for or againſt every man examined and heard; judg then what a vaſt ſpace of time will that great Day take up. Some Divines are of opinion it may laſt as long as the World hath laſted; but this is ſure, things will not be hudled up, nor ſhuffled over in haſt; you have taken your time for ſinning, and God will take his time for judging.

Conſider the multitudes, multitudes without number, that are to be judged in that day, even all the poſterity of *Adam*, which are as the Sand upon the Sea-ſhore; that not only ſo many perſons, but all that they have done, muſt come into Judgment, even the very thoughts of their Hearts, which never came to the knowledg of Men; their Conſciences to be interrogated, all other Witneſſes fully heard and examined: how great a day muſt this day of the Lord then be?

### *The Second Uſe.*

But the main of this Point will be for *Exhortation*, that ſeeing all the offers of Chriſt are recorded and witneſſed with reſpect to a day of account, every one of you would therefore immediately embrace the preſent gracious tender of Chriſt in the Goſpel, as ever you expect to be acquitted and cleared in that great day: take heed of denials, nay of delays and demurs. *For if the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward; how ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation?* Heb. 2. 2, 3. The Queſtion is put, but no Anſwer made; *How ſhall we eſcape?* The wiſdom of Men and Angels cannot tell how. To enforce this Exhortation, I ſhall preſent you with ten weighty Conſiderations upon the matter, which the Lord follow home, by the bleſſing of his Spirit, upon all your Hearts.

1. *Conſider how invaluable a mercy it is, that you are yet within the reach of offered Grace.* The mercies that ſtand in offer before you this day, were never ſet before the Angels that fell; no *Mediator* was ever appointed for them. O aſtoniſhing mercy! that thoſe Veſſels of Gold ſhould be caſt into everlaſting Fire, and ſuch clay Veſſels as we are thus put into a capacity of greater happineſs than ever they fell from: Nay, the mercy that ſtands before you is not only denied to the Angels that fell, but to the greateſt part of your fellow Creatures, of the ſame rank and dignity with you: *He ſheweth his Word to* Jacob, *his Statutes and his Judgments unto* Iſrael; *he hath not dealt ſo with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them: praiſe ye the Lord.* Pſal. 147. 19, 20. A mercy deſervedly celebrated with a joyful *Allelujah*. What vaſt *Tracts* are there in the habitable World, where the name of Chriſt is unknown! 'Tis your ſpecial mercy to be born in a Land of Bibles and Miniſters; where it is as difficult for you to avoid and ſhun the Light, as it is for others to behold and enjoy it.

2. *Conſider the nature, weight, and worth of the Mercies which are this day freely offered you.* Certainly they are mercies of the firſt rank, the moſt ponderous, precious, and neceſſary among all the mercies of God. Chriſt the firſt born of mercies, and in him Pardon, Peace, and eternal Salvation are ſet before you: it were aſtoniſhing to ſee a ſtarving Man refuſing offered bread, or a condemned Man a gracious pardon. Lord what compoſitions of ſloth and ſtupidity are we, that we ſhould need ſo many intreaties to be happy!

3. *Conſider who it is that makes theſe gracious tenders of Pardon, Peace and Salvation, to you; even that God whom you have ſo deeply wronged, whoſe Laws you have violated, whoſe Mercies you have ſpurned, and whoſe Wrath you have juſtly incenſed.* His patience groans under the burden of your daily provocations; he loſes nothing if you be damned, and receives no benefit if you be ſaved; yet the firſt motions of Mercy and Salvation to you, freely ariſe out of his Grace and good pleaſure. God intreats you to be reconciled, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. The bleſſed Lord Jeſus, whoſe blood thy ſins have ſhed, now freely offers that blood for thy Reconciliation, Juſtification and Salvation, if thou wilt but ſincerely accept him e'er it be too late.

4. *Reflect ſeriouſly upon your own vileneſs, to whom ſuch gracious offers of Peace and Mercy are made.* Thy ſins have ſet thee at as great a diſtance from the hopes and expectations of pardon, as any ſinner in the World. Conſider Man, what thou haſt been, what thou haſt done, and what vaſt heaps of guilt thou haſt contracted by a life of ſin; and yet that unto thee Pardon and Peace ſhould be offered in Chriſt, after ſuch a life of Rebellion, how aſtoniſhing is the mercy! The Lord is contented to paſs by all thy former Rebellions, thy deep-died Tranſgreſſions, and to ſign an Act of Oblivion for all that is paſt, if now at laſt thy Heart relent for Sin, and thy Will bow in obedience to the great commands and calls of the Goſpel, *Iſa.* 55. 2. & 1. 18.

5. *Conſider how many offers of mercy you have already refuſed, and that every refuſal is recorded againſt you:* How long you have tried and even tired the patience of God already, and that this may be the laſt overture of Grace that ever God will make to your Souls. Certainly there is an offer that will be the laſt offer, a ſtriving of the Spirit which will be his laſt ſtriving; and after that no more offers without you, no more motions or ſtrivings within you for evermore. The Treaty is then ended, and your laſt neglect or rejection of Chriſt recorded againſt the day of your account; and what if this ſhould prove to be that laſt tender of Grace which muſt conclude the Treaty betwixt Chriſt and you! what undone wretches muſt you then be, with whom ſo gracious a Treaty breaks off upon ſuch dreadful terms!

6. *Conſider well the reaſonable, mild, and gracious nature of the Goſpel-terms, on which Life and Pardon are offered to you.* Acts 20. 21. The Goſpel requires nothing of you but Repentance and Faith. Can you think it hard when a Prince pardons a Rebel, to require him to fall upon his Knees, and ſtretch forth a willing and thankful Hand to receive his Pardon? Your Repentance and Faith are much of the ſame nature. Here is no legal ſatisfaction required at your hands, no reparation of the injured Law by your doings or ſufferings, but a hearty ſorrow for ſins committed, ſincere purpoſes and endeavours after new obedience, and a hearty thankful acceptation of Chriſt your Saviour; and for your encouragement herein, his Spirit ſtands ready to furniſh you with Powers and Abilities: *Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my Words unto you,* Prov. 1. 23. And Iſa. 26. 12. *Lord, thou haſt wrought all our Works in us.*

7. Again, *Conſider how your way to Chriſt by Repentance and Faith is beaten before you by thouſands of ſinners for your encouragement.* You are not the firſt that ever adventured your Souls in this path: multitudes are gone before you, and that under as much guilt, fear and diſcouragement as you that come after can pretend unto; and not a man among them repulſed or diſcouraged: here they have found reſt and peace to their weary Souls, *Heb.* 4. 3. *Acts* 13. 39. Here the greateſt of Sinners have been forth for an enſample to you that ſhould afterwards believe on his Name, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. You ſee if you will not, others will joyfully accept the offers of Chriſt; What diſcouragements have you that they had not? or what greater incouragements had they which God hath not given you this day? Therefore they ſhall be your Judges.

8. *Conſider the great hazard of theſe precious ſeaſons you now enjoy.* Opportunity is the golden ſpot of time, but it is *tempus labile*, a very ſlippery and uncertain thing: great and manifold are the hazards and contingences attending it. Your life is immediately uncertain, your breath continually going in your Noſtrils; and that which is every moment going, will be gone at laſt. The Goſpel is as uncertain as your life; God hath made no ſuch ſettlement of it but that he may at pleaſure remove it, and will certainly do ſo, if we thus trifle under it; 'tis but a Candleſtick, tho a golden one, *Rev.* 2. 5. and that you all know is a moveable thing: and not only your life, and the means of your eternal life, I mean the Goſpel, are uncertain things; but even the motions and ſtrivings of the Spirit with your Souls are as uncertain as either. *Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure,* Phil. 2. 12, 13. That God now works with you, is matter of great incouragement to your work; but that he works at his own pleaſure, as a free arbitrary Agent who can ceaſe when he pleaſes, and never give one knock at your hearts more, ſhould make you work with fear and trembling.

9. *Think what a fearful aggravation it will be, both of your ſin and miſery, to periſh in the ſight and preſence of an offered remedy; to ſink into Hell betwixt the outſtretched Arms of a compaſſionate Redeemer, that would have gathered you, but you would not.*

Heathens, yea Devils will upbraid you in Hell for ſuch unaccountable folly, and deſperate madneſs: Heathens will ſay, Alas, we had but the dim Moon-light of Nature, which did indeed diſcover Sin, but not Chriſt the Remedy. Ah, had your Preachers and your Bibles been ſent among us, how gladly would we have embraced them! Surely, ſaith God to *Ezekiel*, *had I ſent thee to them, they would have hearkned unto thee,* Ezek. 3. 5, 6. Mat. 11. 21. The very Devils will upbraid you; O if God had ſent a *Mediator* in our nature, we had never rejected him as you have done; but he took not on him the nature of Angels.

10. Laſtly, *How clear, as well as ſure, will your condemnation be in the great day, againſt whom ſuch a cloud of Witneſſes will appear!* O how manifeſt will the Righteouſneſs of God be! Men and Angels ſhall applaud the Sentence, and your own

Conſciences ſhall acknowledg the equity of it. You that are *Chriſtleſs* now, will be *ſpeechleſs* then, *Mat.* 22. 12. *Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, I perſwade Men,* 2 Cor. 5. 11. as one that trembles to think of being ſummoned as a Witneſs againſt any of your Souls. O that I might be your rejoycing, and you mine in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt!

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# SERMON II.

## Revel. III. 20.

*Behold* [*I*] *ſtand at the Door*, &c.

HAving in the former Sermon ponder'd Chriſt's ſolemn Preface to his earneſt Suit; the next thing that comes under our conſideration, is *the Perſon ſoliciting*, and pleading for admiſſion into the Heart of Sinners, which is Chriſt himſelf.

*Behold* [*I*] *ſtand*. The only difficulty here is rightly to apprehend the manner of Chriſt's Preſence in Goſpel-adminiſtrations: for it is manifeſt the Perſon of Chriſt was at this time in Heaven; his Bodily Preſence was removed from this lower World above ſixty years before this Epiſtle was written to the *Laodiceans*. *John*'s baniſhment into *Patmos* is by *Euſebius*, out of *Irenæus* and *Clemens Alexandrinus*, placed in the fourteenth year of the Emperor *Domitian*, and under his ſecond Perſecution, which was about the ninety ſeventh year from the Birth of Chriſt.

Yet here he ſaith, *Behold I ſtand*; not my Meſſengers and Miniſters only, but I by my Spiritual Preſence among you, I your Sovereign Lord and Owner, who have all right and authority by Creation and Redemption to poſſeſs and diſpoſe of your Souls; 'tis I that ſtand at the Door and knock, I by my Spirit, ſoliciting and moving by the Miniſtry of Men. You ſee none but Men; but believe it, I am really and truly, tho ſpiritually and inviſibly preſent in all thoſe Adminiſtrations; all thoſe Knocks, Motions and Solicitations are truly mine, they are my Acts, and I own them, and ſo I would have you conceive and apprehend them. Hence the ſecond *Note* is this,

Doct. 2. *That Jeſus Chriſt is truly preſent with men in his Ordinances, and hath to do with them, and they with him; tho he be not viſible to their carnal Eyes.*

Thus runs the Promiſe: *Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midſt of them,* Mat. 18. 20. The middle place was the Seat of the *Preſident* in the Jewiſh Aſſemblies, where he might equally hear and be heard of all. So will I be in the midſt of the Aſſemblies of the Faithful, met together in my Name and Authority, to bleſs, guide and protect them. Hence the Church is called the place of his Feet, *Iſa.* 16. 13. a manifeſt alluſion to the *Ark*, called God's Footſtool, *Pſal.* 99. 5. And agreeably hereunto, Chriſt is ſaid to walk among the ſeven golden Candleſticks, *Rev.* 2. 1. There are the Spiritual walks of Chriſt, there his converſes and communion with Men: And this preſence of Chriſt was not the peculiar privilege of the firſt Churches, but is common to all the Churches of the Saints to the end of the World, as appears by that glorious promiſe comfortably co-extended with the Church from firſt to laſt; *Lo, I am with you always to the end of the World,* Mat. 28. ult. This Promiſe is the ground and reaſon of all our Faith, and expectations of benefit from Ordinances; and the Subjects of it are not here conſidered *Perſonally*, but *Officially*, to you and all that ſucceed you in the ſame Work and Office; not to you only as *Extraordinary*, but to all the ſucceeding *Ordinary* ſtanding Officers in my Church. As for the Apoſtles, neither their Perſons, nor extraordinary Office was to continue long, but this Promiſe was to continue to the end of the World.

Nor is this Promiſe made abſolutely, but conditionally; the connection of the Promiſe with the Command, enforces this qualified ſenſe; as 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. *The Lord is with you, whilſt you are with him.* Ignorant idle unqualified Perſons cannot claim the benefit of this gracious grant.

Once more, this Promiſe is made to every hour and minute of time. I am with you, *all the days*, as it is in the *Greek Text*; in dark and dangerous, as well as peaceable and encouraging days: and it is cloſed up with a ſolemn *Amen, So be it*, or, So it ſhall be.

To open this Point diſtinctly, we are to conſider that there is a threefold preſence of Chriſt.

1. Corporeal.
2. Repreſented.
3. Spiritual.

1. There is a Corporeal Preſence of Chriſt, which the Church once enjoyed on Earth, when he went in and out amongſt his People, *Acts* 1. 21. when their Eyes ſaw him, and their Hands handled him, 1 *John* 1. 1. This Preſence was a ſingular conſolation to the Diſciples, and therefore they were greatly dejected when it was to be removed from them. But after Redemption-work was finiſhed on Earth, this bodily Preſence was no longer neceſſary to be continued in this World, but more expedient to be removed to Heaven, *John* 16. 7. as indeed it was, and muſt there abide until the time of the reſtitution of all things,

*Acts* 3. 21. And in this reſpect he tells the Diſciples, *John* 16. 28. *I leave the World, and go to my Father.*

2. There is a Repreſented Preſence of Chriſt in Ordinances. As the Perſon of a King is repreſented in another Country by his *Ambaſſadors*, ſo is Chriſt in this World by his Miniſters: *We then are Ambaſſadors for God; as tho God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God*, 2 Cor. 5. 20. Chriſt is about other work for us in Heaven, but we ſtand in his ſtead on Earth. And this ſpeaks the great Dignity of the Miniſterial Office; whatever abuſes or contempts are caſt on them, they reflect upon Chriſt: *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me*, Luk. 10. 16. It alſo teacheth us whence the validity of Goſpel-adminiſtrations is; Chriſt ratifies and confirms them with his own Authority. It alſo inſtructs us how wiſe, ſpiritual, and holy Miniſters ſhould be, who repreſent Chriſt to the Word. A Drunkard, a Perſecutor, a ſenſual Worldling, is but an ill Repreſentative of the bleſſed and holy Jeſus.

3. Beſide and above the two former, there is a Spiritual Preſence of Chriſt in the Churches, and Ordinances; and this Preſence of Chriſt by his Spirit, who is his *Vicegerent*, is to be conſidered as that from which all Goſpel-Ordinances derive,

1. Their Beauty and Glory.
2. Their Power and Efficacy.
3. Their awful Solemnity.
4. Their Continuance and Stability.

1. From the preſence of Chriſt by his Spirit, the Ordinances and Churches derive their Beauty and Glory: *To ſee thy Power and thy Glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in the Sanctuary*, Pſal. 27. 4. Look as the beauty of the Body is a reſult from the Soul that animates it; and when the Soul is gone, the Beauty of the Body is gone alſo: ſo the Beauty and Glory of all Ordinances comes and goes with the Spirit of Chriſt, which is the very Soul of them. The Churches are indeed golden Candleſticks, but the Candleſtick hath no light but what the Candle gives it; hence that magnificent deſcription of the new Temple is cloſed up in this expreſſion, *The name of that City ſhall be, The Lord is there*, Ezek. 48. ult.

2. From this Spiritual Preſence of Chriſt, all Goſpel-Ordinances derive that Power and Efficacy which is by them exerted upon the Souls of Men, either in their Converſion or Edification. This power is not inherent in them, nor do they act as natural, neceſſary agents, but as inſtituted means, which are ſucceſsful or unſucceſsful, according as Chriſt by his Spirit co-operates with them: *He that plants is nothing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increaſe*, 1 Cor. 3. 7. that is, they are nothing to the purpoſe, nothing to the accompliſhment of Mens Salvation without the concurrence of the Spirit of Chriſt. For when the Apoſtle makes himſelf and *Apollos*, with all other Miniſters, nothing, we muſt underſtand him ſpeaking not abſolutely, but comparatively, and relatively; they are neceſſary in their places, and ſufficient in their kind, for what they are appointed to, elſe it would be a reflection upon the wiſdom of God that inſtituted them: but ſingly in themſelves, and diſjunctively conſidered, they are nothing; as a Trumpet or Wind-Inſtrument is nothing, as to its end and uſe, except breath be inſpired into it, and that breath modulated by the art and skill of the Inſpirer; like *Ezekiel's* Wheels that move not but as the Spirit that was in them moved, and directed their motions. If Ordinances wrought upon Souls naturally, and neceſſarily, as the fire burneth, then they could not fail of ſucceſs upon all that come under them: But it is with them as with the Waters of the Pool of *Betheſda*, whoſe healing virtue was only found at that ſeaſon when the Angel deſcended and troubled them.

3. This Spiritual Preſence of Chriſt gives the Ordinances of the Goſpel that awful ſolemnity which is due upon that account to them. The Preſence of Chriſt in them commands reverence from all that are about him. *God is greatly to be feared in the Aſſemblies of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.* Hence is that ſolemn caution or threatning, *Lev.* 26. 23, 24. *If you walk contrary unto me, then will I alſo walk contrary unto you*; the Hebrew word in that Text ſignifies to walk raſhly or at an adventure with God, *ſine perſonæ diſcrimine*, without conſidering with whom we have to do, and what an awful Majeſty we ſtand before. And the puniſhment is ſutable to the ſin; I alſo will walk at an adventure with you, making no diſcrimination in my Judgments betwixt your Perſons and the Perſons of the worſt of Men. O that this were duly conſidered by all that have to do with God in Goſpel-inſtitutions!

4. 'Tis the Spiritual Preſence of Chriſt in his Churches and Ordinances that gives them their continuance and ſtability: whenever the Spirit of Chriſt departs from them, it will not be long before they depart from us; or if they ſhould not, their continuance will be little to our advantage. When the Glory of the Lord once diſmounted from betwixt the Cherubims, when that ſad voice was heard in the Temple, *migremus hinc*, let us go hence, how ſoon was both City and Temple made a deſolation! And truly Chriſt's Preſence is not ſo fixed to any Place, or any Ordinances, but the ſins of the People may baniſh it away, *Rev.* 2. 5. Who will tarry in any place longer than he is welcom, if he have any where elſe to go?

But more particularly, let us here diſcuſs theſe two Points.

I. How it appears Chriſt is thus Spiritually preſent with his Churches and Ordinances.

II. Why it is neceſſary he ſhould be ſo.

Firſt, By what evidences doth it manifeſtly appear that there is ſuch a preſence of Chriſt with his Churches and Ordinances. And this will appear by two undeniable evidences thereof.

1. By their wonderful Preſervations.
2. From their ſupernatural Effects.

1. From their wonderful Preſervations: for it is wholly unaccountable, and unconceivable, how the Churches, Miniſters and Ordinances, ſhould be ſupported and preſerved without it, amidſt ſuch Hoſts of potent and enraged Enemies. If Chriſt were not among them, they had certainly been ſwallowed up long ago. 'Tis he that holds the Stars in his right hand, *Rev.* 2. 1. His walks among the ſeven golden Candleſticks is their beſt ſecurity. The Burning Buſh, *Exod.*

3. 3. is a rare emblem to open this Myſtery; the buſh burned with fire, but was not conſumed. The *buſh* was a reſemblance of the Church of God in *Egypt*, the *flames* upon it was their terrible Perſecution; the *wonder*, that no aſhes appeared as the effects of thoſe terrible flames; the *reaſon* thereof was, God was in the buſh, Jeſus Chriſt was in the midſt of his people.

By virtue of this Preſence we are here this day, in the enjoyment of Goſpel-Liberties; no Society of Men in the World have ſuch ſecurity as the Church hath upon this account. The mightieſt Monarchies have been overturned, no Policies nor human Power could preſerve them; but the Church and Ordinances are ſtill preſerved, and ſhall ever be by virtue of that gracious Promiſe, *Jer.* 30. 11. *For I am with thee, ſaith the Lord, to ſave thee: tho I make a full end of all Nations whither I have ſcattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee.*

The *Babylonian*, *Perſian*, *Grecian* Monarchies have deſtroyed and ruined one another:

———— *Sic Medus ademit*
*Aſſyrio, Syroque tulit moderamina Perſes*, &c.

but ſtill the Church of Chriſt lifts up its Head, and beholds their ruins.

2. This Preſence of Chriſt in and with his Ordinances is undeniably evinced from their ſupernatural effects upon the Souls of Men: 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. *The Weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty thro God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds.* 'Tis the Spirit of Chriſt that gives them their ſucceſs and efficacy: The Sword of the Goſpel hath its point and edg, but it is impoſſible the Heart of a ſtupid hardned ſinner ſhould ever be prickt or wounded by it, if the Spirit of Chriſt did not manage it. When Sinners fall down convinced under the authority of the Word, they feel, and readily acknowledg that God is in it of a truth, 1 *Cor.* 14. 25. *Ruffinus* reports, that at the Council of *Nice*, a godly man, of no great learning, was the inſtrument of converting a learned Philoſopher, whom the *Biſhops* with all their Arguments could not perſuade: of which the *Philoſopher* himſelf gave this remarkable account, *Whilſt you reaſoned with me, ſaid he, againſt words I oppoſed words, and what was ſpoken I overthrew by the art of ſpeaking; but when inſtead of words, power came out of the mouth of the ſpeaker, words could no longer withſtand truth, nor Man reſiſt the power of God.*

And this indeed is the true and juſt account of all thoſe marvellous and gracious changes made upon the Souls of men by the preaching of the Goſpel: Can the vaniſhing breath of a dying Man, think you, inſpire ſpiritual and eternal Life into the Souls of other Men? Can he ſearch the Conſcience, break the Heart, and bow the Will at this rate? No, no, this is the Power and Operation of Chriſt; and of that Preſence we muſt ſay, ſaith a * Reverend Author, as *Martha* did to her Saviour concerning the Death of her Brother *Lazarus*, John 11. 21. *Lord if thou hadſt been here, my Brother had not died.* So, ſay I, if that Preſence and Power of Chriſt were felt by all, which hath been certainly experienced and felt by many, they had not remained in the ſtate of Spiritual Death as they do. But tho there be thouſands under Ordinances that never felt this Power of Chriſt upon them, yet bleſſed be God there are alſo multitudes of Witneſſes and Evidences of this Truth, that there is a real, ſpiritual, energetical Preſence of Chriſt in his own Appointments; which was the firſt thing to be evinced.

* Mr. *Burgeſs* on 1 *Cor.* 3.

Secondly, The ſecond thing requiring Explication, is the Uſes and Ends which make ſuch a Preſence of Chriſt neceſſary. And they are,

1. To preſerve and ſupport his Miniſters and Churches amidſt ſuch Hoſts of potent and enraged Enemies: This Preſence of Chriſt is as a Wall of Fire round about them. It was the divine Preſence with *Jeremiah* that was as a Life-Guard to him againſt the rage of the Princes and Nobles of *Iſrael:* Jer. 15. 20, 21. *I will make thee to this People a fenced brazen Wall, and they ſhall fight againſt thee, but they ſhall not prevail againſt thee; for I am with thee to ſave thee, and to deliver thee, ſaith the Lord: And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.*

It was eaſier for the *Roman* Army to ſcale the Walls, and batter down the Towers of *Jeruſalem*, than for all the Enemies in *Jeruſalem* to deſtroy this Prophet of God thus immur'd by the Divine Preſence. *Athanaſius* and *Luther* had the Power of the Empire ingaged againſt them, yet the Preſence of Chriſt was their ſecurity. The Witneſſes could not be ſlain till they had finiſhed their Teſtimony, *Rev.* 11. 7. To this Preſence alone the faithful Witneſſes of Chriſt owe their marvellous preſervation at this day; had not Chriſt ſaid, *Lo, I am with you*, you had not ſaid at this day, *behold our Miniſters are ſtill with us.*

2. The Preſence of Chriſt is neceſſary to aſſiſt and enable his Miniſters in their Work, for it is a Work quite above their own ſtrength; for it is well we are workers together with God, elſe we ſhould ſoon faint under our labours. When *Moſes* objected, *I am not eloquent*, the Lord told him, *I will be with thy Mouth*, Exod. 4. 10. When God guides the Tongue, how powerful and perſuaſive muſt the Language be! When the Apoſtles, illiterate men, were ſent out to convert the World, Chriſt promiſed to give them *a Mouth and Wiſdom*, Luke 21. 15. a mouth to ſpeak, and Wiſdom to guide that mouth; and then their words were demonſtrations, all their adverſaries could not reſiſt that Spirit and Power by which they ſpake. Empires and Kingdoms full of Enemies, received the Goſpel; but the reaſon of this wonderful ſucceſs is given us in *Mark* 16. 20. *They went out and preached every where, the Lord working with them.* 'Tis ſweet and proſperous working in fellowſhip with Chriſt: The Spirit of Chriſt gives a manifold aſſiſtance to his Miniſters in their work; 'tis he that guides and directs their minds in the choice of thoſe Subjects wherein they labour with ſuch ſucceſs to their Hearers. He dictates the Matter, influences their Affections, guides their Lips, follows home their Doctrine with ſucceſs. And this is a ſpecial uſe and end of Chriſt's Preſence with his Miniſters and Ordinances.

3. The ſpiritual Preſence of Chriſt is neceſſary for the preparation and opening of the Peoples hearts to receive and embrace the Goſpel to Salvation; not a Heart will open to receive Chriſt till the Spirit of Chriſt unlock them. *Paul* and

*Timothy* were extraordinarily called to preach the Goſpel at *Macedonia*, there *Lydia* was converted; but how? Not by their Skill or Eloquence, but by the Spirit's Influence; *The Lord opened the Heart of Lydia*, Acts 16. 14. The Church could not be propagated without Converſion; Converſion could never be wrought without Chriſt's Influence and ſpiritual Preſence. So that this Preſence is of abſolute neceſſity; the Church cannot ſubſiſt, nor the great ends of Ordinances be attained without it.

Infer. 1. *Is Chriſt really preſent in all Goſpel-Adminiſtrations, how awfully ſolemn then is every part of Goſpel-Worſhip? we having to do with Chriſt himſelf, and not with Men only, in Goſpel-Ordinances.* Happy were it, if under this Conſideration all our People did receive the Word we preach, as the *Theſſalonians* did, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. not as the Word of Man, but as the Word of God; then it would work effectually in us as it did in them. But alas! We have looſe and low apprehenſions of the Word; we come to judg the Gifts of the Speaker, not to have our Minds informed, our Conſciences ſearched, our Luſts mortified, and our Lives regulated. But O that Men would realize the Preſence of Chriſt in Ordinances, and ſeriouſly conſider that Word of his, *Rev.* 2. 23. *All the Churches ſhall know that I am he which ſearcheth the Reins and Hearts, and I will give to every one of you according to your Works.*

How would it compoſe vain and wandring Hearts unto holy ſeriouſneſs! O if Men would but conſider that they are before the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as *Cornelius* and his Family did, *Act.* 10. 33. *We are all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.* If they would conſider the Word as the executioner of God's eternal Decrees, which returns not in vain, but accompliſhes that whereto God ſends it, *Iſa.* 55. 11. and eventually proves the ſavor of Life or Death eternal to them that ſit under it, 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. In a word, were it but conſidered as the Rule by which its Hearers ſhall be judged in the great day, *Joh.* 12. 48. then how would men tremble at the Word? What mighty effects would it have upon their Hearts? How would it run and be glorified? But alas, as *Job* ſpeaks, Job 9. 11. *He goeth by me, and I ſee him not; he paſſeth on alſo, but I perceive him not.* Few realize the ſpiritual Preſence of Chriſt in Ordinances.

*Infer.* 2. If Chriſt be really preſent with his Churches and Ordinances, *how vain are all attempts of Enemies to ſubvert and deſtroy them?* That Promiſe, *Mat.* 28. *ult.* ſuppoſes the continuance of a Goſpel Church Miniſtry to the end of the World, elſe there would be a Promiſe without a Subject: as *de jure*, there ought to be a Church, ſo *de facto* there ſhall be a Church with Miniſters and Ordinances, let Satan and Antichriſt do their worſt. I do not ſay this Promiſe ſecures this or that particular Church or Nation, for the preſence of Chriſt is moveable from one place to another, but ſtill the Church is ſafe. And here are three things that ſecure it againſt all hazards.

1. The invaluable Treaſures God hath lodged in the Church, *viz.* his *Truths*, his *Worſhip*, and his *Elect*; ſuch a precious Cargo ſecures the Veſſel that carries it, whatever Storms or Tempeſts may befal it.

2. The Covenant and Promiſe of God with the Church, is its abundant ſecurity: *Mat.* 16. 18. *Upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.* The faithfulneſs of God is pawned for his Peoples ſecurity. If the Church fail, God's faithfulneſs muſt fail with it.

3. But above all, the Preſence of Chriſt, in the midſt of it, puts it out of all danger of miſcarrying. In that Promiſe, *Lo, I am with you alway*, are found all munitions and fortifications whatſoever: Here we have his Eye of Providence, his Hand of Power, and whatſoever elſe is needful to ſupport and ſecure it. God accounts his Preſence our ſafety, *Exod.* 14. 25. The Enemies of God and his People account it ſo too; and ſhall it not be ſo in our own account? Provoke not the Lord Jeſus to withdraw his Preſence, and fear not the conſultations and oppoſitions of Hell or Earth.

Infer. 3. *From this ſpiritual Preſence of Chriſt all his faithful Miniſters ſhould draw incouragement amidſt the manifold difficulties and diſcouragements they daily encounter in his Work and Service.* Chriſt is with them, they work in fellowſhip with him, let them not be diſmaid.

The difficulties and diſcouragements the Miniſters of Chriſt meet with are great and many; and the more faithful and ſucceſsful any of them are in their Maſters Work, the fiercer oppoſition they muſt expect: beſides all the diſcouragements riſing out of their own Hearts, which are not a few, they muſt encounter,

Firſt, The oppoſition of Enemies from abroad. Secondly, the obſtinacy and ſtubbornneſs of the Hearts they work upon. Satan is a jealous Prince, and will raiſe all manner of outcries and oppoſitions againſt thoſe heavenly *Heralds*, that come to proclaim a new Prince in his Dominions, and withdraw his miſerable Subjects from their curſed Allegiance to him. What is it to preach the Goſpel (ſaid *Luther*) but to derive the fury of the World upon the Head of that Preacher? But this would be eaſily ſupportable, did our Work but proſper upon the Hearts of our Hearers. But this alas, is the killing conſideration of all; we know the worth of Souls, and how great a ſervice it is to ſave them from death, *James* 5. 20. We alſo know the Terrors of the Lord, which excite our utmoſt endeavours to perſuade Men, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. We feel the compaſſions of Chriſt ſtirring in our own bowels, which makes us long after their Salvation, *Phil.* 1. 8. We preach, we pray, yea, we travail again as it were in birth until Chriſt be formed in them, *Gal.* 4. 19. And when we have done all, we find their Hearts as Iron and Braſs, *Jer.* 6. 28. We mourn in ſecret when we cannot prevail, and ofttimes our Hands hang down with diſcouragement, and we are ready to ſay with the Prophet, *Jer.* 20. 9. *We will ſpeak no more in his Name.* But here is our relief, under all diſcouragements from abroad and at home; the Work is Chriſt's, the Power is his, he is with us, and we are Workers together with him. There was a time when three thouſand Souls were born to Chriſt at one Sermon, it may be now three thouſand Sermons may be preach'd and not a Soul converted: Yet let us not be diſcouraged, a time of eminent Converſions is promiſed, and to be expected in theſe latter days, when the living Waters of the Goſpel ſhall make every thing to live whither they come, *Ezek.* 47. 9. and when the Fiſhers, *i. e.* the Miniſters of Chriſt, ſhall not fiſh with Angles as now they do, taking now one, then another ſingle Convert, but ſhall ſpread forth their Nets, and incloſe multitudes at a draught; *When they ſhall flee as a Cloud, and as the Doves to their Windows.* God now opens a door of opportunity beyond expectation; O that the Hearts of Miniſters and People were ſutably enlarged, and the People made willing in the day of his Power.

Infer. 4. *Hence we alſo infer the great dignity of the Miniſterial Office, and the ſutable Reſpect and Honour due to all Chriſt's faithful Miniſters.* The Lord Jeſus himſelf is repreſented by them, they ſtand in his ſtead, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. his Authority is clothed upon them; the Honors and Diſhonours given them, redound to the Perſon of Chriſt. The *Galatians* received *Paul* as an Angel of God, even as Chriſt Jeſus, *Gal.* 4. 14.

Yet how have their Perſons and Office been vilified and deſpiſed in this degenerate age! How many Learned, Pious, Laborious, Peaceful Miniſters of Chriſt have in this age been hunted up and down the World as wild Beaſts, been made the filth and offſcouring of all things to this duy? 1 *Cor.* 4. 13. The word ſignifies that dirt and filth which *Scavengers* rake together in the Streets, to be carried to the Dunghil. No doubt but *Satan* drives a great deſign in this to invalidate their Miniſtry, diſcourage their Labours, and break their Hearts: but Jeſus Chriſt will ſupport us under all theſe abuſes, wipe off the dirt thrown at us for his name ſake, and reſerve ſome of us for better days.

Infer. 5. *Is Chriſt preſent in his Ordinances, what a ſtrong engagement then lies upon you all to attend and wait aſſiduouſly upon the Miniſtry of the Word, and to bring all yours, that are capable, there to wait upon Chriſt with you?* We read, in the days of Chriſt's fleſh, when he performed his miraculous Cures upon the Sick, what thronging there was after him; how Parents bought their Children, Maſters their Servants, preſſing in multitudes, untiling the Houſe to let down their Sick to him, *Luke* 12. Ah, ſhall Men be ſo earneſt for a Cure for their Bodies, and ſo indifferent for their Souls? 'Tis true, the Spirit of Chriſt is not tied by any neceſſity to act always with the Word; he acts as an arbitrary Agent; *John* 3. 8. *The Wind bloweth where it liſteth:* but it is engagement enough to wait continually upon his Ordinances, that he ſometimes graciouſly and effectually concurreth with them. 'Tis good to lie in the way of the Spirit, and there is a bleſſing pronounced upon them that wait continually at his Gates, *Prov.* 8. 34. O therefore neglect no ſeaſon within your reach, for who knows but it may be the ſeaſon of life to thy Soul?

Infer. 6. *What an unſpeakable loſs is that of the Goſpel, ſeeing the preſence of Chriſt comes and goes with it?* When the Goſpel departs, the Spirit of Chriſt departs with it from among Men; no more Converſions, in God's ordinary way, are then to be expected: well therefore might the Lord ſay, Hoſea 9. 12. *Wo to them when I depart from them.* The Spirit may in ſome ſenſe depart, whilſt the Ordinances are left ſtanding for a time among the People; but then expect no ſuch bleſſings or benefits from them. But when God takes away Ordinances and Spirit too, wo indeed to that People; and are there no Sins amongſt us preſaging ſuch a Judgment? O *England*, reflect upon thy barrenneſs under it; where be the fruits anſwerable to ſuch precious means? The Goſpel is a golden Lamp, the Graces of the Spirit communicated by it are golden Oil; as in that ſtately viſion, *Zach.* 4. Will God maintain ſuch a Lamp, fed with ſuch precious Oil, for Men to trifle and play by?

And no leſs ominous and portentous is that bitter enmity to the Goſpel and the ſerious Profeſſors of it, which (I cannot ſpeak without horror) is every where found among us; this great hatred brings on the days of viſitation, and the days of recompence with a ſwift and dreadful motion upon any People, *Hoſea* 9. 7.

Infer. 7. *If Chriſt be preſent by way of Spirit and Energy in his Ordinances, then there is no reaſon to deſpair of the Converſion and Salvation of the greateſt of Sinners that yet lie dead under the Goſpel.* What tho their Hearts be hard, their Underſtandings dark, and their Wills never ſo perverſe and obſtinate? all muſt give way and open in the day of Chriſt's power, when his Spirit joins himſelf with the Word. This makes it an irreſiſtible Word; 'tis glorious to obſerve the hearts of Publicans and Harlots opening and yielding to the voice of Chriſt, *Mat.* 21. 31. What were thoſe 3000 Perſons prickt at the heart by *Peter's* Sermon, *Acts* 2. 36. but the very Men that with wicked hands had crucified the Lord Jeſus? And what were the converted *Corinthians*, but *Idolaters* turned from dumb Idols, *Whoremongers*, *Adulterers*, *Effeminate?* &c. 1 *Cor.* 12. 2. and 6. 11. God hath his Elect among the vileſt of Men: The Goſpel will find them out, and draw them home to Chriſt, when the Spirit of Chriſt animates and bleſſeth it. Well might the Apoſtle therefore ſay, that the Goſpel preached with the Holy Ghoſt, ſent down from Heaven, is an object worthy for Angels to behold with admiration, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. What tho Satan has ſtrongly fortified their Souls againſt Chriſt, with ignorance, prejudice and enmity; yet the weapons of our warfare are mighty thro God to pull down theſe ſtrong holds. Deſpair not therefore of your carnal and dead-hearted relations, bring them to the Goſpel upon the encouragement of theſe words of Chriſt, *John* 5. 25. *The hour cometh, yea and now is, that the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear it ſhall live.*

Infer. 8. *Is Chriſt ſpiritually preſent in his Ordinances, O then what an indeared affection ſhould every gracious Soul bear to the Ordinances of God!* They are the walks of Chriſt and his Spirit, the appointed times and places for your meeting and Communion with him; there your Souls firſt met with Chriſt, there you began your acquaintance with him; there you have had many ſweet converſes with him ſince that day; they were the ſeed of your Regeneration, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. the Bread of Life by which your Souls have been ſuſtained ever ſince, and therefore to be more eſteemed by you than your neceſſary food, *Job* 23. 12. Here you have found the richeſt Cordials to revive and recover your drooping Spirits, when ready to ſink away in a faint fit under ſin within you, and afflictions upon you. No wonder *David's* Soul even fainted for the Courts of God, *Pſal.* 119. 50. and that *Hezekiah* deſired a ſign on his ſick bed, that he ſhould go up to the Houſe of the Lord. Here are the choiceſt comforts of the Saints upon Earth; all our freſh Springs are in *Zion.* What a Dungeon, what a barren Wilderneſs were this World without them! Prize the Ordinances, love the Ordinances, wait aſſiduouſly upon the Ordinances, and pray for the liberty and efficacy of the Goſpel, that it may ſet no more in your days, nor in the days of your Poſterity.

# SERMON III.

## Revel. III. 20.

*Behold I* [*ſtand*] *at the door, and knock,* &c.

Having finiſhed Chriſt's ſolemn Preface, and cleared the manner of his Preſence in his Churches and Ordinances: I now come to a third obſervation, which is neceſſarily implied in theſe words, *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock*; and that ſad Truth therein implied is this,

Doct. 3. *That the Hearts of Men are naturally lockt up and faſt barr'd againſt Jeſus Chriſt their only Saviour.*

If it were not ſo, what need were there of all that pains and patience, uſed and exerciſed by Chriſt, in waiting patiently, and knocking importunately, for entrance into the Hearts of Men? To keep a clear method in this Point, three things muſt be ſtated in the doctrinal Part.

1. How it appears the Hearts of Men are thus ſhut up.
2. What are thoſe Locks and Bars that ſhut them up.
3. That no Power of Man can remove theſe Bars.

Firſt, That all Hearts are naturally ſhut and made faſt againſt Chriſt, is a ſad but certain truth; we read, *John* 1. 11, 12. *He came unto his own, and his own received him not,* &c. He came unto his own People, from whoſe Flock he ſprang up; a People to whom he had been prefigured in all the Sacrifices and Types of the Law, and in whom they might all clearly diſcern the accompliſhment of them all. His Doctrines and his Miracles plainly told them who he was, and whence he came; yet few diſcerned or received him as the Son of God. Chriſt found the Doors of Mens Hearts generally ſhut againſt him, ſave only a few whoſe Hearts were opened by the Almighty Power of God, in the way of Faith, *verſ.* 12. Theſe indeed received him, but all the reſt excluded and denied entrance to the Son of God. So again, *John* 5. from *v.* 33 to 40. Chriſt reaſons with them, and gives undeniable Demonſtrations, that he was the *Meſſiah* come to ſave them; proves it from the teſtimony of *John,* verſ. 33. *Ye ſent unto* John, *and he bare witneſs unto the Truth:* Tells them the deſign of his coming among them was their Salvation, *verſ.* 34. ſhews them the great Seal of Heaven, his uncontroulable Miracles, *verſ.* 36. *The Works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me:* And if that were not enough, he reminds them of the immediate teſtimony given of him from Heaven, *verſ.* 37. *The Father himſelf which hath ſent me, hath born witneſs of me.* He did ſo at his *Baptiſm,* Mat. 3. 17. *And lo a voice from Heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed.* And ſo again, at his transfiguration upon the holy Mount, *Mat.* 17. 5. *While he yet ſpake, behold a bright cloud overſhadowed them; and behold a voice out of the cloud, which ſaid, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him.* He bids them ſearch the Scriptures, and critically examine his perfect correſpondence to them, *John* 5. 39. Enough one would think to open the door of every Man's Underſtanding and Heart to receive him with fulleſt ſatisfaction: and yet after all behold the unreaſonable obſtinacy and reſiſtance of their Hearts againſt him, *verſ.* 40. *Ye will not come unto me that ye might have Life.*

Not a Soul will open, with all the reaſons and demonſtrations in the World, till the Almighty power of God be put forth to that end. If another come in his own Name (ſaith he, *verſ.* 43.) *him will ye receive*; Any body rather than the Son of God: Every cheat can impoſe upon you eaſily, 'tis to me only your Hearts have ſuch ſtrong averſions. Now there is a twofold ſhutting up of the Heart againſt Jeſus Chriſt.

1. Natural.
2. Judicial.

1. *Natural.* Every Soul comes into this World ſhut up and faſt cloſed againſt the Lord Jeſus. The very Will of Man, which is the freeſt and moſt arbitrary faculty, comes into the World barr'd and bolted againſt Chriſt, *Rom.* 8. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God, for it is not ſubject unto the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* Phil. 2. 13. *'Tis God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure.* This is a diſmal effect of the Fall. Who feels not ſtrong averſations, violent rebellions, and obſtinate reſiſtances in his own Heart, when moving towards Chriſt in the firſt weak and trembling acts of Faith?

2. There is a *Judicial* ſhutting up of the Heart againſt Chriſt. This is a ſore and tremendous ſtroke of God, puniſhing former rebellions: *Pſal.* 81. *Iſrael would have none of me, ſo I gave them up to their own Hearts luſts.* This looks like a prelude of Damnation, a very near preparation to ruin. *Iſrael would have none of me,* there's the *Natural* ſhutting up of the Heart; *ſo I gave them up,* there's the *Judicial* ſhutting up of the Heart; they would not hear, they ſhall not hear. O fearful

Judgment! Thus the Lord gave up the Heathens, *Rom.* 1. 26. they had abuſed their natural light, and now their minds are *judicially* darkned; given up to a ſottiſh and injudicious mind, not able to diſtinguiſh Duty from Sin, Safety from Danger; a mind that ſhould elect the worſt things, and reprobate the beſt. This was the reprobate mind unto which God gave them up; what ſadder word can the Lord ſpeak than this, unleſs it be, *Take him Devil!* 'Tis true, thoſe that God ſhuts up he can open, and thoſe whom Juſtice ſhuts up, Mercy can ſet free, but it is beyond all the power of Angels and Men to do it: *Job* 12. 14. *He ſhutteth up a Man, and there can be no opening.* Theſe two cloſures of the Heart are not always found together in the ſame Subject, and bleſſed be God they are not. Chriſt meets with many a repulſe, and indures with much patience the gainſayings of ſinners, before he pronounces that dreadful ſentence upon them, *Iſa.* 6. 9, 10. *Go and tell this People, Hear ye indeed, but underſtand not; and ſee ye indeed, but perceive not: Make the heart of this people fat,* &c.

But when it comes to this once, dreadful is the caſe of ſuch Souls; and none are in greater danger of this Spiritual Judicial ſtroak of God, than thoſe that have ſat long under the Light, rebelling againſt it. That's the firſt thing, The Hearts of Men by nature are lockt and ſhut up againſt Chriſt.

Secondly, In the next place, let us examine what thoſe Locks and Bars are which oppoſe and forbid Chriſt's entrance into the Hearts of poor Sinners. And they will be found to be,

1. Ignorance.
2. Unbelief.
3. Pride.
4. Cuſtom in ſin.
5. Preſumption.
6. Prejudices againſt the ways of Holineſs.

Bars enough to ſecure the Soul in Satan's poſſeſſion, and fruſtrate all the deſigns of mercy, except an Almighty Power from Heaven break them aſunder.

1. The firſt Bar making faſt the Soul of Man againſt Chriſt, is *Ignorance*, that *obex infernalis*, that helliſh Bolt, which effectually keeps Chriſt out of the Soul.

If Knowledg be the *Key* that opens the Heart to Chriſt, as it's plain it is from *Luk.* 11. 52. where Chriſt denounceth a wo to them that took away *the Key of Knowledg*; then *Ignorance* muſt needs be the ſhutter that makes faſt the door of the Heart againſt Chriſt. Upon this ground Chriſt told the Woman of *Samaria*, that her Infidelity grew upon the root of her Ignorance; Joh. 4. 10. *If thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldſt have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.* Ah ſinners, did you but know what a Chriſt he is that is offered to your Souls in the Goſpel; did you ſee his beauty, fulneſs, ſutableneſs, and feel your own neceſſities of him, all the World could not keep you from him: You would break through all reproaches, all ſufferings, all ſelf-denials, to come into the enjoyment of him. But alas, it is with you as it was with thoſe, *Cant.* 5. 9. *What is thy beloved* (ſay they to the Spouſe) *more than another beloved, that thou doſt ſo charge us?* Unknown Excellencies attract not: Ignorance is Satan's Scepter, which he ſways over all his Kingdom of darkneſs, and holds his Vaſſals in miſerable bondage to him: Hence the Devils are called, *Eph.* 6. 12. *The rulers of the darkneſs of this World.* Alas, were the Eyes of ſinners but opened to ſee their woful ſtate, and their remedy in Chriſt, he could never hold them in ſubjection one day longer; they would break away from under his cruel Government, and run over by thouſands to Chriſt: for ſo they do as ſoon as ever God opens their eyes; in the ſame hour they are turned from darkneſs to light, *Acts* 28. 16. they are alſo turned from the power of Satan to God. O that you did but know the worth of your Souls, the dreadful danger they are in, and the fearful wrath that hangs over them, the willingneſs and ability of Chriſt to ſave them, you could not ſleep one night longer in the ſtate you are: The next cry would be, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Who will ſhew me the way to Chriſt? Help Miniſters, help Chriſtians, yea, help Lord; theſe would be the laments and cries of them that are now ſecure and quiet. But the God of this World hath blinded the Eyes of them that believe not: No cries for a Phyſician, becauſe no ſenſe how their Souls are *ſtabbed* by ſins of *commiſſion*, and *ſtarved* by ſins of *omiſſion.* O that the great Phyſician would once apply his excellent Eye-ſalve to your Underſtandings, which are yet darkned with groſs ignorance both of your miſery and remedy.

2. The ſecond Bar or Lock that ſhuts Chriſt out of Mens Souls, is the ſin of *Unbelief*; this is one of the ſtrongeſt holds of Satan wherein he truſteth; this is a ſin that not only locks up the Heart of a ſinner, but alſo binds up the Hand of a Saviour: *Mat.* 13. 58. *He could do no mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief.*

It obſtructed his miraculous Works when he was on Earth, and it obſtructs his gracious Works now he is in Heaven. A Saviour is come into the World, but poor Unbeliever, thy Soul can neither have Union nor Communion with him till this Bar of thy unbelief be removed. The Goſpel is come among us with mighty Arguments to convince, and powerful Motives to perſwade, but little ſaving effect follows; its main deſign is to many fruſtrated, and all this thro unbelief, ſhutting up and hardning Mens Hearts under it. The Word preached did not profit them becauſe of their unbelief. Ah curſed Bar! which ſhuts up thy Heart, ſhuts out thy Saviour, and will effectually ſhut thee out of Heaven except the Almighty power of God break it aſunder. *They could not enter in becauſe of unbelief.* The ruin of Souls is laid at the door of Unbelief; 'tis the damning ſin, *Mark* 16. 16. and truly called ſo, becauſe no other ſin could damn but in virtue of this ſin. That's the ſecond Bar to Chriſt.

3. The Third Bar denying entrance to Chriſt into the Hearts of ſinners is *Pride*, and ſtoutneſs of Spirit. The natural Heart is a proud Heart; it lives upon its own ſtock, it cannot ſtoop to a ſincere and univerſal renunciation of its own righteouſneſs: *Being ignorant of the righteouſneſs of God, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs,* οὐκ ὑπετάγησαν, *they have not ſubmitted to the righteouſneſs of God*, Rom. 10. 3. Pride ſtiffens the Will that it cannot ſtoop or condeſcend to declare their own emptineſs, diſcover their own ſhame, and live wholly on the righteouſneſs of another. Proud Nature had as live be damned as deny it ſelf in ſuch a point as this is: this makes Faith ſo exceeding difficult, becauſe it involves ſuch deep

points of ſelf-denial in it; to give up all to Chriſt, to draw all from Chriſt, and to be willing to part with all for Chriſt. What Will can be brought to a deliberate conſent to ſuch things as theſe, unleſs an omnipotent Power bow it? 'Tis natural to Men rather to eat a brown cruſt, or wear a coarſe ragged Garment which they can call their own, than to feed upon the richeſt Dainties, or wear the coſtlieſt Garments which they muſt receive as an alms or gift from another. O how hard is it to ſubdue this pride of the Heart, even after light and conviction is come into the Soul; to convince Men of their undone condition, and the abſolute neceſſity of another and higher Righteouſneſs than their own? When Souls are in a treaty with Chriſt, and the match is almoſt made; this is the ſin that makes the laſt oppoſition. Feign would they come to Chriſt, ten thouſand Worlds for a Chriſt; but yet they think they muſt not approach him without ſome qualifications which are yet wanting. But Soul, if ever Chriſt and thou conclude the match, thou muſt deny Self even in this, the moſt refined form and intereſt of it, and come as *Abraham* did, naked and empty-handed to him that juſtifieth the ungodly. Down with this Houſe Idol, thy ſelf, thy righteous ſelf, trimmed up like another *Agag* with ſuch precious pretences of humility.

4. The fourth Bar forbidding Chriſt's entrance into the Soul is *cuſtom in ſin*. Sin hath ſo fixed it ſelf by long continuance in the Soul, the Soul is ſo ſettled and confirmed in its courſe, that all arguments and perſuaſions to change our way are ſwept away by the power of cuſtom, as ſtraws and feathers are by the rapid courſe of a mighty torrent: *Jer.* 13. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots? then may ye alſo do good that are accuſtomed to do evil.* Soap and Nitre may as ſoon make a *Blackmoor* white, or fetch the ſpots out of the *Leopards* skin (which are not accidental, but connate) as the reaſonings of Men can prevail to remove the mighty power of cuſtomary ſin. Phyſicians find it a hard thing to cure a *Cachexia* or ill habit of body. 'Tis a grave and ſerious note of *Seneca*, *Ateneris aſſueſcere, multum eſt*: 'Tis a great matter to be accuſtomed this way or that from our Childhood; every repeated act of ſin confirms and ſtrengthens the habit; and hence it is that we ſee ſo few Converſions in old Age. It was a wonder in the primitive times that *Marcus Caius Victorius* imbraced Chriſtianity in the ſixtieth year of his age. Take an habituated Drunkard, a ſelf-righteous *Moraliſt*, lay before them the neceſſity of a change, and you ſhall find it as eaſy to ſtop the courſe of a River with the breath of your Mouth, as to ſtop them in a cuſtomed courſe of ſinning. That's the fourth Bar.

5. The Fifth Bar oppoſing and reſiſting Chriſt's entrance into the Soul is the ſin of *Preſumption*; this is the ſin that parts Chriſt and thouſands of Souls in the World; preſuming, they hope, and hoping, they periſh: when Men preſume their condition is ſafe already, their Souls never make out after a Saviour. This was the ruin of *Laodicea*; Rev. 3. 17. *Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing, and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* This damning Preſumption is diſcovered in three things, (1.) Many think they have that grace which they have not, miſtaking the *ſimilar* for the *ſaving* Works of the Spirit; a fatal miſtake never rectified with many thouſands till it be too late. (2.) They preſume to find that mercy in God, which they will never find; for all the ſaving mercies of God are diſpenſed to Men through Chriſt in the way of Regeneration and Faith. (3.) They preſume upon that time for Repentance and Faith hereafter, which their Eyes ſhall never ſee. And thus Preſumption doth lock up the Heart againſt Chriſt, and leaves ſinners periſhing even in the preſence of a Savionr. They make a bridg of their own ſhadow, and ſo periſh in the Waters.

6. The ſixth and laſt ſin barring up the Heart againſt Chriſt, is a ſtrong prejudice againſt Holineſs, and the ſtrict duties of Religion. Thus in the very infancy of Chriſtianity the World was ſcared and driven off from Religion by the common prejudices that lay upon the Profeſſors of it: *As concerning this Sect, we know that every where it is ſpoken againſt*, Acts 28. 22.

Thus *Juſtin Martyr* complains, that Chriſtians were every where condemned διὰ τὴν φήμην, by common fame; and upon this account Chriſt pronounces a wo upon the World becauſe of offences, *Mat.* 18. 7. Alas! it will be the ruin of thouſands; ſome have ſuckt in ſuch prejudicate Opinions and vile Notions of Religion, and its Profeſſors, as makes them irreconcilable enemies to it. Satan hath dreſt it up in their fancies in ſuch an odious form and repreſentation, that makes them loath both name and thing. Theſe prejudices are drawn from various things; ſometimes from the neceſſary duties of Chriſtianity, which are laid as crimes upon the people of God: *When I wept, and chaſtned my Soul with faſting, that was to my reproach*, Pſal. 69. 10. Sometimes the groundleſs and malicious ſlanders and inventions of the Enemies of Chriſtianity, are the occaſions of real prejudices to the World; *Come let us deviſe devices againſt* Jeremiah, *and let us ſmite him with the Tongue*, Jer. 18. 18. Sometimes the innocent and ſerious Profeſſors of godlineſs are cenſured and condemned for hypocritical Profeſſors ſakes, who never heartily eſpouſed Religion. And laſtly, the ways of Holineſs ſuffer for the ſlips and infirmities of weak Chriſtians, who commonly give too many occaſions to diſguſt the World againſt the ways of God.

By theſe things multitudes are kept off from attendance upon the means of Grace, and multitudes more have their Hearts ſhut up from receiving any ſaving benefit under them.

Theſe are the common Bars and Locks by which the ſtrong Man armed ſecures his poſſeſſion in the Souls of ſinners; and theſe Bars are too ſtrong for any power beneath the Almighty Power and Arm of God to remove or break. 'Tis ſaid, that the Lord opened a door of Faith to the *Gentiles*, Acts 14. 27. The Arm of the Lord muſt be revealed, or none will open to Chriſt by Faith, *Iſa.* 53. 1.

1. The Iron Bar of the Law, that thundering terrible Law, cannot force open the Heart of an Unbeliever; all the dreadful curſes flying out of its fiery mouth, make no more impreſſion than a Tennis-ball againſt a wall of Marble. You read of them that hear the words of this curſe, yet bleſs themſelves in their Heart, ſaying, they ſhall have peace tho they walk in the imagination of their Hearts, to add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt. *Deut.* 29. 19.

They play with Hell and eternal Torments, ruſh into iniquity as the Horſe ruſheth into the

Battel, act as men in love with their own Death, as thoſe that are at an agreement with Hell. O the beſotting, hardning, infatuating power of Sin!

2. The Doctrine of free Grace cannot in it ſelf remove theſe Bars, and open Mens Hearts to Chriſt; *We have piped unto you, but ye have not danced*, Mat. 11. 17. The melodious and delicious Airs of Grace, Mercy, Peace and Pardon, affect not the dead Hearts of Unbelievers: Like deaf Adders they ſtop their Ears at the voice of the Charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely. Theſe Goſpel-melodies only diſpoſe them to a more quiet ſleep in ſin.

3. No works of Providence are in themſelves ſufficient to open the Hearts of Men to Chriſt. (1.) The Judgments of God cannot do it; thouſands have been made ſick with ſmiting, that yet cannot be made ſick for ſin. *I have conſumed them, but they refuſed to receive correction; they have made their Faces harder than a Rock, they have refuſed to return*, Jer. 5. 3. Meſſengers of Judgment are abroad, ſmiting ſome in their Eſtates, ſcattering in one day the labour of many years; and therein giving a warning-blow at the Conſcience to make ſure of Chriſt, and the World to come, ſince their comfort and happineſs is ſcattered in this World. Some are ſmitten in their deareſt Relations, Death knocks at their doors, and carrys out the delight of their Eyes, and with the ſame admoniſheth their Souls to place their happineſs in more durable comforts: Some are ſmitten in their Bodies with Diſeaſes, giving warning of the near approach of their latter end, and bidding them prepare for another habitation; but all in vain. (2.) No Mercies of God are in themſelves ſufficient to open the obſtinate Hearts of Sinners to Chriſt. God hath heapt up Mercies by multitudes upon many of you; all theſe mercies of God lead you to repentance, *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. They take you in a friendly way by the hand, and thus talk with you: Ah ſinner! how canſt thou grieve and diſhonour that God that thus feedeth, clotheth and comforteth thee on every ſide? Do you thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh People and unwiſe? Yet all will not do, neither Judgments nor Mercies can afright or allure the carnal Heart to Jeſus Chriſt. 'Tis his Spirit, his Almighty power alone that opens theſe everlaſting Gates, and makes theſe ſtrong Bars give way and fly at his voice.

Infer. 1. *Behold here the diſmal ſtate of Nature, the woful condition of all unregenerate Souls; Chriſt the Redeemer ſhut out, Sin and Satan ſhut in.* This is the horrid ſtate of Nature ſhut up in unbelief, *Rom.* 4. 32. Ah Lord, what a condition is this! We ſhould certainly account it an unſpeakable miſery to be ſhut into a Houſe haunted by the Devil, where we ſhould be continually ſcared and frighted with dreadful noiſes and apparitions; but alas, what is an apparition of the Devil without us, to the inhabitation of the Devil within us? Nay, what is the poſſeſſion of a Body, to Satan's poſſeſſion of the Soul? Yet this is the very caſe of the Unregenerate, *Luke* 11. 21. The ſtrong Man armed keepeth the Palace, till Chriſt diſpoſſeſs him by Sovereign victorious Grace. Poor wretch, canſt thou ſtart at a ſuppoſed viſion of a Spirit, and not tremble to think that thy Soul is the habitation of Devils? There is a twofold miſery lying upon all Chriſtleſs unregenerated Perſons; Satan is,

1. Their *Ruler* in this World.
2. Their *Tormentor* in that to come.

1. He is their *Ruler* in this World, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of diſobedience, *Epheſ.* 2. 3. Look as the holy Spirit of God dwells and rules in ſanctified Souls, walks in them as in hallowed Temples, guiding and comforting the Souls of the Saints; ſo Satan dwells in unregenerate Hearts, actuating their luſts, inflaming them with his temptations, uſing their faculties and members as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs. And then,

2. He will be their *Tormentor* in the World to come: he that *tempts* now, will *torment* then, *Mat.* 25. 41. *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Flee therefore and eſcape for your lives, ſleep not quietly another Night in ſo diſmal and dreadful eſtate. *If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed.*

Infer. 2. *What a glorious and admirable effect of Sovereign omnipotent Grace is the effectual Converſion of a ſinner unto God!*

If every Heart by Nature be ſecured for Satan under ſo many Locks and Bars, then the opening of any Heart to Chriſt is deſervedly marvelous in our Eyes. You all acknowledg that the opening of the Graves at the Reſurrection will be a glorious diſplay of Almighty Power, and ſo it will: it will be a wonderful thing to behold the Graves opened and the dead raiſed at the voice of the *Arch-Angel* and the Trump of God; but yet give me leave to ſay, That the opening of thy Heart, poor ſinner, to receive Chriſt, is a more glorious work than that of raiſing the dead: It is therefore deſervedly put into the firſt rank of the great myſteries of Godlineſs, that Chriſt is believed on in the World, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. He that well views and conſiders Chriſt, may juſtly wonder that all the Hearts in the enlightned World do not ſtand wide open to embrace him; and he that ſhall conſider the frame and temper of the natural Heart, and how ſtrongly Satan hath intrenched and fortified himſelf in it, may juſtly wonder to hear of a work of Converſion. O brethren, conſider the marvels of Converſion, the wonderful works of God upon the Soul that opens unto Chriſt by Faith.

1. There's a new Eye created in the Mind: *The Son of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding, that we may know him that is true*, 1 Joh. 5. 20. O that Eye, that precious Eye of Faith, which ſhews the Soul as it were a new World, a World of new and raviſhing objects, *Eph.* 5. 8. All the Angels in Heaven, Miniſters, and *Libraries* upon Earth, cannot create ſuch an Eye, give ſuch an Illumination; 'tis only he that *commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, that thus ſhineth into our Hearts, to give the light of the knowledg of the Glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 4. 6.

2. And what a glorious ſupernatural Work is the conviction of the Conſcience by the powerful ſtroak of the ſaving beams of Light upon it? Now the Conſcience, that lay in a dead ſleep, begins to ſtartle and look about it with fear and horror. Life and Senſe is got into it, and now cries, Ah, ſick, ſick, ſick at the heart for Sin, ſick for a Saviour.

3. And no leſs marvelous an effect of the Almighty power is the bowing of the ſtubborn Will ſo efficaciouſly, ſo congruouſly, and ſo determinately and fixedly to the Lord Jeſus.

The Will is efficaciouſly determined ſo as no power of Hell or Nature can reſiſt or fruſtrate that mighty Power which worketh effectually in all them that believe, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 13. Yet it works not by way of compulſion, but in a way congruous and agreeable to the Nature of the Will, *Hoſea* 11. 4. *I drew them with the cords of a Man, with the bands of Love.* Satan bids for the Soul, Chriſt infinitely outbids all his offers; Eternal, ſpiritual, and unſearchable Riches, inſtead of ſenſitive periſhing Injoyments, which determin the choice of the Will in its own natural method, by the ſight of the excelling glory of ſpiritual things. And thus the mighty ſupernatural Power of God opens that Heart which Satan had ſecured ſo many ways againſt Chriſt.

Infer. 3. *Hence it alſo follows, that Man hath no free will of his own to ſupernatural Good.* The Will cannot by its own power open it ſelf to receive Chriſt by faith. When it doth open to him, it is not *virtute innata, ſed illata*; not by its natural power, but by the power of God upon it. The admirers of Nature talk much of the Sovereignty, Virginity, and Liberty of the Will, as if it alone had eſcaped the Fall, and that no more but a moral Swaſion is needed to open it to Chriſt; that is, that God need do no more to ſave Men than the Devil doth to damn them. But if ever God make you ſenſible what the work of ſaving Converſion is, you will quickly find that your Will is lame, its freedom to ſpiritual things gone; you will cry out of a wounded Will, as well as of a dark Head, and a hard Heart. You will quickly find, *That it is God alone that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure*, Phil. 2. 13. That the birth of the new Creature is not of the will of Man, but of God, *John* 1. 13.

Infer. 4. *Learn hence the neceſſity of Converſion in order to Salvation.* Chriſt and Heaven are ſhut up againſt you till your hearts be ſavingly opened unto him. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, you muſt be born again*, John 3. 5. O ſinner, that hard Heart of thine muſt be humbled; thy ſtubborn and refractory Will muſt be bowed; all the powers of thy Soul muſt be unlockt and opened unto Chriſt; he muſt come into thy Soul, or thou canſt never ſee the face of God in peace. *It is Chriſt in you that is the hope of glory*, Col. 1. 27. Till thy Heart be opened, Chriſt with all the hopes of Glory ſtand without thee. And if hopes from the death of Chriſt without us, without the application of his Perſon, be enough to ſave Men, then why are any damned? Conſult 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *Adam*'s ſin damns none but only ſuch as are in him, and Chriſt's righteouſneſs ſaves none but thoſe only that are by faith in him; the eternal purpoſe of the Father, the meritorious death of the Son, puts no Man into the ſtate of Salvation and Happineſs till both be brought home by the Spirit's powerful application in the work of ſaving Converſion. 'Tis good news, good indeed, that Chriſt died for ſinners; 'tis good news that Chriſt is brought to our very doors in the tenders of the Goſpel, and that the Spirit knocks at the door of our Hearts by many convictions and perſwaſions to open to him, and enjoy the unſpeakable benefits of his death: theſe things bring us nigh to Chriſt, the next door to Salvation: and yet all this may be eventually but a dreadful aggravation of our damnation, and will certainly be ſo to them whoſe Hearts are but almoſt opened to Chriſt.

Infer. 5. *See hence the neceſſity of fervent Prayer to accompany the preaching of the Goſpel.* Without the Spirit and Power of God accompanying the Word, no Heart can ever be opened to Chriſt: Alas, ſuch Bars as theſe are too ſtrong for the breath of Man to break. Let Miniſters pray, and the People pray, that the Goſpel may be preached *with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from Heaven*, 1 Pet. 1. 12. It greatly concerns us that preach the Goſpel to wreſtle with God upon our knees, to accompany us in the diſpenſation of it unto the People; to ſteep that Seed we ſow among you in tears and prayers before you hear it: and I beſeech you Brethren let us not ſtrive alone, join your cries to Heaven with ours, for the bleſſing of the Spirit upon the Word. How doth *Paul* beg of the People, as a beggar would beg for an alms at the door, for their aſſiſtance in Prayer, *Rom.* 15. 30. *I beſeech you, brethren, for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye ſtrive together with me in your prayers to God for me.*

For want of ſuch wreſtlings with God in prayer, there is ſo little efficacy in Ordinances. *Martha* told her Saviour, *John* 11. 21. *Lord if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died*; and I may tell you that if the Spirit had been here, your Souls had not remained dead under the Word as they do this day. O when the Sabbath draws near, let fervent cries aſcend from every Family to Heaven, Lord pour out thy Spirit with thy Word; make it mighty thro thy Power to open theſe Gates of Iron, and break aſunder theſe Bars of Braſs.

### *Second Vſe of Exhortation.*

Seeing the Caſe ſtands thus, that all Hearts by nature are barr'd and ſhut up againſt Chriſt; let every Soul do what it can, and ſtrive to its uttermoſt to get the Heart and Will opened to Chriſt: *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate*; Chriſt is at the Door, O ſtrive with your ſelves, as well as with God, now to get it opened, now Salvation is ſo near your Souls.

*Object.* But have you not told us that no ſinner can open his own Heart, nor bow his own Will to Chriſt?

*Anſw.* True, he cannot convert himſelf, but yet he may do many things in order to it, that have a remote tendency to it, which he doth not do; and ſo he periſheth not, becauſe he cannot, but becauſe he will not.

Divers things may be done by poor ſinners with their own Hearts, which are not done; and tho in themſelves they are inſufficient, yet being the way and method in and by which the Spirit of God uſually works, we are bound to do them. As, (1.) Tho it be not in your power to open your hearts to Chriſt, yet 'tis in your power to forbear the external acts of ſin, which faſten your Hearts the more againſt Chriſt: Who forces thine Hands to ſteal, thy Tongue to ſwear or lye? who forces the Cup of exceſs down your throat? (2.) So tho you cannot open your hearts under the Word, yet it is in your power to wait and attend upon the external Duties and Ordinances of the Goſpel: Why cannot thoſe Feet carry thee to the Aſſemblies of the Saints, as well as to an Ale-houſe? (3.) And tho you cannot let the Word effectually into your Hearts, yet certainly you can apply your minds with more attention and conſideration to it than you do. Who forces thine Eyes to wander, or cloſes them with ſleep, when the awful matters of eternal Life and Death are ſounding in thine Ears? (4.) Tho you cannot open your Hearts to embrace Chriſt, yet certainly you can reflect upon your ſelves when the obvious characters of a Chriſtleſs ſtate are plainly held forth before your Eyes: God hath given you a ſelf-reflecting power; *The Spirit of Man knoweth the things of a Man*, 1 Cor. 2. 11. When you hear of Convictions of ſin, compunctions of Heart for ſin, deep concernments of the Soul about its eternal ſtate, hungerings and thirſtings after Chriſt, reſtleſs and anxious Days and Nights about Salvation, others have felt; you can certainly turn in upon your ſelves, and examine whether ever it were ſo with you; and if not, methinks it were not hard to aggravate your own miſery, to take your poor Souls aſide, and bemoan them, ſaying, Ah my poor Soul, canſt thou endure everlaſting burnings? What will become of thee if Chriſt paſs thee by, and his Spirit ſtrive no more with thee? Why can't you throw your ſelves at the Feet of God, and cry for mercy? Prayer is a part of natural Worſhip, diſtreſs uſually puts Men upon it that yet have no Grace, *Jonah* 1. 5. Do but this towards the opening and ſaving of your own Souls, which tho it be not in it ſelf ſufficient, nor puts God under any meritorious obligation or neceſſity to add the reſt; yet it puts you into the way of the Spirit. And is not thy Soul, ſinner, worth as much as this comes to? have you not taken a great deal more pains than this for the trifles of this World? And will it not be a dreadful aggravation of ſin and miſery to all eternity that you periſhed ſo eaſily? Don't you ſee many ſtriving round about you for Chriſt and Salvation, whilſt you ſit ſtill with folded Arms as if you had nothing to do for another World? *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*, Mat. 11. 12.

Why ſhould other Mens Souls be dearer to them than yours unto you? What diſcouragements have you, which other Men have not? Or what encouragements have they, which you have not?

*Object.* Say not, We have no aſſurance our pains ſhall proſper, or our ſtrivings be made effectual to converſion; if there were any promiſe in the Goſpel that ſuch endeavours ſhould be ſeconded from Heaven, and made available to Salvation, then we would ſtrive as long as breath and life ſhould laſt; but all this may be to no purpoſe, we may be Chriſtleſs, and hopeleſs when all is done.

*Sol.* But yet remember it is poſſible God may bleſs theſe weak endeavours, and come in by his Almighty Spirit with them: Nay, it is highly probable that he will do ſo; and is a ſtrong probability nothing with you? Do you uſe to do no actions about your civil callings without an aſſurance of ſucceſs? When the Merchant adventures his Life or Eſtate at Sea, is he ſure of a good return? Or doth he not adventure upon the mere hopes and probabilities of a gainful Voyage? When the Husbandman plows his Land, empties both his bags and purſe upon it, is he ſure of a good harveſt? May not a blaſt come that ſhall defeat all his hopes? Yet he ploweth and ſoweth in hope, and ordinarily God maketh him partaker of his hope; but without ſuch induſtry his expectations would be vain. Away then with vain excuſes, up and be doing in the uſe of all appointed means, and the Lord will be with you.

### *Third Uſe for Trial.*

Before I diſmiſs this Point let us try our ſelves by it, whether God hath opened our Hearts to Chriſt, broken theſe Bars of Ignorance, Unbelief, Cuſtom, Prejudice, *&c.* and the Will ſtand wide open to receive Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.

This is a ſolemn Uſe, the conſequence of it great; O that our faithfulneſs and ſeriouſneſs in the trial might be anſwerable. Try your ſelves by theſe following marks.

*Mark* 1. If your Eyes be not opened to ſee Sin in its vileneſs, and Chriſt in his glory, ſutableneſs, and neceſſity; then ſure your Hearts were never yet effectually opened by the Goſpel. I confeſs mens Eyes may be opened to ſee ſin, and yet their Hearts at the ſame time ſhut up by unbelief againſt Chriſt; but no mans Heart can be opened to Chriſt whilſt his Eyes are ſhut: *John* 6. 40. *This is the will of him that ſent me, that every one which ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting life.* The work of Faith is always wrought in the light of Conviction; the cure of the Heart begins at the Eye of the Mind, *Acts* 26. 18. *To open their Eyes, and turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God.* God opens Mens Hearts by ſhining into them, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. If therefore any man's Eyes be ſtill blinded with Ignorance, Prejudice, *&c.* ſo that he apprehends not his own guilt and miſery, nor ſees the worth and neceſſity of a Saviour; that man's Heart is ſtill under Satan's Lock and Bar, Sin is ſhut in and Chriſt is ſhut out of that man's Soul.

*Mark* 2. No Heart opens to Chriſt by Faith till it be firſt prickt and wounded by Compunction and Humiliation; this Heart-wounding work is always antecedent to the work of Faith. I doubt not but your thoughts fore-run my Diſcourſe to that famous Scripture, *Acts* 2. 37. where *Peter* preaching to thoſe that had crucified Chriſt, and bringing up his Diſcourſe cloſe to their Conſciences, in the application of that Sermon, convincing them not only what a horrid and atrocious crime the crucifying the Son of God was in it ſelf; but alſo charging it home upon them, *Whom you have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and ſlain: When they heard this, they were pricked at the Heart; and cried out, Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do?* Upon this out-cry three thouſand Souls opened in one hour to Chriſt. Now conſider whether your Hearts have been thus prickt and wounded: Hath ſorrow for ſin pierced thy Soul? Vain ſinner, that frothy Heart of thine muſt be made to bleed under Compunctions for ſin, or there will be no room for Chriſt in it. Come Souls, 'tis in vain to flatter your ſelves in your own eyes; reflect upon the frames of your Hearts, call back the days that are paſt, and ſay, When was the *Time*, and where was the *Place* when thou layeſt at the Foot of God ſobbing and mourning upon the account of thy Sins? Did ever God hear ſuch a cry as this from thy Soul? *Ah Lord, my Soul is diſtreſſed, I roll hither and thither for eaſe and comfort, but find none: O the inſupportable weight of Guilt! O the bitterneſs of Sin! My Soul fails under it. Lord undertake for me.* I do not ſay, the degrees of Compunction and Humiliation are equal in all Converts; neither their ſins nor abilities to bear ſorrows for them are equal: but this I ſay, thy Heart muſt ake for ſin, or it will never open to Chriſt; he binds up none but broken hearts, *Iſa.* 61. 1.

*Mark* 3. If Chriſt be come into thy Heart, then the love and delight of every ſin is gone out of thy Heart. Chriſt and the love of ſin cannot dwell together: what Chriſt ſaid to the Soldiers that apprehended him in the Garden, the like he ſaith to every Soul that comes to apprehend him by Faith, *If you ſeek me, let theſe go their way*; away with the ſin thou moſt delighteſt in: Chriſt cannot come in till theſe be gone, *Iſa.* 55. 6, 7, 8. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous Man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Here be the terms of your Acceptation and Salvation plainly laid down, forſake thy ways and thoughts; the *way* notes the external acts of ſin, and the *thoughts* the internal acts, both of contrivance, and delight in ſin: both theſe muſt be forſaken; and that's not all, for this makes up but a negative holineſs. *Let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy.* It is in vain for Men to make the door of Salvation wider than God hath made it; we cannot bring down Chriſt's terms lower than he hath ſet them; if we will not come up to them, Chriſt and we muſt part. And this makes the great ſtruggle, the ſharp debate in the Souls of Converts: O 'tis hard to give up pleaſant and profitable luſts; but away they muſt go, a Bill of Divorce muſt be ſigned for them, or you cannot be eſpouſed to the Lord Jeſus. This will be found to be a harder tug than to part with all externals for Chriſt's ſake.

*Mark* 4. No Heart can open truly to Chriſt that is not made willing upon due deliberation to receive him, with his croſs of ſufferings, and his yoke of obedience, *Mat.* 16. 24. & 11. 29.

An exception againſt either of theſe is an effectual Bar to thy Union with Chriſt; he looks upon that Soul as not worthy of him, that puts in ſuch an exception, *Mat.* 10. 38. If thou judgeſt not Chriſt worth all ſufferings, all loſſes, all reproaches, he judges thee unworthy to bear the name of his Diſciple. So for the duties of obedience, called his yoke; he that will not receive Chriſt's yoke, can never receive his Perſon, nor any benefit by his Blood.

*Mark* 5. Every Heart that opens ſincerely and Evangelically to Chriſt, opens to him in deep humility and ſenſe of its emptineſs and unworthineſs; all ſelf-righteouſneſs is given up as dung and droſs: thus *Abraham* came unto him, at to one that juſtifieth the ungodly, *Rom.* 4. 5. *Now to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his Faith is counted for righteouſneſs.* Yea, here's the true way of Juſtification indeed; where the imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt comes, all ſelf-righteouſneſs vaniſhes before it. By him that worketh not, underſtand not an idle, lazy believer, that takes no care of the duties of obedience; no, no, an idle Faith can never be a ſaving Faith: but the meaning is, he worketh not in a Law-ſenſe, to the ends and intentions of the firſt Covenant; to make up a righteouſneſs to himſelf by his own working, to cover himſelf with a robe of righteouſneſs of his own ſpinning and weaving, a home-made Cloth; no, not a rag of that: Thou muſt receive Chriſt into an empty, naked, unworthy Soul, or not receive him at all. Bleſſed *Paul* heartily rejected all his own righteouſneſs, caſt down that *Houſe-Idol* to the ground, that he might be found in the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt, *Phil.* 3. 8. Caſt that Idol out of door, it ſtands in the way of a better Righteouſneſs. There be divers ways wherein ſinners maintain their own righteouſneſs to their own ruin: there is a groſs, and a more refined ſelf-righteouſneſs; the one more palpable and eaſily liable to conviction, the other much harder to be diſcovered and cured. Ask ſome Men upon what their hopes of Salvation are grounded? and they will tell you, they are juſt in their dealings with Men, and conſtant in their prayers to God, that's all, and therefore they doubt not of their Salvation: Thus they ſubſtitute a righteouſneſs of their own in the room of Chriſt's blood, and are their own *Deſtroyers* by ſeeking this way to be their own *Saviours*. But then there is a more refined way of ſelf-righteouſneſs, dreſt up with ſuch pretences of humility, that Men are hardly to be convinced of it. I pity many poor Souls upon this account, who ſtand off from Chriſt, dare not believe, becauſe they want ſuch and ſuch qualifications to fit them for Chriſt. O ſaith one, could I find ſo much brokenneſs of Heart for ſin, ſo much reformation and power over corruptions, then I could come to Chriſt; the meaning of which is this, if I could bring a price in my hand to purchaſe him, then I ſhould be encouraged to go unto him. Here now lies horrible pride covered over with a veil of great humility: Poor ſinner, either come naked and empty-handed, according to *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Rom.* 4. 5. or expect a repulſe; for Chriſt is not the *Sale*, but the *Gift* of God.

*Mark* 6. Laſtly, Whatever Soul opens ſavingly to Chriſt, it opens finally and everlaſtingly to him; the Heart once opened to Chriſt, muſt ſtand open for ever to him, never to ſhut out Chriſt any more. And here is a very obſervable difference betwixt a Man that comes to Chriſt in a ſudden fright of Conſcience, and parts with him again when that fright is over; and a Man that receiveth Chriſt not to ſojourn, but to dwell in his Heart by faith, *Epheſ.* 3. 17. When Chriſt comes into the Heart, he ſaith, Here will I dwell for ever; and Lord, ſaith the Soul, So I receive thee; this is the day of union, O let me never know a day of ſeparation; let it never be in the power of Life or Death, Angels, Principalities, or Powers, things preſent or to come, to make a ſeparation betwixt thee and me. Soul ſaith Chriſt, thou ſhalt be mine whilſt I am in Heaven; and Lord, ſaith the Soul, I will be thine whilſt I am on Earth. I will never leave thee nor forſake thee, ſaith Chriſt: O my Lord, ſaith the Soul, hold me faſt in thy Hand, that I may never leave nor forſake thee; my Eſtate, Liberty, and Life, may and muſt go; but it is in the fixed purpoſe of my Heart never, never to let thee go. The eſpouſals betwixt Chriſt and the Soul are for ever, *Hoſ.* 2. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea for ever.* And here lies another great difference betwixt the Hypocrite that takes Chriſt with a politick reſerve, that will venture with Chriſt at Sea no farther than he can ſee the ſhore; and the upright Heart that imbarks it ſelf with Chriſt without reſerves, come what will; that ſaith to him, as *Ittai* to *David*, when perſwaded to go back in a time of danger, nay, ſaith he, Where my Lord Jeſus Chriſt is, whether it be in Liberty or in Priſon, in Life or in Death, there alſo will I be. Fleſh may perſwad to a retreat; nay ſaith the Soul, I cannot retreat;

but wherever the truths of Chriſt, the intereſt and glory of Chriſt are, there alſo muſt I be; for upon theſe terms I firſt received him, and opened the door of my Heart to him. Theſe things are no ſurpriſes to me, Chriſt and I have debated them long ago; he dealt fairly with me, and I muſt deal faithfully with him.

Now Brethren, view over theſe ſix Trials: Have your eyes been opened to ſee Sin in its vileneſs, Chriſt in his beauty and neceſſity? Have your hearts been prick'd and wounded with compunction and ſorrow for ſin? Are the loves and delights of ſin gone out of your Souls? Have you no exceptions either to the croſs or yoke of Chriſt? Have you given up all your own righteouſneſs, whether groſs or refined, for dung and droſs, and received Chriſt for ever? Then thy Heart is ſavingly opened to him.

*Fourth Vſe.*

The laſt Uſe that cloſeth this Point, will be Conſolation to all thoſe whoſe Hearts the Lord hath thus opened to receive Chriſt at his knocks and calls of the Goſpel.

Hath God indeed opened any of your Hearts, and made you ſincerely willing to receive Chriſt? then there are ten ſweet Conſolations like ſo many boxes of precious ointment to be poured forth in the cloſe of this diſcourſe upon every ſuch Soul. And the

Firſt *Conſolation* ſhall be this: The opening of any Heart to receive Chriſt, is a clear ſolid Scripture-evidence of the Lord's eternal love to, and ſetting apart that Man for himſelf from all eternity. I do not ſay that every Man whoſe Heart is opened by Faith, is thereupon immediately aſſured and ſatisfied that God hath choſen him to Salvation; but whether he apprehend it or no, the thing in it ſelf is certain and real: conſult 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 4, 5. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God; for our Goſpel came not to you in word only, but alſo in power and in the Holy Ghoſt*, &c. Their election of God was the thing to be proved; but alas, might they ſay, who can know that but God alone? It is among the Divine ſecrets; yes ſaith the Apoſtle, we know it, and by this we know it, for our Goſpel came not unto you in an empty ſound, but in mighty efficacy, effectually opening your Hearts to believe. A more clear and certain evidence of your Election cannot be given in this World. Look again into *Rom.* 8. 30. *Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called; and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified; and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.*

There are two great and raviſhing Truths cleared in this Scripture; the one is this, That the whole number of the called upon Earth is taken out of ſuch as were predeſtinated to Life before the World was. The other is this, That as the whole number of the glorified Saints in Heaven, is made up of Souls called and juſtified upon Earth: ſo the called Soul, that is, the Soul that ſavingly opens to Chriſt by Faith, may from that work of the Spirit upon him, ſolidly reaſon backward to God's electing Love before all time; and forward, to his glorification with God, when time ſhall be no more.

O how ſtrong is the Conſolation flowing out of this glorious work of the Spirit upon our Hearts! That's one thing.

II. *Conſolation.* The opening of the Heart to receive Chriſt is the peculiar effect of the Divine and Almighty Power of God; the Arm of an Angel is too weak to break thoſe ſtrong bars before mentioned. Therefore the exceeding greatneſs of his Power is applied unto this work of believing, *Epheſ.* 1. 19. *And what is the exceeding greatneſs of his Power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty Power which he wrought in Chriſt when he raiſed him from the dead.* Here is Power, the Power of God, the greatneſs of his Power, the exceeding greatneſs of his Power, the very ſame Power which wrought in Chriſt when he raiſed him from the dead; and all this no more than needs to make the Heart of Man open by Faith to receive Chriſt: the only Key that fits the croſs Wards of Man's Will, and effectually opens his Heart, is in the Hand of Chriſt, *Revel.* 3. 7. *He hath the key of* David, *he openeth and no Man ſhutteth.*

How long have ſome of you ſat under able Miniſters, ſearching Sermons, and rouzing Providences, yet all to no purpoſe, till this Almighty Power came with the Word, and then the work was done. *The people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power*, Pſal. 110. 3. What a glorious Power was that which opened Chriſt's grave, when he lay in the Heart of the Earth, with a mighty Stone rolled upon his Sepulcher? And how mighty a Power is that which breaks aſunder all thoſe Bars which kept thy Soul in the ſtate of ſin and death? None feel this Power but thoſe only whom God intendeth for Salvation; and having once wrought this, it is engaged to go through with all the reſt which yet remaineth to be done to perfect thy Salvation.

III. *Conſolation.* The opening of thy Heart to Chriſt is not only an effect of Almighty Power, but ſuch an effect of it, without which all that Chriſt hath done and ſuffered had been of no avail to thy Salvation; neither the eternal Decrees of God, nor the meritorious ſufferings of Chriſt, are effectual to any Man's Salvation, until this work of the Spirit be wrought upon his Heart. The offering up of Chriſt is in its kind and place ſufficient to purchaſe our Redemption, but it is the receiving of Chriſt by Faith that brings home Salvation to our Souls; where there be many concauſes to produce one effect, that effect is not produced until the laſt cauſe have wrought. Thus 'tis here, the moving cauſe, *viz.* the free-grace of God, hath wrought; and the meritorious cauſe, the death of Chriſt, hath alſo wrought; but ſtill the Heart even of an elect Man remaineth under guilt and condemnation, until the Spirit, who is the applying cauſe, have alſo wrought this bleſſed effect we now ſpeak of. It is Chriſt in us, *i. e.* in union with our Souls, which is to us the hope of glory, *Col.* 1. 27. 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. Behold then the laſt ſtroak given in this opening of the Heart by Faith; herein electing Love hath brought home Chriſt with all the purchaſes and benefits of his death into the actual poſſeſſion of thy Soul. O how tranſporting and raviſhing a conſideration is this!

IV. *Conſolation.* In this work, the opening of the Heart by Faith, the great deſign and main intention of the Goſpel is alſo anſwered and accompliſhed. You behold in the Church a glorious frame of Ordinances ſet up by divine Inſtitution, Miniſters appointed to preach Sermons, Sacraments, Prayers, Singing, variety of Ordinances ſet up, excellent gifts given to Men as the fruit of Chriſt's aſcenſion into Heaven. Now what was the deſign of God in the inſtitution of all theſe things, but that by them, as Inſtruments in his hand, our ignorant, dead, unbelieving Hearts might be opened to Chriſt in acts of Repentance and Faith, and built up to a perfect Man? Miniſters are ſent *to open your Eyes, turn you from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God*, Acts 26.18. They are not ſent by Chriſt into this World to get a living, to drive ſo poor a Trade as that for themſelves, but to bring you to Faith, 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. When God's Elect are thus brought in and built up in Chriſt, you ſhall ſee this glorious frame of Ordinances taken down; there will be no more preaching nor hearing, the end of all theſe things being accompliſhed; 1 *Cor.* 15. 24. *Then cometh the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father*, &c. Now the conſideration of the accompliſhment of the great and principal deſign of the Goſpel thus far upon thy Heart, is matter of tranſporting joy; Miniſters may and muſt die, Ordinances may be removed, but this bleſſed effect of them upon thy Soul ſhall never die: God will perfect what he hath begun; that's the fourth Conſolation.

V. *Conſolation.* And then 5*ly*, That day wherein thy Heart is ſavingly opened to receive Chriſt, that very day is Salvation come to thy Soul. When *Zacheus* his Heart was opened to Chriſt, he tells him, *Luke* 19.9. *This day is Salvation come to thy Houſe.* Salvation was come into the World before thou waſt born, yea Salvation was come to thy doors in the tenders of the Goſpel before, but it never came into thy Soul till the day wherein thy Heart opened to Chriſt by Faith. And is not this matter of ſingular conſolation? If Salvation be not, what is? No wonder that the *Eunuch* went home rejoicing when he had received Chriſt by Faith, *Acts* 8. 39. that the *Jaylor* rejoiced with all his Houſe, *Acts* 16. 34. Neither blame, nor wonder at Men for rejoicing, for 'tis the day of their Salvation. 'Tis true, their Salvation is not finiſhed that day, there may be many things yet to be done and ſuffered by them before the compleating of it; but it is begun that day, the foundation is laid in the Soul that day, and the Top-ſtone ſhall be ſet up with ſhouting in due time, crying, Grace, Grace, unto it.

VI. *Conſolation.* The opening of a ſinners Heart to Chriſt makes joy in Heaven, a triumph in the City of our God above: *Luke* 15. 7. *I ſay unto you likewiſe, that joy ſhall be in Heaven over one ſinner that repented, more than over ninety nine juſt perſons which need no repentance.*

As when a young Prince is born, all the Kingdom rejoices, the Conduits run with Wine, and there's all demonſtration of joy and thankfulneſs in every City and Town: 'tis much more ſo in Heaven, when a Soul is born to Chriſt under the Goſpel; 'tis a ſatisfaction to the Heart of the Lord Jeſus who now beholds more of the travel of his Soul, and to all the Angels and Saints, that another Soul is eſpouſed to him.

Beloved, when the Goſpel is effectually brought home by the Spirit to the Heart of a Sinner, and wounds him for Sin, ſends him home crying, O ſick, ſick of Sin, and ſick for Chriſt; the news thereof is preſently in Heaven, and ſets the whole City of God a rejoicing. Chriſt never rejoiced over thee before, thou haſt wounded him and grieved him a thouſand times, but he never rejoiced in thee till now; and that which gives joy to Chriſt may well be matter of joy to thee: that's the ſixth Conſolation.

VII. *Conſolation.* And then 7*ly*, That day thy Heart is unlockt, unbarr'd, and ſavingly opened by Faith, that very day an intimate, ſpiritual, and everlaſting union is made betwixt Chriſt and thy Soul; from that day Chriſt is thine, and thou art his. Chriſt is a great and glorious Perſon, but how great and glorious ſoever he be, the ſmall and feeble Arms of thy Faith may ſurround and embrace him; and thou mayſt ſay with the Church, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his:* for mark what he ſaith in the Text, *If any Man open to me, I will come in to him.* That Soul ſhall be my habitation, there will I dwell for ever. Thus will Chriſt dwell in your Hearts by Faith. What Soul feels not it ſelf advanced by this union with the Son of God? Hereby the Believer becomes a Member of his Body, Fleſh and Bones; this is an honour beſtowed upon thy Soul above and beyond all that honour that ever God beſtowed upon any Angel in Heaven; to them Chriſt is an Head by way of Dominion, but to thee by way of vital influence. Angels are as the *Barons* and *Nobles* of his Kingdom, but the Believer his Spouſe, and all the Angels of Heaven miniſtring Spirits unto ſuch. That's the ſeventh Conſolation.

VIII. *Conſolation.* And then 8*ly*, The opening of thy Heart to Chriſt brings thee not only into union with his Perſon, but into a ſtate of ſweet Soul-enriching communion with him. So he ſpeaketh in the Text, *If any Man open the door, I will ſup with him, and he with me.* Poor Soul, thou haſt lived many years in the World, and never hadſt any communion with God till this day. Chriſt and thy Soul have been ſtrangers till now. 'Tis true, thou haſt had communion with Ordinances, and communion with Saints, but for communion with Chriſt thou couldſt know nothing of it till thou receivedſt him into thy Soul by Faith. Now thou mayſt ſay, *Truly my fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 John 1. 3.

And thenceforth thy communion with Men is pleaſant and deſirable.

IX. *Conſolation.* The opening of a Man's Soul to Chriſt by Faith is a ſpecial and peculiar mercy, which falls to the ſhare but of a very few. God hath done that for thee which he hath denied to millions; *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?* i. e. to how ſmall a remnant in the World, *Iſa.* 53. 1. And the Apoſtle puts the work of Faith among the great myſteries of Godlineſs, among the wonders of Religion, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. *Preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World.*

The ſound of the Goſpel is gone forth into the World; *Many are called, but few are choſen. There were many Widows in* Iſrael, *in the days of* Elias, *but to none of them was* Elias *ſent, ſave unto* Sarepta, *a City of* Sidon, *unto a Woman that was a Widow*, Luke 4.25,26. To allude to this, there were many hundreds that ſat under the ſame Sermon which opened thy Heart to Chriſt, but it may be unto none of them was the Spirit of God ſent that day to open their Hearts by Faith, but unto thee; thou wilt freely acknowledg thy ſelf as unlikely and unworthy as the vileſt ſinner there. O aſtoniſhing mercy!

X. *Conſolation.* And then laſtly, In the ſame day thy Heart opens by Faith to Chriſt, all the treaſures of Chriſt are unlockt and opened to thee. In the ſame hour God turns the key of Regeneration to open thy Soul; the key of free Grace is alſo turned to open unto thee the unſearchable riches of Chriſt; then the righteouſneſs of Chriſt becomes thine to juſtify thee, the Wiſdom of Chriſt to guide thee, the holineſs of Chriſt to ſanctify thee; in a word, he is that day made of God to thee, *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. *All is yours, for you are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's*, 1 Cor. 3. *ult.* And thus I have ſhewed you ſome of thoſe great things God doth for thoſe Souls that will but do this one thing for him, *viz.* open their Hearts to receive Chriſt upon the tenders and terms of the Goſpel.

# SERMON IV.

## Revel. III. 20.

***Behold I* [*ſtand*] *at the Door and knock*, &c.**

THE verb ἕστηκα here rendred *I ſtand*, is of the *preter tenſe*, and would ſtrictly be rendred *I have ſtood*; but being joined with a verb of the *preſent tenſe*, is here rendred *I do ſtand*, a frequent *Hebraiſm* in Scripture: and it notes the continued patience and long-ſuffering of Chriſt; I have ſtood and ſtill do ſtand, exerciſing wonderful patience towards obſtinate ſinners. Which gives us this fourth Obſervation.

Doct. 4. *That great and admirable is the patience of Chriſt in waiting upon trifling and obſtinate Sinners.*

Thus Wiſdom, *i. e.* Chriſt, expreſſes himſelf, *Prov.* 1. 24. *I have called, and ye refuſed*; *I have ſtretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded.* Here you have not only Chriſt's earneſt Calls, but ſutable Geſtures alſo, to gain attention. The ſtretching out of the Hand was a ſignal given to procure attention, *Acts* 21. 40. Yet none regards; and this the Lord doth not once or twice, but all the day long, *Iſa.* 65. 2. ſhewing forth all long-ſuffering, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. In the opening of this Point I will ſhew you,

1. What Divine Patience is.
2. Wherein it is evidenced.
3. Why it is exerciſed towards ſinners.

Firſt, Of the nature of Divine Patience; it is an ability in God not only to delay the execution of his wrath for a time towards ſome, but to delay it in order to eternal Salvation of others. Let me ſpeak to the parts of this deſcription of Divine Patience.

1. It is an ability or power in God, not the effect of Impotence, or want of opportunity: All ſinners are continually within the reach of the Arm of his Juſtice, and he can ſtrike when and where he will. *Eſau* had a revengeful mind againſt *Jacob*, but wanted opportunity, and therefore was forc'd to delay the execution of his conceived wrath, until the days for mourning for his Father were come; and then ſaith he, *I will ſlay my Brother* Jacob, *Gen.* 27. 41. But in God it is a glorious effect of power, *Nah.* 1. 3. *The Lord is ſlow to anger, and great in power.*

The greatneſs of his patience flows from the greatneſs of his power: ſo the Apoſtle ſpeaks, Rom. 9. 22. *What if God willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-ſuffering the Veſſels of wrath, fitted*, or made up *to deſtruction?* And therefore when *Moſes* prays for the exerciſe of Divine Patience towards the provoking *Iſraelites*, he doth it in this form, *Numb.* 14. 17, 18. *And now I beſeech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou haſt ſpoken, ſaying, The Lord is long-ſuffering*, &c. He could exerciſe this Almighty power upon thee, and cruſh thee by it as a Moth is cruſhed; but behold he exerciſes it upon himſelf, in ſtopping the propenſions of his own Juſtice, which daily ſollicit him to cut thee off; 'tis the power of God over his Wrath, bridling and reſtraining it from day to day.

2. This Patience is exerciſed towards ſuch as periſh, in a temporary delay of their damnation; and tho this be but a mere ſuſpenſion of his wrath for a *time*, yet it is a glorious act of Patience in him; as that forecited Text, *Rom.* 9. 22. ſhews. Is it nothing for a ſinner condemned as ſoon as born, to be reprieved ſo many years out of Hell? Thou haſt been provoking him daily and hourly to cut thee off and ſend thee to thy own place; and yet to be on this ſide the everlaſting burnings, this is wholly owing to the riches of his forbearance. Ah, how is God to be admired in this his glorious power over his own wrath! When we look abroad into the World, and ſee every where ſinners ripe for deſtruction, daring the God of Heaven to his face, yet forborn, how admirable is this Power of God!

3. God doth not only exerciſe this Power in a temporary ſuſpenſion of his Wrath againſt ſome, who alas, muſt feel it at laſt; but he delays the execution of his Wrath in a deſign of mercy towards others that they may never feel it, *Iſa.* 48. 8, 9. Thus he bears with his own Elect, all the years of their lives wherein they lay in the ſtate of nature, and went on in a courſe of rebellion againſt God; and this long-ſuffering of God towards them proves their Salvation, as you have it in 2 *Pet.* 3. 15. *And account that the long-ſuffering of our Lord is Salvation.* What's the meaning of that? Ah! Chriſtian, thou mayſt eaſily know the meaning of it, without turning over many *Commentaries*; thou art now in Chriſt, ſafely eſcaped out of the danger of Wrath to come; but thou oweſt thy Salvation to the patience and long-ſuffering of God towards thee. For what if he had cut thee off in the days of thy ignorance and rebellion againſt him (and thou knoweſt thou didſt give him millions of provocations ſo to do) where hadſt thou now been? thou hadſt never ſeen Chriſt, nor the leaſt dawning hope of Salvation by him. Remember how oft you lay in thoſe days upon beds of ſickneſs, upon the brink of the grave; what was it that ſaved thee from eternal Wrath but this admirable Patience of

Chriſt? Well therefore may the Apoſtle ſay, *Account the long-ſuffering of God to be Salvation.*

This Patience of God ſeems to be a branch ſpringing out of his mercy and goodneſs; only it differs from mercy in this, that Man as *miſerable* is the object of Mercy, but Man as *criminal* is the object of Patience. Thus briefly of the Nature of Divine Patience, a power of God over his own wrath, not only to ſuſpend it for a time towards them that periſh, but to delay the execution of it, in a deſign of Salvation towards others.

Secondly, Next we come to ſhew the various evidences of this Divine Patience, or wherein it appears in its glorious manifeſtations towards provoking ſinners; and there are ſeven full evidences and diſcoveries of it, which ſhould make the Hearts of Sinners melt within them whilſt they are ſounding in their ears. Ah methinks ſuch things as theſe ſhould melt down your hard hearts before the Lord.

1. And the firſt Evidence of the riches of his patience ſhall be taken from the multitude of Sins that Men and Women are guilty of before him, the leaſt of which is a burden too heavy for any Creature to bear; the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, *Pſal.* 40.12. *Innumerable evils have compaſſed me about.* It was true, as applied to the perſon of *David*; and tho it be three applied to the perſon of Chriſt, yet not one of them were his own ſins, but ours; called his, by God's reckoning or imputing them to him. Men can number vaſt Sums, Millions of Millions, but no Man can number his own ſins, they paſs all account. There is not a member of the Body, tho never ſo ſmall, but hath been the inſtrument of innumerable evils. For inſtance, the *Tongue*, the Apoſtle tells us, is *a World of iniquity*, Jam. 3. 6. And if there be *a World* of ſin in one member, what then are the ſins of all? How many idle, frothy, vain words hath thy Tongue uttered? And yet for them, Chriſt ſaith, *Men ſhall give an account in the day of Judgment*, *Mat.* 12. 36. And what have the ſins of thy thoughts been? *The thought of fooliſhneſs is ſin*, ſaith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 24. 9. O who can underſtand his errors? Yet the Patience of God hath not crackt and broken under ſuch innumerable evils. O glorious Patience! Well may it be uſhered in in the Text with a term of admiration, *Behold, I ſtand!*

2. The ſecond Evidence of the Divine Patience ſhall be taken from the heinous nature of ſome ſins above others, whereby ſinners fly, as it were, in the very Face of God; and yet he bears with much long-ſuffering, lets not looſe his Hand to cut them off. All ſins are not of one ſize, ſome have a ſlighter tincture, and ſome are deeper, called upon that account Scarlet and Crimſon ſins, *Iſa.* 1. 18. double-died abominations, ſins in grain; ſuch are ſins againſt Knowledg, ſins committed after Convictions and Covenants, and rebukes of Providence. I do not only ſpeak of outward groſs acts of ſin; for as the School-men well determine, tho outward ſins are ſins of greater infamy, yet inward ſins may be ſins of greater guilt: Even thoſe ſins that never took air to defame thee in the World; but whatever they be (Reader) whether outward or inward, thy Conſcience is privy to them, and thy Soul may ſtand amazed at the Patience of God in forbearing thee all this while under ſuch Provocations, and horrid Rebellions againſt him; eſpecially conſidering how many there be this day in Hell that never provoked God by ſinning with ſuch a high hand as thou haſt done.

3. It is yet a greater Evidence of the Patience of God in bearing with, and forbearing us, under the guilt of that ſpecial ſin, *viz.* The ſlighting and neglecting of Jeſus Chriſt: Here's a ſin that goes to the very heart of Jeſus Chriſt, he can bear any other ſin rather than that; and yet this hath Chriſt born from every Soul of you. You are the Men and Women that have ſpurned at the yerning bowels of his Mercies, ſlighted his Grace, trampled his precious Blood under foot, and yet he hath forborn you unto this day; read *Mat.* 22. 5. and let thy Conſcience anſwer, whether thou art not equally deep in the guilt of making light of Chriſt with thoſe wretches upon whom it is there charged. Chriſt hath ſuffered the wrath of God in thy room, brought home Salvation in Goſpel-offers to thy door: and then to be ſlighted! no Patience but his own could bear it. Every Sermon and Prayer you have ſat under with a dead Heart; every motion of his Spirit which you have quencht, what is this but the making light of Chriſt, and the great Salvation? Here the deepeſt project of infinite Wiſdom, and the richeſt gift of free-grace, wherein God commends his love to Men, are vilely undervalued as ſmall things: and thus have you done days without number; and yet his Hand is not ſtretched out, to cut thee off in thy Rebellion; *Who is a God like unto thee!* What Patience like the Patience of Chriſt!

4. The length of time the Patience of Chriſt hath indured thee, ſpeaks the perfection and riches of his Patience towards thee.

Conſider ſinner, what Age thou art of, how many years thou canſt number, and that all this hath been a time of Patience, for thou waſt a tranſgreſſor from the Womb, *Iſa.* 48.8,9. yet for his Name ſake hath he defer'd his anger, and hath not cut thee off. How ſoon did the wrath of God break forth upon the Angels when they ſinned in Heaven! And how long hath it born with thee, whilſt thou haſt been provoking him on Earth? Was there ever Patience like the Patience of God! Many thouſands have been ſent away to Hell ſince thy day, but thou art yet ſpared; O that the long-ſuffering of God might be Salvation to thee!

5. 'Tis a great Evidence of the power of Divine Patience that may be drawn from the grievouſneſs of our Sins to God, during the whole time of his forbearance: 'Tis true, there is no proper paſſion in the Divine Nature, no real perturbation, his anger is a mild and holy flame; yet the contrariety of ſin to the holineſs of his Nature is what makes his patience miraculous in the Eyes of Men. The Scripture ſpeaking in a condeſcending Language to the underſtanding of the creature, repreſents God as wounded to the heart by the ſins of Men; ſo in *Ezek.* 6. 9. *I am broken with their whoriſh Heart, which hath departed from me*; and *Amos* 2. 13. *Behold I am preſſed under you, as a cart is preſſed that is full of ſheaves*; when the Axel-tree is ready to crack under the load: and 2 *Chron.* 36. 16. 'tis ſaid, *The wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his people till there was no remedy*; his Patience would bear no longer; and therefore when he executes his wrath upon provoking ſinners, that execution is repreſented in the nature of an eaſe or relief to his burdened Patience and Juſtice, *Iſa.* 1. 24. *Ah, ſaith he, I will eaſe me of*

*my enemies, and avenge me of my adverſaries.* Yet obſerve it comes in with an (*ah*) with a kind of regret and reluctancy; ſo in *Iſa.* 10. 25. *Yet a very little while and the indignation ſhall ceaſe, and my anger in their deſtruction.* God could have given eaſe and reſt this way to his anger long ago, but he chuſes rather ſtill to bear with thee, than on theſe terms to eaſe himſelf of thee.

6 *Evidence.* The vaſt expences of his Riches and Bounty upon us, during the whole time of his forbearance and patience towards us, ſpeak him unconceivable and infinite in his long-ſuffering towards us, *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?* q. d. Vile ſinner, canſt thou compute the treaſures of bounty and goodneſs, thou haſt been riotouſly ſpending and waſting all this while? Doſt thou know what vaſt ſums Chriſt hath ſpent upon thee to preſerve thee ſo long out of Hell? There be two Treaſures ſpending upon ſinners all the time of God's forbearance of them; there's the precious Treaſure of thy time waſted, and the invaluable ſtreams of Goſpel-Grace running all this while at the waſte Spout: thy time is precious; the whole of thy time, which is betwixt thee and Eternity, is but little, and the moſt thereof has been waſted in ſin, and caſt away upon vanity: but that's not all, the Treaſures of Goſpel-Grace have been waſting all this while upon thee. In *Zach.* 4. 12. it is compared to Golden Oil, maintaining the Lamps of Ordinances; ſo it is ſet forth to us in that ſtately Emblem. Who would maintain a Lamp with Golden Oil for wanton Children to play by? Yet this hath God done while thy Soul hath dallied and trifled with him. The Witneſſes or Miniſters of Chriſt, in *Rev.* 11. 3, 4. are compared to thoſe Olive-Trees that drop their precious Oil, their Gifts, Graces, yea and their natural Spirits with them, into this Lamp to keep it burning; all this while the Blood of Chriſt hath been running in vain, the Miniſters of Chriſt preaching and beſeeching in vain, the Spirit of Chriſt ſtriving with you in vain. You burn away Golden Oil, and yet your Lamp is not gone out. O marvelous Patience! O the riches of God's forbearance!

7. Laſtly, the riches of Divine Patience towards you, are greatly heightned and aggravated by the quick diſpatch the Lord hath made of other ſinners, whilſt he hath ſpared and paſt over you. This comparative conſideration calls upon you in the Apoſtle's language, *Rom.* 11. 22. *Behold the goodneſs and ſeverity of God; on them which fell, ſeverity; but towards thee, goodneſs, if thou continue in his goodneſs, otherwiſe thou ſhalt be cut off.* Some ſinners have been cut off in the beginning of their days, many in the very acts of ſin, and thoſe not greater than thy ſins; they are gone to their own place, and thou ſtill left for a Monument of the Patience and Forbearance of God. The ſin of *Achan* was not a greater ſin than thy covetouſneſs, and the earthlineſs of thy Heart is; the ſin of *Nadab* and *Abihu* in offering up ſtrange fire, than thy ſuperſtition, and offering up uncommanded Services to God: yet the hand of God fell upon them, and ſmote them dead in the place; in the day and place wherein they ſinned, they periſht; they were taken away in their iniquities, but thou reſerved. O that it might be for an inſtance and example of the riches of Divine Patience, which may at laſt lead thee to repentance!

Thus I have given you ſeven Evidences of the wonderful Patience of Chriſt, who hath ſtood, and ſtill doth ſtand at the door and knock. Next we will enquire into the grounds and reaſons of this marvelous Patience of Chriſt, this aſtoniſhing long ſuffering of God towards ſinners; and there are divers obvious reaſons of the long ſuffering of God towards Men.

*Reaſon* 1. The exerciſe of his Patience is a ſtanding teſtimony of his reconcilable and merciful nature towards ſinful Man. This he ſhewed forth in his Patience toward *Paul*, a great example of his merciful Nature for a pattern to them that ſhould hereafter believe on him, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. The long-ſuffering of God is a ſpecial part of his manifeſtative Glory; and therefore when *Moſes* deſired a ſight of his Glory, *Exod.* 34. 6. he proclaims his Name, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth.* He would have poor ſinners look towards him as an atonable Deity, a God willing to be reconciled, a God that retaineth not his anger for ever; but if poor ſinners will take hold of his ſtrength, and make peace with him, they may have peace, *Iſa.* 27. 4. This long-ſuffering is an attribute very expreſſive of the Divine Nature; he is willing ſinners ſhould know, whatever their provocations have been, there is room for pardon and peace, if they will yet come in to accept the terms. This Patience is a *Diadem* belonging to the *Imperial Crown* of Heaven; the Lord glories in it as what is peculiar to himſelf, *Hoſ.* 11. 9. *I will not execute the fierceneſs of my anger, for I am God, and not Man:* q. d. Had I been as Man, the holieſt, meekeſt, and mortifiedſt Man upon Earth, I had conſumed them long ago; but I am God, and not Man, my Patience is above all created Patience; no Husband can bear with his Wife, no Parent with his Child, as God hath born with you. That's one reaſon of Chriſt's waiting upon trifling ſinners, to give proof of his gracious, merciful and reconcilable nature towards the worſt of ſinners.

*Reaſon* 2. The Lord exerciſes this admirable Patience towards ſinners with deſign thereby to lead them to repentance; that's the direct aim and intention of it. The Lord deſires and delights to ſee ingenuous relentings and brokenneſs of Heart for ſin, and there is nothing like his Forbearance and Patience promotes ſuch an Evangelical Repentance. All the terrors of the Law will not break the Heart of a ſinner, as the Patience and long-ſuffering of God will do; therefore it is ſaid, *Rom.* 2. 4. *That the Goodneſs, Forbearance and Long-ſuffering of God lead Men to Repentance:* theſe are fitted to work upon all thoſe principles of humanity, which incline Men to Repentance; Reaſon, Conſcience, Gratitude, feel the influences of the goodneſs of God herein, and melt under it; *Saul's* Heart relented in this caſe, 1 *Sam.* 24. 17. *Is this thy voice, my Son* David? *and* Saul *lift up his voice and wept; And he ſaid to* David, *Thou art more righteous than I, for thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.* Thus the goodneſs and forbearance of God doth as it were take a ſinner by the hand, leads him into a corner, and ſaith, Come, let thou and I talk together; Thus and thus vile haſt thou been, and thus and thus long-ſuffering and merciful have I been to thee; thy Heart hath been full of ſin, the Heart of thy God hath been full of pity and mercy. This puts the ſinner into Tears, breaks his Heart in pieces; if any thing in the World will melt a hard Heart, this will do it. O how good hath God been to me! How have I tried his Patience to the uttermoſt, and ſtill he waiteth to be gracious, and is exalted that he may have compaſſion; the Sobs and Tears, the ingenuous Thaws and Relentings of a ſinners Heart under the apprehenſions of the ſparing mercy and goodneſs of God, is the Muſick of Heaven.

*Reaſon* 3. The Lord exerciſes this long-ſuffering towards ſinners, to clear his Juſtice in the damnation of all the obſtinate refuſers of Chriſt and Mercy. Chriſt waits at our doors now, that he may be clear in his ſentence againſt us hereafter. This Patience of Chriſt takes away all Apologies and Pleas out of the Mouths of impenitent ſinners; the more Chriſt's Patience hath been, the leſs defence or plea they will have for themſelves.

Think with thy ſelf, ſinner, what wilt thou anſwer in the great day, when Chriſt ſhall ſay, Did not I ſtand at thy door from day to day, from Sabbath to Sabbath, from year to year, calling, wooing, perſwading thee to be reconciled, and accept Pardon and Mercy in the proper ſeaſon of them, and thou wouldſt not? *Rev.* 2. 21. *I gave her ſpace to repent, and ſhe repented not.* Well, the Lord gives you time now, a ſpace of repentance, ſuch a ſpace as millions of Souls gone out of time into a miſerable Eternity never had. With whomſoever Chriſt hath been quick and ſevere, to be ſure he hath not been ſo with you. This time of Chriſt's Patience will be evidence enough to clear Chriſt and condemn you; Men and Angels ſhall applaud the ſentence as dreadful as it is, and ſay, Righteous art thou, O Lord, in judging thus.

*Reaſon* 4. The Lord draws forth and exerciſes his admirable Patience towards ſinners for the continuation and propagation of the Church. The Church muſt be continued and propagated from Age to Age; and if God ſhould be quick in cutting off ſinners as ſoon as ever they provoke him, whence ſhould the Elect of God riſe in this World? There are thouſands of God's Elect in the Loins of God's Enemies. Many that will heartily embrace Chriſt, muſt riſe from ſuch as reject him.

Now if God ſhould cut off theſe in the beginning of their provocations, how ſhould the Church be continued? Where had good *Abijah* and *Hezekiah* been, if wicked *Jeroboam* and *Ahaz* had been cut off in their firſt tranſgreſſions? The Lord ſuffers many a wicked Parent to ſtand for a time under his Patience, becauſe Children are to ſpring from them who will obey and embrace that Chriſt whom their wicked Parents rejected: Yea, the Wicked do not only propagate the Church, but are uſeful to preſerve and defend it; as the uſeleſs chaff is a defence to the Wheat. *Rev.* 12. 16. *The Earth ſhall help the Woman.*

*Reaſon* 5. To conclude, the Lord exerciſeth this long-ſuffering towards Sinners in a gracious condeſcenſion to the Prayers of his People. *Were it not that the Lord had left a ſmall remnant, we had been as* Sodom, *we had been like unto* Gomorrah, *Iſa.* 1. 9.

The Prayers and Interceſſions of the Saints are a skreen betwixt wicked Men and the wrath of God for a time, *Job* 22. 30. The innocent preſerve the Iſland. The World ſtands by the Prayers of the Saints; what multitudes of rebellious, Chriſt-deſpiſing ſinners ſwarm this day in every part of this Nation? ſuch as declare by their open practice they will not have Chriſt to reign over them, who contemn his offers, deſpiſe his Meſſengers; but bleſſed be God, yea and let them bleſs him too, that there are others mourning to the Lord for them, beſeeching his forbearance towards them. Little do the wicked know how much they are beholden to the Prayers of the Saints. Theſe and ſuch like reaſons prevail with the Lord Jeſus to ſtand in a waiting, patient poſture, at the doors of ſinners. Ah, how loth is he to give them up! We now proceed to the Uſes of this Point by way of,

1. Information.
2. Exhortation.
3. Conſolation.

### I. *Uſe.*

And firſt, this Point will be very fruitful for Information of our Underſtandings in divers great and uſeful Points, both Doctrinal and Practical, wherein every Soul among you is deeply concerned; and therefore I beſeech you let them be heard and pondered with an anſwerable attention and ſeriouſneſs of Spirit: and the firſt Inference ſhall be this.

*Infer.* 1. If the Lord Jeſus do exerciſe ſuch admirable Patience towards ſinners, *Then how much better is it for poor ſinners to be in the Hands of Chriſt, than in the Hand of the beſt and holieſt Man in the World?* O ſinner, 'tis better for thee to fall into the Hands of the Meek and Merciful Jeſus, than into the Hand of the deareſt Friend thou haſt upon Earth; no creature can bear what Chriſt bears; no Patience like the Patience of Chriſt: 'tis ſaid of *Moſes*, Numb. 11. 12. *Now the Man* Moſes *was meek above all Men upon the face of the Earth.* There was never ſuch a Man born into the World, for Patience, Meekneſs, and Long-ſuffering, as *Moſes* was; and yet for all that, this mirror of Meekneſs could not bear the provocations of *Iſrael:* You Rebels, ſaith he, muſt I draw Water for you out of the Rock? Thus was his Spirit ruffled with the provocations of *Iſrael*, and this loſt him the Land of *Canaan*. *Jonah* was a good Man, a Prophet of the Lord; yet becauſe the Lord would not be ſo quick and ſevere with *Niniveh*, as *Jonah* would have had him, in what uncomely Language doth his angry Soul return upon his God? *Jonah* 4. 2. *O Lord,* ſaith he, *was not this my ſaying when I was yet in my Country? Therefore I fled before unto* Tarſhiſh, *for I knew thou wert a gracious God and merciful, ſlow to anger and of great kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the evil; therefore now, O Lord, take I beſeech thee my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live:* q. d. Ah, Lord, I knew it would come to this, I knew thy gracious Nature, how inclinable thou art to mercy, and that upon the firſt appearance of their repentance, thou wouldſt repent of the evil, and ſo free-grace would make me as a lier among them.

Nay, give me leave to ſpeak a higher word than all this, and let it not ſeem ſtrange that the Patience of the glorified Saints in Heaven is nothing to the Patience of Chriſt towards provoking ſinners upon Earth. Thoſe glorified Souls that be above, tho they have Patience, among other

ther Graces, perfected in its kind, yet ſtill it is but created, finite Patience, and it cannot bear what Chriſt's Patience bears: take an inſtance of it out of *Rev.* 6. 9, 10, 11. *I ſaw under the Altar the Souls of thoſe that were ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, ſaying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judg and avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth? And it was ſaid unto them, That they ſhould reſt for a little ſeaſon.* Here you ſee glorified Souls leſs able to bear the ſlow pace of Juſtice towards their Enemies, than Chriſt was. 'Tis true, here was no ſinful impatience, but yet a Patience ſhort of Chriſt's infinite Patience. Ah if you were to depend upon the patience of any Creature in Heaven or Earth, you had worn it out long ago. I will not execute the fierceneſs of my anger, for I am God and not Man. Ah, 'tis well we have to do with a God; if a Man find his Enemy, will he let him go away? 1 *Sam.* 24. 19. No, no, he will reckon before he part with him. Sinner, the Lord finds thee daily in thy ſins, and yet lets thee go; yet beware thou try not his Patience too far, leſt vengeance overtake thee at laſt, and pay the Juſtice of God with all the arrearages due to his Patience.

*Infer.* 2. Hence it follows, *that convinced and broken-hearted Sinners need not be diſcouraged in going to Jeſus Chriſt for mercy, ſeeing he exerciſes ſuch wonderful Patience towards obſtinate and refuſing ſinners.*

This Inference breaths pure Goſpel; it is a Cordial to chear the Heart that is moving towards Chriſt with fear and trembling. 'Tis a great artifice of the Devil to daunt and diſcourage poor convinced ſinners, by telling them there is no hope of mercy for them; that they ſhall find the Arms of Mercy cloſed, the Bowels of Compaſſion ſhut up; that the time of Mercy is now paſt, they come too late. O how buſie is Satan with ſuch ſuggeſtions as theſe in many of your Souls? But I am come to tell you this day, that theſe are but the artifices of the Enemy; you are going to the Fountain of Mercy, Patience, Goodneſs and Long-ſuffering; go on, and you ſhall find abundantly more than you expect. He will not caſt off a Soul that comes mourning and panting towards him, and is willing to ſubſcribe the Goſpel-Articles of Reconciliation: No, he will not ſhut out ſuch a Soul, whatever its rebellions and provocations have been. Sinner, thou art going to the meek and merciful Jeſus, *Mat.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you reſt; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly.* You are going to Meekneſs and Mercy it ſelf; he is the Lamb of God, that is his Name: go on then poor trembling ſinner, don't ſtand any longer at, ſhall I, ſhall I? with Chriſt; but make a bold but neceſſary adventure of Faith; try him once, and then report what you find him to be: Certainly if he exerciſes ſuch Patience towards the Veſſels of wrath, whilſt they are fitting to deſtruction, as he doth, *Rom.* 9. 22. he will not want Patience for a Veſſel of Mercy, preparing by Humiliation and Faith for Chriſt and Glory. Doth he forbear thoſe that ſtand in defiance, and will he fall upon thoſe that are mourning to him upon the knee of ſubmiſſion? Shall a damned wretch, that is preparing for Hell, find ſo much forbearance, and a poor broken-hearted ſinner none? It cannot be. If Jeſus Chriſt forbear thee when thy Heart was as hard as a Rock, and could not yield one Tear, one Sigh for ſin, will he execute his Wrath upon thee, will he ſhew thee no Mercy, when thy Heart is broken all to pieces with ſorrow, and filled with loathing and deteſtation againſt ſin, and thy ſelf for ſin? Did he forbear thee when ſin was thy delight? and will he deſtroy thee now it is thy burden? It cannot be.

Moreover, if the Lord Jeſus had not a mind to ſhew Mercy to thy poor Soul, now, now, that thine Eyes are opened and thine Heart touched to the quick, why hath he forborn the execution of his wrath ſo long? He might have taken his own time to cut you off when he would, he might have made any day the execution-day: But ſure among all the days of thy life, the day of thy Humiliation, the day of thy Faith, is not like to prove that day.

Again, as great and vile ſinners as thy ſelf have adventured upon the Grace of Chriſt, and found it infinitely beyond their expectation. Theſe the Lord Jeſus hath ſet forth as incouraging examples to all the broken-hearted ſinners that are coming after; that they ſeeing how it hath fared with their forerunners to Chriſt, might be encouraged to come on with the more confidence, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. *But I obtained mercy, that in me firſt Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, for a pattern to them that ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting.* Well then, ſhut your Ears againſt all the whiſpers of Satan, entertain no evil reports of Chriſt; the Devil loves to draw a falſe picture of Chriſt, and repreſent him in the moſt diſcouraging form to poor trembling ſinners, but you will not find him ſo. What can Chriſt ſay more to convince and ſatisfy Souls than he hath done? He hath left the boſom of the Father, he hath taken union with thy Nature, he hath poured out his Soul unto Death; he hath told us, *Thoſe that come unto him, he will in no wiſe caſt out.* Thouſands are gone before us in the paths of Repentance and Faith, and found it according to his Word; you have been ſpared all your Life to this day of Mercy, O do not ſtand off now upon ſuch weak objections.

Inference 3. *The long-ſuffering of Chriſt towards ſinners, inſtructeth and teacheth his Miniſters to imitate their Lord in a Chriſt-like Patience and Long-ſuffering.* Chriſt is our pattern of Patience; if he wait, much more may we: we think it much to ſtand from Sabbath to Sabbath, wooing, pleading and inviting, and are apt to be diſcouraged when we ſee no fruit follow. The want of ſucceſs is apt to caſt us under *Jeremiah's* temptation, *To ſpeak no more in his Name*; and to lament with *Iſaiah, That we have laboured in vain*: 'tis a hard caſe to ſtudy, pray and preach, and ſee all our labours return in vain. 'Tis not ſo much the expending as the returning of our labours upon us in vain, that diſcourageth our Hearts. Miniſters would not die ſo faſt, ſaith Mr. *Lockier* on *Coloſ.* nor be grayheaded ſo ſoon, did they ſee the fruit of their labours upon their People. But let us look to our pattern in the Text, *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock.* If the Maſter wait, let not the Servant be weary: *The Servant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be patient toward all; waiting, if at any time God will give them repentance,* 2 Tim. 4. 24.

Tho the beginnings be ſmall, our latter end may greatly increaſe: tho we now fiſh with Angles, and take but now one, and then another; the time may come, and we hope is at the door, when we ſhall ſpread our Nets, and incloſe multitudes. *Aretius* a pious Divine comforteth himſelf thus, under the inſucceſsfulneſs of his Labors, *Dabit poſterior ætas tractabiliores fortaſſe animos, mitiora pectora quam noſtra habent tempora.* Future days will afford more tractable Spirits, and eaſier tempers of Mind than our preſent times afford. Beſide, the fruit of our labours may ſpring up to a bleſſed harveſt when we are gone. *John* 4. 37. One Man ſoweth, and another reapeth; but if not, our reward will not be meaſured by the ſucceſs, but the ſincerity of our deſigns and labours. Our Zeal for converſion of Souls to Chriſt will be accepted, but our diſcouragement in his ſervice will certainly diſpleaſe him. If *Iſrael* be not gathered, yet ſhall we be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord. However, let this be a caution to you that hear us, that you caſt not our Souls under ſuch diſcouragements. If I may ſpeak the ſenſe of others from my own experience, then I can aſſure you, that the fixedneſs of your Hearts in the ways of ſin, and your untractableneſs to the calls of God, are a greater burden and diſcouragement to us than all the ſufferings we have met withal from the World; yet are we contented to pray in hope, and preach in hope, incouraging our ſelves (the Lord grant it be not without ground) that a crop ſhall yet ſpring up, which ſhall make the Harveſt-men laugh.

Inference 4. *From the Patience and Long-ſuffering of Chriſt, we may learn the invaluable preciouſneſs of Souls, and the high eſteem Chriſt hath for them.*

Tho your Souls be cheap in your own eyes, and you are contented to ſell them for a trifle, for a little ſenſual pleaſure and eaſe, ſome of you will hazard them for a Shilling; yet certainly Jeſus Chriſt hath an high eſteem of them, elſe he would never ſtand knocking with ſuch importunity, and waiting with ſuch wonderful patience for the Salvation of them. Chriſt knows their worth, tho you do not; he accounts, and ſo ſhould you, one of your Souls more worth than the whole World, *Matth.* 16. 26. The Soul of the pooreſt Child, or meaneſt Servant, that hears me this day, is of greater value in Chriſt's Eye than the whole World; and he hath given three great evidences of it, (1.) That he thought it worth his Heart-Blood to redeem and ſave it: 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. *You were not redeemed with Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of the Son of God.* Had they not been precious in his Eyes, he would never have ſhed his moſt precious Blood to ranſom them. (2.) Were they not highly valuable in his Eyes, he would never wait with ſuch unwearied Patience to ſave them as he doth. He hath born thouſands of repulſes, and unreaſonable denials from you: Sinner, Chriſt hath knockt at thy door in many a Sermon, in many a Prayer, in many a Sickneſs, in all which thou haſt put him off, denied him or delayed him; yet ſtill he continues knocking and waiting. Thou couldſt not have made the pooreſt Beggar in the World wait at thy door ſo long as thy Redeemer hath been made to wait, and yet he is not gone. At this day his Voice ſounds in thine ears, *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock.* Here's clear demonſtration of the preciouſneſs of thy Soul in the Redeemer's Eyes. And then laſtly, When Chriſt ends the Treaty, and gives up the Souls of Men for loſt, and unperſwadable, with what regret and ſorrow doth he part with them! Never did one Friend part from another with ſuch demonſtrations of ſorrow as Chriſt parteth with the Souls of ſinners. The Bowels of his compaſſion roll together; for he knows what is coming upon them, and what that eternal miſery is into which their wilful rejection of him will caſt them: In *Luke* 19. 42. you find the Redeemer's tears wept over obſtinate *Jeruſalem*, *And when he came nigh to the City, he wept over it, and ſaid, O* Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, *if thou hadſt known, at leaſt in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* Like unto this is that expreſſion, *Iſa.* 1. 24. *Ah, I will eaſe me of mine enemies, &c.* Tho it be an eaſe to his Juſtice, yet he cannot give them up without an *ah*, an interjection of ſorrow; ſo in *Hoſea* 11. 8. *How ſhall I give thee up,* Ephraim? *How ſhall I deliver thee,* Judah? I muſt do it, but how ſhall I go about it? All theſe expreſſions ſhew the great value God hath for your Souls; and did you know it alſo, certainly you would not make Chriſt wait one hour longer.

*Inference* 5. Hence it follows, *That greater is the ſin, and ſeverer will be the condemnation of them that periſh under the Goſpel, than of all other People in the World.* Let me ſpeak freely to you that hear me this day, Jeſus Chriſt hath ſpent more of the riches of his Patience upon you in one year, yea in this very day, than he hath ſpent upon the Heathen World in all the days of their lives; they never heard of Chriſt, and the great Salvation, they have had no calls to Faith and Repentance, as you have had; don't think God hath dealt at this rate with other Nations. You have his Sabbaths, Miniſters, Calls; he hath not dealt ſo with other Nations, and as for theſe things they have not known them, *Pſal.* 147. 19. God hath dealt in a peculiar way with us, and theſe ſpecial favors will make dreadful accounts. He told the *Jews*, among whom he had preacht and wrought his Miracles, *It would be more tolerable for* Sodom *and* Gomorrah *in the day of Judgment, than for them*; and in his Name I will tell you this day, that barbarous *Indians* and *Americans* will have a milder Hell than you; *Mitius ardent:* and as the Lord told *Ezekiel*, chap. 3. 5, 6. *Thou art not ſent to a People of a ſtrange Speech, and of a hard Language, whoſe words thou canſt not underſtand; ſurely had I ſent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee: but the houſe of* Iſrael *will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto me: For all the houſe of* Iſrael *are impudent and hardhearted.*

Ah Brethren, 'tis a ſad Truth, that the Miniſters of Chriſt have found more fruit of their Labours among the *Salvage Americans*, than in *England*, a People born and bred up under the Goſpel. Had heatheniſh People your Sabbaths, your Miniſters and Bibles, they would not deal by Chriſt as you have done: But look you to it, for certainly the ſeverity of his Juſtice will at laſt recompence the expence of his Patience: There are two Glaſſes turned up this day, and both almoſt run down; the Glaſs of the Goſpel running down on Earth, and the Glaſs of Chriſt's Patience running down in Heaven. Be ſure of it that for every ſand of Mercy, every drop of Love that runs down in vain in this World, a drop of Wrath runs into the vial of Wrath which is fitting in Heaven.

Inference 6. *If Chriſt has exerciſed ſuch admirable Patience and Long-ſuffering towards you, before he could gain entrance into your Heart; then you have all the reaſon in the World to exerciſe your Patience for Chriſt, and account all long-ſuffering to be your unqueſtionable duty.* Chriſt was not weary in waiting upon you, be not you weary in waiting upon him, or for him. Now there are three things wherein the People of God will have much occaſion to exerciſe their Patience with reſpect to Chriſt.

(1.) You will need a great deal of Patience to wait for the returns and anſwers of your Prayers; you knock and wait at the door of Mercy, and no anſwer comes; hereupon diſcouragement and wearineſs ſeizeth your Spirits. Poſſibly ſome of you have Prayers many years gone upon the file in Heaven, ſome upon Spiritual accounts, and ſome upon Temporal; and becauſe the anſwer is not diſpatcht, your Eyes are ready to fail with waiting: for the Lord may bear long with his own Elect, *Luke* 18. 7. The ſeed of Prayer lies under the clods, and will at laſt ſpring up, *for he never ſaid to the ſeed of* Jacob, *Seek me in vain*; none ſeek God in vain but thoſe that ſeek him vainly. Now you ſhould not be too quick and ſhort-breathed in waiting upon God for the returns of Prayer, conſidering how long you made Chriſt wait upon you.

(2.) You will have occaſion to exerciſe your Patience in bearing the burden of reproaches, and ſufferings for Chriſt; *For to you it is given in the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake,* Phil. 1. 29. Sufferings you ſee are the Gifts of Chriſt, the comfort of ſuffering is his Gift, and ſo are the abilities to ſuffer alſo; and that which will increaſe your ſuffering ability, will be the conſideration of Chriſt's long-ſuffering towards you, and the hard things he endured for you and from you.

(3.) You will have occaſion to exerciſe your Patience for the day of your compleat Redemption and Salvation. If you love Chriſt fervently, the time of your ſeparation from him will be born difficultly; vehement love needs the allay of Patience, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 5. *The Lord direct your Hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Chriſt.* Others need much Patience to die, but ſuch will need as much Patience to live; but whatever the exerciſes of your Patience ſhall be, whether in waiting for the returns of your Prayers, in bearing the croſs and ſufferings of Chriſt, or in waiting for the day of your compleat Redemption and enjoyment of Chriſt: This ſingle conſideration, that Chriſt ſtood and waited ſo long upon you, is enough to fortifie your Patience againſt all the difficulties it ſhall encounter.

*Inference* 7. Laſtly, *If Chriſt thus patiently wait upon trifling and obſtinate ſinners; then let no godly perſon be diſcouraged becauſe their unregenerate Relations have not yet made their firſt ſtep towards Chriſt in the way of Repentance and ſaving Faith.*

It may be you have laid up a great ſtock of Prayers for them, the believing Husband hath prayed for his unbelieving Wife, and the believing Wife for her unbelieving Husband; godly Parents for their ungodly Children, and the gracious Child for his ungodly Parents; and yet no returns of Prayer appear. Many cries are gone up to Heaven like that of *Abraham*, Gen. 17. 18. *O that* Iſhmael *might live before thee.* Well, be not diſcouraged, Chriſt is contented to wait, and therefore well may you. Thoſe cries of Parents, Lord, my poor Child is in the ſtate of Nature, look in mercy upon him, open his Eyes, break his Heart for ſin, draw his Will to Chriſt; theſe cries may not be loſt, tho the fruit of them yet appear not: conſider how long Chriſt waited upon you. There be three things that encourage hope: (1.) That your Hearts and theirs were of the ſame natural complexion and temper; and the ſame Power which opened your Hearts can open theirs; thy Underſtanding was once as dark, thy Heart as hard, and thy Will as inflexible as thy carnal Relations now are. The ſame Hand that opened thy Heart, can open theirs. Don't think Chriſt had an eaſier task to win thy Heart, than he will have to win theirs. Almighty Power wrought upon you, and the ſame Power can work effectually upon them; the Lord's Hand is not ſhortned. (2.) You have reaſon to wait, for as much as it is probable you your ſelves have put ſtumbling-blocks in the way of their Souls to Chriſt, and hindred the returns of your own Prayers for the converſion of your carnal Relatives. O Chriſtians, there is more due to them than your Prayers, Prayers muſt be backt with Examples; had they not only heard your cries to God for them, but ſeen your ſutable encouraging Pattern ſet before them alſo, you and yours might have rejoiced together long ago. But (3.) conſider that God many times makes the fruit of ſuch Prayers to ſpring up after thoſe that ſowed them are dead and gone. The Lord may give life to your Prayers when you are dead: Certainly your Prayers die not with you. 'Tis the opinion of ſome that *Paul*'s converſion was the return of *Stephen*'s Prayer, *Lord lay not this ſin to their charge. Stephen* died, but his Prayers lived, and were anſwered upon one that ſtood by and conſented to his death. But however it be, wait on; if your Prayers come not into their boſoms, they will certainly return into your own. Here's duty diſcharged, love to Chriſt and their Souls manifeſted; which will be your comfort however God diſpoſes the event.

### II. *Uſe.*

Secondly, The Doctrine of Chriſt's Patience puts a great and ſerious Exhortation into my Mouth this day, to preſs one of the greateſt Duties upon you that ever I preſſed in the whole courſe of my Miniſtry among you: And could I deliver this Exhortation to you upon my Knees, with Tears of Blood mingled with my words, might that prevail, I would ſurely do it. My Exhortation is to all that are in an unregenerate ſtate, that they preſume not to try the Patience of Chriſt any longer. If you have any regard to your eternal Happineſs, exerciſe not his Patience beyond this hour. O that this hour might put an end to Chriſt's waiting, and your danger! Hitherto you have wearied Men, but will you weary God alſo? Chriſt hath called, but you have refuſed; he hath ſtretched out his Hands, but you have not regarded. Your thoughts have been wandering after vanity, whilſt the voice of the Goſpel hath been ſounded in your Ears; ſome of you have been ſottiſh and uncapable to apprehend ſpiritual Truths; others of you ſenſual, given up to the pleaſures of the World, and abandoning all ſerious thoughts about the World to come. Some of you have been buried alive in the cares of the World, and others ſettled upon a dead formality in Religion; and to this day Chriſt hath called upon you in vain. Now that which I exhort you to, is that you venture not to try the Patience of Chriſt one day longer: if you have any regard to the everlaſting happineſs of your Souls, come not under the guilt and danger of one denial or delay more. If you aſk me why? Why may we not venture a little longer? Chriſt hath born all this while, and will he not bear a little longer? May we not take a little more pleaſure in ſin? May we not hazard one Sermon, or Sabbath more, and yet not periſh? I anſwer, No. If your Souls be precious in your eyes, let there be no more denials nor delays to Chriſt's Suit. For,

1. How patient and long-ſuffering ſoever Chriſt hath been, yet there will be an end of the day of his Patience; a time when he will wait no longer, when his Spirit ſhall ſtrive no more with you. There is a knock of Chriſt at the Heart, which will be the laſt knock that ever he will give; and after that no more knocks: A time when the Maſter of the houſe will riſe up, and the door be ſhut. You have had to do with a meek and patient Chriſt hitherto; but believe it ſinners, there is a day called *the day of the wrath of the Lamb*, and that day is dreadful, *Rev.* 6. 16. where you find ſinners crying *to the Rocks and Mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb.* O if his wrath be once kindled, tho but a little; *bleſſed are they that truſt in him*, that have finiſhed their agreement with him. The day of Chriſt's Patience towards *Jeruſalem* was a long day, but it had an end, *Mat.* 23. 37. and it ended in their deſolation: therefore try the Patience of Chriſt no further; you know not the limits of it, it may end with your next refuſal, and then where are you? 2. The longer Chriſt hath exerciſed his Patience already towards you, the more terribly will he avenge the abuſe of it in Hell upon you. 'Tis paſt doubt with me that there are different degrees of Torment in Hell; the Scriptures are plainly and clearly for it. Now among all the aggravations of the Torments of Hell, none can be greater than the reflections of damned Souls upon the abuſed Patience and Grace of Chriſt. Thoſe that had the beſt means, the loudeſt calls, and the longeſt day under the Goſpel, will certainly have the hotteſt place in Hell, if the goodneſs and long-ſuffering of Chriſt do not now lead them to Repentance; the cries of ſuch Souls will be heard above the cries of all the other miſerable wretches that are caſt away. *'Twill be more tolerable for* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, *than for* Capernaum, *Mat.* 11. 23. O Friends, you little know the ſmart reflections of Conſcience in Hell, upon ſuch hours as you now enjoy; ſuch wooing, charming voices and allurements to Chriſt as you now hear. There are many thouſands of Souls in Hell, that came thither out of the dark heatheniſh parts of the World, where they never heard of Chriſt; but your miſery will be far beyond theirs, your reflection more ſharp and bitter: Therefore delay no longer, leſt you periſh with peculiar aggravations of miſery. 3. Try the Patience of Chriſt no further, I beſeech you, for as much as you ſee every day the Patience of Chriſt ending towards others: Patience coming down, and Juſtice aſcending the Stage, to triumph over the abuſers of Mercy. You don't only read in Scripture the finiſhing and ending of God's Patience with Men, but you may ſee it every day with your own Eyes. If you look into Scripture, you may find the Patience of God ended towards multitudes of Sinners, who poſſibly had the ſame preſumptions, and vain hopes for the continuance of it that you now have: If you look into 1 *Pet.* 3. 19, 20. you ſhall there find that *Chriſt went and preached to the Spirits in Priſon, which ſometimes were diſobedient, when once the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of* Noah. The meaning of it is this, that in the days before the Flood, Chriſt by his Spirit ſtrove with diſobedient and rebellious ſinners, in the Miniſtry of *Noah*, who then were living Men and Women as now we are, but now are Spirits in priſon, *i. e.* damned Souls in Hell, for their diſobedience: And truly, Brethren, you may frequently behold the glaſs of Patience run down, the very laſt ſand in it ſpent upon others. Whenever you ſee a wicked Chriſtleſs Man or Woman die, you ſee the end of God's Patience with that Man or Woman; and all this for a warning to you, that you adventure not to trifle and dally with it as they did. 4. Laſtly, Do not try God's Patience any longer (if you love your Souls) for this Reaſon, becauſe when Men grow bold, and incourage themſelves in ſin, upon the account of God's forbearance and long-ſuffering towards them, there cannot be a more certain ſign that his Patience is very near its end towards that Soul. 'Tis time for God to put an end to his Patience when it is made an encouragement to ſin. God cannot ſuffer ſo vile an abuſe of his glorious Patience, nor endure to ſee it turned into wantonneſs: This quickly brings up ſin to its finiſhing act and perfection, and then Patience is juſt upon finiſhing alſo. That Patience is thus abuſed, appears from *Eccleſ.* 8. 11. and when it is ſo abuſed, look for a ſudden change. O therefore beware of provoking God, for now the day of Patience is certainly near its end with ſuch ſinners, *Prov.* 1. 24, 25, 26. *Becauſe I have called and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my Hand and no Man regarded; but ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof: I alſo will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind.* Ah, when ſinners ſcoff and mock at the threatnings of God, and bear themſelves up upon his Patience, as that which will never crack under them; then look out for a Whirlwind, a ſudden Tempeſt of wrath which will hurry ſuch Souls into Hell. Then miſery comes like a ſtorm blowing furiouſly from all Quarters. Well, the Heavens are yet clear over you, but a ſtorm is nigh, and may certainly be preſaged from ſuch vile abuſes of the glorious Patience of Chriſt towards you. That's the firſt Exhortation, try not the Patience of Chriſt by any further delays.

*Exhort.* 2. Admire Chriſt's patience and forbearance of you until now, that he hath not cut you off in your ſin, but lengthned out his Patience unto this day, and brought about your Salvation by his long-ſuffering towards you. Here now I muſt change my voice, and turn it unto thoſe whoſe Hearts the Lord hath opened: Stand amazed at the riches of his Grace towards you, and ſee that you account this long-ſuffering of God to be your Salvation; for in plain truth it is ſo: your Salvation was bound up in Chriſt's forbearance; if Chriſt had not born as he did, you had not been where you are. I could heartily wiſh that all the time you can redeem from the neceſſary employments you have in the World, may now be ſpent in an humble thankful admiration of this admirable Grace and Patience of Chriſt, and anſwerable duties to the intentions and ends thereof. To this end I ſhall ſubjoin divers weighty Conſiderations, which methinks ſhould melt every Heart wherein the leaſt dram of ſaving Grace is found.

*Conſid.* 1. Bethink your ſelves of the great and manifold provocations you have given the Lord to put an end to all further Patience towards you; not only in the days of your vanity and unregeneracy, but even ſince your reconciliation to him. Do you not believe thouſands of Sinners are now in the depths of Hell, who never provoked the Lord at a higher rate than you have done? Were you not herded once among the vileſt of Sinners? 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. *And ſuch were ſome of you*; as vile as the vileſt among them: yet you are waſhed in the Blood of Chriſt, and your companions roaring in the loweſt Hell; or if your lives were more clean, ſure your Hearts and Natures were as filthy as theirs. And certainly your ſins ſince the time of reconciliation have had ſpecial aggravations in them, enough to put an end to all further mercies towards you. Light and Love have aggravated theſe ſins, and yet the Lord will not caſt you off.

*Conſid.* 2. How often have you been upon the very brink of Hell, in the days of your unregeneracy? Every ſickneſs, and every danger of life which you eſcaped in thoſe days, was a mavelous eſcape from the everlaſting wrath of God. Had thy diſeaſe prevailed one degree further, thou hadſt been paſt hope, and out of the reach of mercy's Arm now. Doubtleſs ſome of you can remember when in ſuch and ſuch a diſeaſe, you were like a Ship riding in a furious ſtorm by one Cable, and two or three of the ſtrands of that Cable were ſnapt aſunder. So it hath been with you, the thred of life, how weak ſoever, hath held till the bonds of union betwixt Chriſt and your Souls are faſtned, and the eternal hazard over. This is admirable Grace.

*Conſid.* 3. How often has Death come up into your Windows, entred into your Houſes, fetcht off your neareſt Relations; but had no commiſſion to carry you out with them, becauſe the Lord had a deſign of mercy upon your Souls?

This cannot but affect a gracious Heart, that God ſhould ſmite ſo near, and yet ſpare you.

*Conſid.* 4. Laſtly, This is affecting, yea very tranſporting, that God hath not only given you time beyond others, but in that time the precious opportunities and means of your Salvation, both external and internal; there's the very marrow and kernel of the mercy: had God lengthned out his patience for a while, but given you no means of Salvation; or afforded you the means, but denied you the bleſſing and efficacy of them; at the moſt it could have been but a reprieve from Hell: but for the Lord to give you the Goſpel, and with the Goſpel to ſend down his Spirit, to perſuade and open thy Heart to Chriſt; here is the riches of his goodneſs as well as forbearance.

*Exhort.* 3. This Doctrine of the Patience of Chriſt exhorts all that have felt it, to exerciſe a Chriſt-like Patience towards others; as you have found the benefit of Divine Patience your ſelves, ſee that you exerciſe the meekneſs and long-ſuffering of Chriſtians towards thoſe that have wronged and injured you. Who ſhould ſhew Patience more than thoſe that have found it? Don't be ſevere, ſhort and quick with others, who have lived your ſelves ſo many years upon the long-ſuffering of God. We are poor ſhort-ſpirited Creatures, quick to revenge injuries; but O had God been ſo to us, miſerable had our condition been. Chriſt hath made this duty the very ſcope of that excellent Parable, *Mat.* 18. from *ver.* 25. onward, where the King takes an account of his Servants, reckoning with them one by one, and amongſt them finds one which owed him ten thouſand Talents, and having not to pay, commands him, his Wife and Children, and all he had to be ſold, and payment to be made; but the Servant falling down, and begging patience, his Lord was moved with compaſſion, and looſed him, and not only forbore, but forgave the debt: one would think the Heart of this man ſhould have been a fountain of compaſſion towards others; but ſee the deep corruption of Nature, the ſame Servant finding one of his fellow-Servants which owed him but a hundred pence, laid hands on him, and took him by the throat. Alas, the wrongs done to us are but trifles, compared with our injuries done to God; where others have wronged you once, you have wronged God a thouſand times. Methinks the patience of Chriſt towards you ſhould melt your Hearts into an ingenuous eaſineſs to forgive others; eſpecially conſidering that an unforgiving Spirit is a dreadful ſign of an unforgiven Perſon.

*Exhort.* 4. Burden not the patience of Chriſt after your admiſſion of him, and reconciliation to him; let it ſuffice that you tried his Patience long enough before, give him no new exerciſes now he is come to dwell in and with you for ever. There be two ways wherein God's own People do greatly provoke him after their reconciliation.

1. By ſluggiſhneſs in Duty.
2. By ſinning againſt Light.

1. By ſluggiſhneſs and deadneſs of Spirit in the ways of Duty and Obedience; turning a deaf ear to the calls and motions of Chriſt's Spirit exciting them to the ſweet and pleaſant Duties of Religion. We have a ſad inſtance of this in the Spouſe, *Cant.* 5. 2, 3. *It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, ſaying, Open to me my Siſter, my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled; for my Head is filled with dew, and my Locks with the drops of the night.* One would think that Chriſt might have opened the Heart of his own Spouſe with leſs ſolicitation, and importunate Arguments than he here uſeth; what Wife could ſhut the door upon her own dear Huſband, and bar him out of his own houſe? And yet ſee the lazy excuſe ſhe makes, ver. 3. *I have put off my coat, how ſhall I put it on? I have waſhed my Feet, how ſhall I defile them?*

O the ſluggiſhneſs of Fleſh, even in regenerate Perſons! Thoſe that have opened the door to Chriſt by Regeneration, even they do often ſhut the door againſt Chriſt in the hours and ſeaſons of Communion with him. Strange, that ſuch a Suitor as Chriſt ſhould be put by, moving and calling to ſuch heavenly pleaſant exerciſes as Communion with him is; but fleſh will be fleſh even in the moſt ſpiritual Chriſtians: little do we know what a grief this is to Chriſt, and loſs to us.

2. Many grieve Chriſt's Spirit, and ſorely try his Patience, even after reconciliation, by ſinning againſt Light and Love: that caution, *Epheſ.* 4. 30. is not without weighty cauſe, *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, by which you are ſealed to the day of Redemption.*

Do we thus requite the Lord? is this the return we make him for all his admirable kindneſs and unparallel'd Love towards us? Certainly Chriſt can put up a thouſand injuries from his Enemies, eaſier than ſuch affronts from his own People. Did you not promiſe him better obedience? Did you not engage to more holineſs and watchfulneſs, in the day that you ſued out your pardon, and made up your Peace with him? Are all thoſe Vows and Covenants forgotten? If you have forgotten them, God hath not.

*Exhort.* 5. Improve the time that remains in this World with double diligence, becauſe you made Chriſt wait ſo long, and caſt away ſo great a part of your life, before you opened your Hearts to receive him. The morning of your life, which was certain the freſheſt and freeſt part of it, was no better than time loſt with many of us; all the days of your unregeneracy Chriſt was ſhut out, and vanity ſhut into your Hearts: You never began to live till Chriſt gave you life, and that was late in the day with many of you. How ſhould this provoke to extraordinary diligence in thoſe few remains of time we have yet to enjoy? It was *Auſtin*'s lamentation, *O Lord, it repents me*, ſaith he, *that I loved thee ſo late.* This conſideration excited *Paul* to extraordinary diligence for Chriſt. It made him fly up and down the World, as a *Seraphim*, in a flame of holy zeal for Chriſt. Thoſe that have much to write, and are almoſt come to the end of their Paper, had need write cloſe. Friends, you have ſomething to do for God on Earth, which you cannot do for him in Heaven, *Iſa.* 38.18,19. You that have carnal Relations, have ſomething to do for them here, which you cannot do in Heaven. You can now counſel, exhort and pray, in order to their Converſion and Salvation; but when you are gone down to the Grave, theſe opportunities of ſervice are cut off.

*Exhort.* 6. Let us all be aſhamed and humbled for the baſeneſs of our Hearts and Natures, which made Chriſt wait at the door ſo long, before we opened to him. O what wretched Hearts have we! that were no more affected with the groans of Chriſt's Heart, than with the groans of a Beaſt, nor ſo much neither, if that Beaſt were our own. O the vileneſs of Nature, to make the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, bringing Pardon and Salvation with him, to ſtand ſo long unanſwered! let who will cry up the goodneſs of Nature, I am ſure we have reaſon to look upon the vileneſs of it with amazement and horror. You could not have found in your hearts to make the pooreſt beggar wait ſo long at your door, as you have made Chriſt wait upon you.

*Exhort.* 7. Laſtly, Let us all bleſs and admire the Lord Jeſus for the continuation of his Patience, not to our ſelves only, but to that whole ſinful Nation in which we live. We thought the Treaty of Peace had been ended with us; many good Men looking upon the iniquities and abominations of theſe times, conſidering the vanities and backſliding of Profeſſors, the Heaven-daring provocations of this Atheiſtical Age, concluded in their own hearts, that God would make *England* another *Shiloh.* Many faithful Miniſters of Chriſt ſaid within themſelves, God hath no more work for us to do, and we ſhall have no more opportunities to work for God: When lo, beyond the thoughts of all hearts, the merciful and long-ſuffering Redeemer makes one return more to theſe Nations, renews the Treaty, and with compaſſions rolled together, ſpeaks to us this day, as to *Ephraim* of old, How ſhall I deliver thee? Look upon this day, this unexpected day of mercy, as the fruit and acquiſition of the interceſſion of your great Advocate in Heaven, anſwerable to that, *Luke* 13. 7, 8, 9. Well, God hath put us upon one Trial more: if now we bring forth fruit, well; if not, the ax lies at the root of the Tree. Once more Chriſt knocks at our doors, the voice of the Bridegroom is heard; thoſe ſweet voices, *Come unto me, Open to me:* your opening to Chriſt now, will be unto you as the Valley of *Achor*, for a door of hope. But what if all this ſhould be turned into wantonneſs and formality? what if your obſtinacy and infidelity ſhould wear out the remains of that little ſtrength and time left you, and that former labours and ſorrows have left your Miniſters? Then *actum eſt de nobis*, we are gone for ever; then farewel Goſpel, Miniſters, Reformation, and all, becauſe we knew not the time of our Viſitation. What was the diſmal doom of God upon the fruitleſs Vineyard? *Iſa.* 5. 5. *I will take away the hedg thereof, and it ſhall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it ſhall be trodden down: I will alſo command the Clouds, that they rain not upon it.* The Hedg and the Wall are the ſpiritual and providential preſence of God; theſe are the defence and ſafety of his People; the Clouds, and the Rain are the ſweet influences of Goſpel-Ordinances. If the Hedg be broken down, God's pleaſant Plants will ſoon be eaten up; and if the Clouds rain not upon them, their Root will be rottenneſs, and their Bloſſom go up as duſt; our Churches will ſoon become as the Mountains of *Gilboa:* ſee therefore you know and improve the time of your Viſitation.

### III. *Uſe of Conſolation.*

I ſhall wind up this fourth Doctrine, in two or three words of Conſolation, to thoſe that have anſwered, and are now preparing to anſwer the deſign and end of Chriſt Jeſus in all his patience towards them, by their compliance with his great deſign and end therein. O bleſſed be God, and let his high praiſes be for ever in our Mouths, that at laſt Chriſt is like to obtain his end upon ſome of us, and that all do not receive the Grace of God in vain. And there be three Conſiderations able to wind up your Hearts to the height of Praiſe, if the Lord hath now made them indeed willing to open to the Lord Jeſus.

*Conſid.* 1. The Faith and Obedience of your Hearts makes it evident, that the Lord's waiting upon you hitherto hath been in purſuance of his deſign of electing Love. What was the reaſon God would not take you away by death, tho you paſſed ſo often upon the very brink of it, in the days of your unregeneracy? And what, think you, was the very reaſon of the revocation of your Goſpel-liberties when they were quite out of ſight, and almoſt out of hope? why ſurely this was the reaſon, that you, and ſuch as you are, might be brought to Chriſt at laſt. Therefore tho the Lord let you run on ſo long in ſin, yet ſtill he continued your Life, and the means of your Salvation, becauſe he had a deſign of Mercy and Grace upon you. And now the time of

Mercy, even the ſet time is come, *Praiſe ye the Lord.*

*Conſid.* 2. You now alſo ſee the Soveraignty and Freeneſs of Divine Grace in your vocation: your Hearts reſiſted all along the moſt powerful means, and importunate calls of Chriſt; and would have reſiſted ſtill, had not Free and Soveraign Grace over-powered them when the time of Love was come. Ah, it was not the tractableneſs of thine own Will, the eaſy temper of thy Heart to be wrought upon; the Lord let thee ſtand long enough in the ſtate of Nature to diſcover that; there was nothing in Nature but obſtinacy and enmity. Thou didſt hear as many powerful Sermons, melting Prayers, and didſt ſee as many awakening Providences before thy Heart was opened to Chriſt, as thou haſt ſince: yet thy Heart never opened till now; and why did it open now? Becauſe now the Spirit of God joined himſelf to the Word; victorious Grace went forth in the Word to break the hardneſs, and conquer the rebellions of thy Heart. The Goſpel was now preached (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12.) *with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from Heaven, which things* (ſaith he) *the Angels deſire to look into.* Ah Friends, it is a glorious ſight, worthy of Angelical obſervation and admiration, to behold the effects of the Goſpel preach'd, with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from Heaven; to ſee when the Spirit comes along with the Word, the blind Eyes of ſinners opened, and they brought into a new World of raviſhing objects; to behold Fountains of Tears flowing for ſin, out of Hearts lately as hard as the Rocks; to ſee all the Bars of Ignorance, Prejudice, Cuſtom and Unbelief, fly open at the voice of the Goſpel; to ſee Rebels againſt Chriſt laying down their Arms at his Feet, come upon the Knee of ſubmiſſion, crying, *Lord I will rebel no more*; to ſee the proud Heart, centered and wrapt up in its own righteouſneſs, now ſtripping it ſelf naked, loading it ſelf with all ſhame and reproach, and made willing that its own ſhame ſhould go to the Redeemer's Glory. Theſe, I ſay, are ſights which Angels deſire to look into.

Certainly your Hearts were more tender, and your Wills more apt to yield and bend in the days of your youth, than they were now when ſin had ſo hardened them, and long continued cuſtom riveted and fixed them; yet then they did not, and now they do yield to the calls and invitations of the Goſpel. Aſcribe all to ſoveraign Grace, and ſay, *Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy Name give the glory.* The obſervation and experience of our own Hearts will furniſh us with Arguments enough to reſiſt all temptations of ſelf-glorying and conceit.

Certainly you were born not of Fleſh, nor of Blood, nor of the will of Man, but of God.

*Conſid.* 3. Laſtly, This is a comfortable Conſideration, that he that waited upon you ſo long, and won your Hearts at laſt, will not forſake you now, that hath gained you at the expence of ſo much pains and patience. Poor Souls, I queſtion not but there are many fears and jealouſies within you, that all will come to nothing, and you ſhall periſh at laſt. Divers things foment theſe jealouſies within your hearts: the weakneſs of your own Graces, which alas, are but in their infancy; the ſenſe you have of your own corruptions, and the great ſtrength they ſtill retain: the ſubtilty of Satan, who imploys all his policies to reduce you; ſometimes roaring after his eſcaped prey with hideous injections, which make your Souls to tremble; ſometimes the diſcouraging apprehenſions of the difficulties of Religion, how far the ſpirituality of active obedience, and the difficulty of paſſive obedience is above your ſtrength; ſometimes feeling within your ſelves ſad alterations, by the hiding of God's face, and withdrawment of ſweet and ſenſible Communion with him. Theſe, and ſuch like things as theſe, cauſe many a qualm to come over your Hearts; but chear up, Chriſt will not loſe at laſt what he purſued ſo long; he that waited ſo many years for thy Soul, will never caſt it away now he hath ſeated himſelf in the poſſeſſion of it.

# SERMON V.

## Revel. III. 20.

*Behold I ſtand at the door,* [*and knock*] &c.

IN the former Point we have ſeen the Redeemer's poſture, a poſture of condeſcending humility, rather the poſture of a Servant than the Lord of all; *Behold I ſtand at the door.* We now come to conſider his action, or motion for entrance, I ſtand *and knock:* this metaphorical action of knocking, ſignifies nothing elſe but the motions made by Chriſt for entrance into the Souls of Sinners; and affords us this fifth Obſervation,

Doct. 5. *That every conviction of Conſcience and motion upon the Affections of Sinners, is a knock of Chriſt from Heaven for entrance into their Souls.*

This action of knocking is aſcribed ſometimes to the Soul, and is expreſſive of its deſires to come into the gracious Preſence and Communion of God; ſo *Mat.* 7. 7. *To him that knocks it ſhall be opened,* i. e. to him that ſeeks by importunate Prayer, Fellowſhip and Communion with the Lord: but here it is applied to Chriſt, and is expreſſive of his importunate deſire to come into union and communion with the Souls of ſinners. Here I ſhall open to you the following particulars:

1. What are the doors of the Soul at which Chriſt knocks.
2. What his knocking at theſe doors implies.

3. By what Inſtruments he knocks at them.

4. In what manner he performs this action.

Firſt, What are the *Doors* of the Soul at which Chriſt knocks. You all know that the term Chriſt here uſed cannot be proper, but metaphorical; 'tis a figurative ſpech, the *Door* is that part which is introductive into the Houſe; and whatever is introductive into the Soul, that is the door of the Soul. Now in the Soul of Man there are many powers and faculties that have this uſe, and are of an introductive nature to let things into the Soul of Man. Some are more outward, as we may ſpeak comparatively; and ſome more inward, as the doors of our houſes are.

Chriſt knocks orderly at them all, one after another, for the operations of the Spirit diſturb not the order of Nature.

1. The firſt door that opens and lets into the Soul is the *Underſtanding*; nothing paſſes into the Soul, but it muſt firſt come through this door of the Underſtanding; nothing can touch the Heart or move the affections, but what hath firſt toucht the Underſtanding. Hence we read ſo often in Scripture of the opening of the Underſtanding, that being as it were the foredoor of the Soul.

2. Within this is the Royal Gate of the Soul, *viz. The Will of Man*, that noble and imperial Power. Many things may paſs into the Mind or Underſtanding of a Man, and yet be able to get no further, the door of the Will may be ſhut againſt them. There were many precious Truths of God let into the Underſtandings of the Heathens by the light of Nature, but could never get further, their Hearts and Wills were lockt and ſhut up againſt them; as you may ſee, *Rom.* 1. 18. *They held the Truths of God in Unrighteouſneſs*; that is, they bound and impriſoned thoſe common notices the Law of Nature impreſt upon their Minds concerning the Being and Nature of God, and the duties of both Tables. Theſe Truths could get no further into their Souls: and, which is of ſad and dreadful conſideration, Chriſt himſelf ſtands betwixt theſe two doors in the Souls of many perſons; he is got into their Underſtandings and Conſciences, they are convinced of the poſſibility and neceſſity of obtaining Jeſus Chriſt, but ſtill the door of their Will is barr'd againſt him, which drew from him that ſad complaint, *John* 5. 40. *You will not come unto me that you might have life.* When this door of the Will is once effectually opened, then all the inner doors of the Affections are quickly ſet open to receive and welcom him. Deſires, Joy, Delight, and all the reſt ſtand open to him. Theſe are the doors at which the Redeemer knocks.

Secondly, Next we muſt conſider what is meant by Chriſt's knocking at theſe doors, and what that action implies. In the general, knocking is nothing elſe but an action ſignificative of the deſires of one that is without to come in, 'tis a ſign appointed to that end: And what is Chriſt's knocking but a ſignification to the Soul of his earneſt deſires to come into it; a notice given to the Soul of Chriſt's willingneſs to poſſeſs it for his own habitation? And it is as much as if Chriſt ſhould ſay, Soul, thou art the Houſe that was built by my Hand, purchaſed and redeemed by my Blood; I have an unqueſtionable right to it, and now demand entrance. More particularly, there are divers great things implied in this gracious act of Chriſt's knocking at the door of the Soul.

1. It implies the ſpecial favour and diſtinguiſhing grace and goodneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, that he will ſtand and knock at our doors, when he paſſes by ſo great a part of the World, never giving one ſuch knock or call at other Mens doors; it is certainly a moſt glorious and admirable condeſcenſion and favour of Heaven, and wherever it is ſucceſsful, it ſpeaks a Man highly favoured of God. O that when Chriſt paſſes by the Souls of Thouſands, and Millions, that would certainly afford him as comfortable an habitation as our Souls can do, and will not give one effectual knock, or call at their doors all the days of their life; that he will pleaſe to turn aſide to thy Soul, and wait, and knock there for entrance: I ſay, here is one of the greateſt acts of favour that can be ſhewn to the Soul of a ſinner. How many Souls be there in the World equal in natural Dignity to yours, and of ſweeter natural Tempers, whom yet the Lord Jeſus lets alone in the quiet poſſeſſion of Satan, *Luke* 11. 21. There is a deep ſilence and ſtilneſs in their Conſciences, no ſtirrings nor diſturbances by Convictions, but through a dreadful Judgment of God they are left in a deep ſleep; and if their Conſciences at any time begin to grumble, how ſoon are they huſht and quieted again by Satan? What the condition of the World was in former Ages we may ſee in *Acts* 14. 16. *Who in times paſt ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own ways.* O 'tis the greateſt Mercy in the World for the ſleepy Conſcience of a ſinner to be rouſed by Convictions, becauſe it is introductive to all other Spiritual Mercies. I confeſs this act of Grace is little apprehended by the Sons and Daughters of Men; much rather would poor ſinners be let alone than be thus diſturbed by troubleſom convictions; and when Chriſt diſturbs their reſt, how do they ſtartle at the knocks of his Word and Spirit? How angry be they that they cannot be let alone to enjoy their quiet ſleep in ſin till the flames of Hell awaken them? *Mr. Fenner*, that great and eminent Inſtrument of God in this Work, tells us in one of his Sermons, how it fared with a certain Man that came to hear him preach: It ſeems the Word had got entrance into his Conſcience, and gave it a terrible Alarm, and as he was going home, ſome that followed him, heard him thus blaming and bemoaning himſelf; *O what a fool, what a beaſt was I to come under this Sermon to day? I ſhall never have peace and quietneſs any more.* And what is the reaſon that ſmooth and general Preaching is ſo much applauded and affected in the World, and cloſe convincing Doctrine ſo much ſhunned and hated, but this, that ſinners are very loth to be diſquieted and have their Conſciences throughly awakened? Well, whatever your apprehenſions be, certainly it is an unſpeakable mercy for Chriſt to knock and diſquiet the Souls of ſinners by his calls. That's the firſt thing.

2. The next thing implied in this action of Chriſt is this, That the firſt motions towards the recovery and ſalvation of ſinners begin not in themſelves, but in Chriſt. We never knock at Heavens door by Prayer till Chriſt hath firſt knockt at our doors by his Spirit: Did not Chriſt move firſt, there would be no motions after him in our Hearts; we move towards him, becauſe he hath firſt moved upon our Souls. Chriſt might ſit long enough unſought and undeſired, did he not make the firſt motion. All our motions are

ſecondary and conſequential motions, *Iſa.* 65. 1. *I am found of them that ſought me not.* As we love him becauſe he firſt loved us, ſo we ſeek after him becauſe he firſt ſought us. Alas, poor ſinners are as well ſatisfied as any People in the World can be, to lie faſt aſleep in the Devil's Arms. When the Spirit of God goes forth with the Word of Conviction, he finds the Souls of Men in the very ſame poſture which the Angels, that had ſurveyed the World, reported the whole Earth to be in, *Zach.* 1. 11. *Behold all the Earth ſitteth ſtill, and is at reſt.* Every man ſettled and ſatisfied in his own way; what a ſtrange ſtillneſs, and midnight ſilence is there amongſt ſinners? Not a ſigh, not a cry to be heard for ſin: So the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 14. 2. repreſents the caſe of ſinners; *The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the Children of Men, to ſee if there were any that did underſtand and ſeek God. They are all gone aſide*, &c. There is one thing that is admirably ſtrange in this caſe, that even thoſe Men and Women whoſe Rattles of earthly pleaſures and delights, which brought them into this ſleep and ſecurity, are taken away from them by the hand of Providence, I mean their Eſtates, Health, Children, *&c.* yet they awake not; there are no ſtirrings after God. O what a dead ſleep hath Sin caſt the Souls of ſinners into! You have a notable Scripture to this purpoſe, in *Job* 35. 9, 10. they are the words of *Elihu* concerning Men and Women under grievous oppreſſion, Perſons ſqueezed and ground by the cruel Hands of wicked Men: *by reaſon of the multitude of oppreſſions they make the oppreſſed to cry; they cry out by reaſon of the Arm of the Mighty: but none ſaith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth ſongs in the night?* i. e. Succour, Comfort and Refreſhment to the afflicted.

Here are Men turned out of their Eſtates, thrown into Priſons, caſt upon all extremities and miſeries; and what do theſe poor Creatures do? Why, ſaith he, they cry by reaſon of their oppreſſion: O my Father, or my Mother, my Wife, my Child, my Eſtate, my Liberty; but none ſaith, where is my God? O my ſin, or my miſery by reaſon of ſin! *Where is he that giveth Songs in the night?* The People of God when they lye muſing upon their beds under affliction, they have their *Songs in the Night*; in the midſt of the multitude of their troubled thoughts within them, the Comforts of God delight their Souls. Thoſe are their Songs in the Night, but no ſuch word or thought in carnal Men. How plain is it, that all the firſt motions of Salvation have their firſt ſpring and riſe in God, and not in us? That's the ſecond thing implied in Chriſt's knocking.

3. Chriſt's knocking at the door of the Heart, implies the method of the Spirit in Converſion, to be congruous and agreeable to the nature of Man's Soul. Mark Chriſt's expreſſion in the Text, he doth not ſay, *Behold I come to the door* and break it open by violence; no, Chriſt makes no forcible entries whether Sinners will or no; he will come in by conſent of the Will, or not at all. I ſtand and knock; if any man open the door, I will come in to him. There is a great difference between a friendly admiſſion by conſent, and a forcible entrance: in a forcible entrance bars of Iron are brought to break open the door; but in a friendly admiſſion one knocks, and the other opens. Forcible actions are unſutable to the nature of the Will, whoſe motions are free and ſpontaneous; therefore it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 110. 3. *The People ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* 'Tis true, the power of God is upon the Will of Man in the day of his Converſion, or elſe it would never open to Chriſt; but yet that power of God doth not act againſt the freedom of man's Will, by co-action and force; no, but of unwilling he makes it willing; taking away the obſtinacy and reluctancy of the Will by the efficacy of his Grace, which ſome Divines call *victrix delectatio*, a ſweet and pleaſant victory; and ſo the door of the Will ſtill opens freely. *Hoſea* 11. 4. *I drew them with the cords of a Man, with the bands of Love. I drew them*, there's Almighty Power: but how did this Power draw them? With the cords of a Man, *i. e.* with rational Arguments, convincing the Judgment. Beaſts are driven and forced, but Men are drawn by Reaſon, and will not move without it if they act like themſelves. It muſt be confeſſed, that when the day of God's Power is come for the bringing home of a poor ſinner to Chriſt, he cannot reſiſt the power of God's Spirit that draws him effectually; *Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me:* yet ſtill the Soul comes freely by the conſent of his Will; for this is the method of Chriſt in drawing Souls to him. There is in the day of a ſinner's Converſion a *Kid*, an *Offer* made for the Will both by Satan and Chriſt. Satan bids Riches, Honours, and Pleaſures, with eaſe and quietneſs to the Fleſh in the enjoyment of them; abide where thou art, ſaith Satan, remain with me, and thou ſhalt eſcape all the perſecutions, loſſes and troubles of the World, which Conſcience entangles other Men in; thou ſhalt draw thy life through peace and pleaſure to thy dying day. O ſaith the Fleſh, this is a good motion, what can be better for me? But then ſaith Chriſt, doſt thou not conſider that all theſe enjoyments will quickly be at an end, and what ſhall become of thee then? Behold, I offer thee the free, full, and final pardon of thy ſins; Peace and Reconciliation with God, Treaſures in Heaven, all theſe ſhall be thine, with Troubles, Reproaches and Perſecutions in this World. The Underſtanding and Conſcience of a ſinner being convinced of the vanity of earthly things, and the indiſpenſable neceſſity of pardon and peace with God: I ſay, when a convinced Judgment hath duly ballanced theſe things, and laid them before the Will, and the Spirit of God puts forth his Power in the renovation of it; it moves towards Chriſt freely, and yet cannot according to its natural order act otherwiſe than it doth. And doubtleſs this is the true meaning of that expreſſion, ſo often miſtaken and abuſed, in *Luk.* 14. 23. *Compel them to come in.* What! by forcing Men againſt the light of their Conſciences? No, no; to the ſhame of many Proteſtants let us hear the Gloſs of *Stella* a Popiſh Commentator upon the place. *Chriſt* (ſaith he) *compels Men to come in, by ſhewing to their Will ſuch an excelling good as it cannot but embrace:* For *voluntas naturaliter fertur in bonum*; the Will is naturally carried to the beſt good. And thus the Spirit works upon the Soul harmoniouſly and agreeably to its own Nature. That's the third thing implied in Chriſt's knocking.

4. Chriſt's knocking at the door of the Soul, manifeſtly implies the immediate acceſs of the Spirit of God unto the Soul of Man; that he can come to the very innermoſt door of the Soul at his pleaſure, and make what impreſſions upon it

he pleaſeth. As for other inſtruments uſed in this Work, they have no ſuch privilege or power; Miniſters can but knock at the external door of the Senſes. Thine Eyes ſhall ſee thy Teachers, we can ſee their Perſons and hear their voices; we can reaſon with Sinners and plead with their Souls; but awaken them we cannot, open their Hearts we cannot. We can only lodg our meſſage in their Ears, and leave it to the Spirit of God to make it effectual. 'This is a Royalty belonging unto the Spirit of God, incommunicable to Angels or Men. If an Angel from Heaven were the Preacher, he could not give one immediate ſtroke to the Conſcience, much leſs can Man; we have no dominion over your Conſciences: The Keys of the doors of your Souls hang not at our girdles, but are in the Hands of Chriſt, *Revel.* 3. 7. *He hath the key of* David, *he openeth and no Man ſhutteth; and he ſhutteth and no Man openeth.* The Conſcience and all the Faculties lie naked and open to the ſtroke of God's Spirit; he can wound them and heal them, and make what impreſſions he pleaſeth upon them. Learn hence what need there is both for Miniſters and People, before they enter upon the ſolemn Ordinances of God, to lift up their Hearts by Prayer for the bleſſing and power of the Spirit upon them. Lord, ſend forth thy Spirit, pour it forth upon, and with thy Word. Ah, how many Sermons have we preach'd and you heard, and yet there is no opening? Theſe are the four things implied in Chriſt's knocking at the door, *viz.* Condeſcending Grace; All firſt motions begin in God; The motions of his Spirit are congruous and agreeable to the nature of the Soul; and that his Spirit can have immediate acceſs to the innermoſt faculties and powers of the Soul at his pleaſure. Now in the next place let us conſider,

Thirdly, By what Inſtruments Chriſt knocks at the Doors, that is, the Judgment, Conſcience and Will of a ſinner. And theſe are two, *viz.*

1. His Word.
2. His Providence.

Here my Work will be to ſhew you how the Spirit of God makes uſe both of the Word and Works of God, to rouſe and open the Conſciences and Hearts of ſinners. Theſe are the two Hammers or Inſtruments of the Spirit by which he knocks at the door of the Heart.

1. The Word, written or preached, but eſpecially preached: to this Chriſt gives the preference above all other Inſtruments imployed about this Work; and anſwerably the Word is called God's hammer, *Jer.* 23. 29. *Is not my Word like Fire, and as the Hammer which breaketh the rocks in pieces?* By this Hammer Chriſt raps at the door of a ſinners Soul, to give warning that he is there. The Spirit of God can open the Heart immediately if he pleaſeth; but he will honour his word in this Work. And therefore, when *Lydia*'s Heart was to be opened, *Paul*, the great Goſpel-Preacher, muſt be invited even by an Angel to come over to *Macedonia*, and aſſiſt in that bleſſed Work, *Acts* 16. 9. *Lydia* was to be converted, her Heart muſt be opened to Chriſt; the Angel could not do it, but calls for the help of the *Apoſtle*, God's appointed Inſtrument to carry on that Work. *I have made thee* (ſaith God to *Paul*) *a Miniſter and a witneſs to open their Eyes, and turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God,* Acts 26. 18. Now there be three ways in which the Spirit uſes the Word as his Hammer in knocking at the door of the Soul.

(1.) He knocks by the particular convictions of the Word upon the Conſcience; this knock by conviction rings and ſounds through all the rooms and chambers of the Soul; particular and effectual Conviction wounds to the very centre of the Soul. Ah, when the Word ſhall come home by the Spirit's particular application, like that of *Nathan*'s to *David*, *Thou art the Man*; then all the powers of the Soul are rouzed and alarmed; now it pierces as a two-edged Sword, *Heb.* 4. 12. divides the Soul and Spirit, the ſuperiour and inferiour faculties of it; cuts down by the back-bone, lays open the ſecret guilt, and innermoſt thoughts of a Man's Heart, before which the ſinner cannot ſtand. The ſecrets of his Heart are made manifeſt; and falling down on his Face, he muſt acknowledg that God is in the Word of a truth, 1 *Cor.* 14. 24. O theſe convictions of the Word are ſuch a rap, ſuch a knock at the door of the Conſcience, as will never be forgotten, no not in Heaven, to all Eternity.

(2.) Chriſt knocks in the Word by its terrible comminations and awful threatnings, menacing the Soul that opens not with eternal ruin; theſe are dreadful knocks: O ſinner, ſaith Chriſt, wilt thou not open? Shall all the tenders of my Grace made to thee be in vain? Know then that this thy obſtinacy ſhall be thy damnation. Thus the Word denounces ruin in the name of the great and terrible God to all wilful impenitents and obſtinate unbelievers, *John* 3. 36. *He that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* O dreadful ſound! like unto which is that, *John* 8. 24. *If ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins:* q. d. Thy *Mittimus* for Hell ſhall be made and ſigned. Will you not come to me that you might have life? then I will foretel what death you ſhall die, you ſhall even *die in your ſins.* O it were better for thee to die like a Dog in a ditch, than to die in thy ſins. Theſe are loud knocks of the Word, terrible ſounds, yet no more than needs to ſtartle the drouſy Conſciences of ſinners. And then,

(3.) The Spirit knocks by the gracious invitations of the Word, the ſweet allurements and gracious inſinuations of it; and without this no Heart would ever open to Chriſt. It is not froſt and ſnow, ſtorms and thunder, but the gentle diſtilling dews, and cheriſhing Sun-beams, that make the flowers open in the Spring. The terrors of the Law may be preparative, but the grace of the Goſpel is that which effectually opens the ſinners Heart. The obdurate flint will ſooner fly when ſmitten upon the ſoft pillow, than upon the anvil. Now the Goſpel abounds with alluring invitations to draw the Will and open the Heart of a ſinner; ſuch is that, *Mat.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden; and I will give you reſt.* O what a charming voice is here! He that conſiders it, may well wonder what Heart in the World can reſiſt it: like unto this is that in *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money let him come; yea, let him come and buy Wine and Milk without mony and without price.* q. d. Come ſinner, come; tho thou have no qualifications, nor worthineſs, nor righteouſneſs of thy own; tho thou be but a heap of ſin and vileneſs, yet come; my Grace is a *gift*, not a *ſale*: and ſuch is that in *John* 7. 37. *In the laſt day, the great day of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood up and cried, If any Man thirſt, let* *him come to me and drink.* q. d. My Grace is no ſealed Fountain, 'tis free and open to the greateſt of ſinners; if they thirſt, they are invited to come and drink. This is that Oil of Goſpel Grace which makes the Key turn ſo pleaſantly and effectually amongſt all the croſs wards of Man's Will. And thus you ſee how the Word preached becomes an Inſtrument in the Spirit's Hand, to open the door of a ſinners Heart, at which it knocks by its mighty Convictions, dreadful Threats, and gracious Invitations.

2. We next come to the ſecond *Hammer* by which the Spirit knocks at the ſinners Heart, and that is the providential Works of God. Theſe in ſubſerviency to the Word, are of excellent uſe to awaken ſinners, and make them open their Hearts to Chriſt. God hath magnified his Word above all his Name; yet there are ſome of the providential Works of God greatly ſerviceable in this caſe; the Word ſanctifies Providences, and Providences aſſiſt the Word, and make it work. Now there are two ſorts of Providential Diſpenſations which the Lord Jeſus makes uſe of to gain entrance for him into the Hearts of Men, *viz.*

(1.) Judgments.
(2.) Mercies.

(1.) Judgments and Afflictions: the Word of God many times works not till ſome ſtroke of God come to quicken and aſſiſt it; thus did the Lord open the Heart of that Monſter of wickedneſs *Manaſſeh*, the Word would not work alone, but a ſmart rod quickned its operation: 2. *Chron.* 33. 10, 11, 12. *And the Lord ſpake to* Manaſſeh, *and to his People; but they would not hearken. Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the Captains of the hoſt of the King of* Aſſyria, *which took* Manaſſeh *among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to* Babylon. *And when he was in affliction, he beſought the Lord his God, and humbled himſelf greatly before the God of his Fathers.*

Thus the Heart of this Man relented under the Word aſſiſted by the Rod. Ah, 'tis good that God takes ſuch a courſe with ſome ſinners, elſe the Word would do them no good: and to this purpoſe is that in *Job* 36. 8, 9, 10. *And if they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction; then he ſheweth them their work and their tranſgreſſion, that they have exceeded; and openeth their Ears to Diſcipline.* This is that rough courſe the obſtinacy of Mens Hearts makes neceſſary for their recovery; and therefore it is very obſervable that ſome words of God have lain dead in ſome ſinners Hearts for years together, and at laſt have begun to work under ſome ſmart and cloſe Rod. Alas, while all things are pleaſant and proſperous about us, the Word hath but little operation and effect: *Jer.* 22. 21, 22. *I ſpake unto thee in thy proſperity, but thou ſaidſt I will not hear: this hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedſt not my voice. The wind ſhall eat up all thy paſtures, and thy lovers ſhall go into captivity; ſurely then ſhalt thou be aſhamed and confounded for all thy wickedneſs.* q. d. Your Eyes are ſo dazled with the beautiful Flowers, and your Ears ſo charmed with the *Syren* Songs and Lullabies of earthly delights, that my Word can take no place upon you. Let an Eaſtwind blow, and wither up theſe Flowers; then the Word ſhall work, and Conſcience reſent the concernments of Eternity. This courſe God is feign to take with many of you; here you ſit from Sabbath to Sabbath under the Word, and nothing takes place upon your Hearts. Will you not hear the voice of my Word? Go Death, ſaith God, and ſmite that Man's Child dead; I will try what that will do; go Poverty, and blaſt his Eſtate, and ſee what that will do; go Sickneſs, and ſmite his Body, and ſhake him over the Graves Mouth, I will ſee what that will do. Thus God ſends to ſinners, as *Abſalom* ſent to *Joab*, who refuſed to come near him, till he ſet fire to his field of Corn, and then away comes *Joab*, 2 *Sam.* 14. 29, 30, 31. And thus the Lord opened the Heart of the *Jaylor*, by putting him into a fright, a panick fear of Death, *Acts* 16. 27. And thus doth the Lord deviſe means to bring back his baniſhed.

(2.) As God makes uſe of the hammer of Judgments, ſo he makes uſe of Mercies to make way for Chriſt into the Hearts of Men. Every Mercy is a call, a knock of God: and truly if there be any ingenuity left unextinguiſhed in the Heart, one would think Mercy ſhould prevail more than all the Judgments in the World, *Rom.* 2. 4. *Knoweſt thou not that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to Repentance?* q. d. Doſt thou not ſee the hand of mercy ſtretched out to lead thee into a corner, there to mourn over thy ſins committed againſt ſo gracious and merciful a God? By every mercy you receive, Chriſt doth as it were fee you to open your Hearts to him; they are ſo many gifts ſent from Heaven to make way for Chriſt into your Hearts. It would be an endleſs task to enumerate all the Mercies beſtowed to this end upon the unregenerate: but ſurely this is the errand of them all; and the Lord takes it very ill when his end is not anſwered in them: hence is that complaint, *Jer.* 5. 24. *Neither ſay they in their Heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth us rain, both the former and the latter, in his ſeaſon.* Some of you have been marvelouſly preſerved in times of common Contagion and Death, when thouſands have fallen at your right hand and left: then have you been preſerved or recovered, according to that, *Exod.* 15. 26. *I will put none of thoſe Diſeaſes upon thee, for I am the Lord that healeth thee.* I am *Jehovah Rophe*, the Lord the Phyſician: many of you have been at the Graves mouth, in many Diſeaſes, others upon the Deeps; yet the hand of mercy pulled you back, and ſuffered you not to drop into the Grave and Hell in the ſame moment. O what a knock was here given by the hand of Mercy at thy hard Heart! Certainly if Men would but obſerve, they might ſee a ſtrange, marvellous working and moulding of things by the hand of Providence, for the production of thouſands of Mercies for them; and if Mercy would do the work, and win you over to Chriſt, many rods had been ſpared, which your obſtinacy hath made neceſſary. O ungrateful ſinners! Doth your Redeemer thus woo and fee you by ſo many gifts of Mercy, and yet will you ſhut him out? *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh People and unwiſe?* For which of all his benefits do your ungrateful Souls ſhut the door upon him?

Fourthly, You ſee what Chriſt's knocking at the Soul of a ſinner implies, and by what inſtruments it is performed. In the laſt place, we will conſider the manner how this action is performed, in the ten following Particulars, wherein much of the myſtery of Converſion will be opened; the Lord grant your experience may anſwer them. We cannot indeed exactly deſcribe

ſcribe and mark all the footſteps of the Spirit in this Work upon the Souls of Men; yet theſe things ſeem eminently obſervable.

1. The knocks of Chriſt at the ſinners Heart are *ſilent* and *ſecret* to all perſons in the World except the Soul it ſelf at whoſe door he knocks: here be many hundreds of you this day under the Word; if the Lord ſhall this day knock by Conviction at any Man's Heart, none will hear that knock, but that Man only; for it is a knock without ſound or noiſe to any but the particular Soul concerned in it. It was fore-propheſied of our Redeemer, and of this very act of his, *Iſa.* 42. 2. *He ſhall not cry, nor lift up, nor cauſe his voice to be heard in the Street.* The Kingdom of God cometh not into the Souls of Men with publick obſervation: you read in 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *No Man knoweth the things of a Man, ſave the Spirit of a Man that is in him.* None knows what Convictions another Man's Conſcience fels, until he himſelf ſhall diſcover them; you hear the ſame ſound of the Goſpel, but you hear not the inward ſtroaks it gives to another Man's Conſcience. Chriſt's approaches to the Soul make no noiſe; little do we know what the Spirit of Chriſt whiſpers in the Ear of him that ſits next us. 'Tis ſaid of the inward comforts of the Spirit, *I will give him the hidden Manna which no Man knows but he that eateth of it.* This is true alſo of inward terrors and troubles. Chriſt's knocks by Conviction are but a ſecret whiſper of his Spirit in the Ear of a ſinner, ſaying, Thou art the Man, this is thy caſe. That is the firſt thing in the manner of Chriſt's knocking, 'tis a ſilent knock without publick ſound.

2. Theſe ſilent inward knocks of the Spirit of Chriſt, tho they are heard by none but the Soul it ſelf, yet do they greatly differ as to the terror, or mildneſs of them in different ſubjects. Some hear them with more terror and aſtoniſhment, others in a mild and gentle manner. When the Lord knockt at the *Jaylor's* Conſcience, *Acts* 16. 29, 30. it was a terrible ſtroak; he called for a light, and ſprang in like a Man diſtracted; and trembling and aſtonied fell down at the Apoſtles feet, crying, *Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?* Here was a terrible knock indeed, which almoſt affrighted his Soul out of his Body; it is as if he had ſaid, Tell me, for the Lord's ſake, and tell me quickly, whether there be any way of Salvation, and where it lies, for I am a loſt Man, an undone Soul. But when the Lord opened the Heart of *Lydia*, there were no ſuch terrors, the Lord ſpake to her in a more mild and gentle voice; as you ſee *verſ.* 14. The Spirit of God varies his method according to the temper of the Soul he worketh on. Knotty pieces need greater wedges and harder blows to rive them aſunder: and as he directs his Miniſters, *Jude* 22. to make a difference, to deal tenderly and compaſſionately with ſome; but others, to ſave with fear; ſo he himſelf obſerveth like different methods.

3. Some knocks of Chriſt are *ſucceſsful*, and obtain the deſired effect. He knocks and the Soul opens; but others are inſucceſsful, he knocks once and again by Convictions, which may cauſe the Conſcience for the preſent to ſtartle a little, but there is no opening to Chriſt by Faith. O friends, this is of dreadful conſideration, *Prov.* 1. 24. *I called, and you refuſed; I ſtretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded.* There's a call without an anſwer, a knock and no opening; and theſe things are very common, eſpecially among the unconverted, that live under a lively Goſpel rouzing Miniſtry: of this Chriſt complains, *Mat.* 11. 16, 17. *Whereunto ſhall I liken this generation? They are like unto Children ſitting in the market-place, and calling to their fellows, ſaying, We have piped unto you, and you have not danced: We have mourned unto you, but you have not lamented.* q. d. Neither the delicious airs and melody of Goſpel-grace, nor the mournful and dreadful threats of damnation to unbelievers avail any thing to open your Hearts to embrace me; no voices from mount *Gerezim* or mount *Ebal* will prevail with you. Ah, how many ſad witneſſes unto this truth have I now before mine Eyes! But God forbid it ſhould be thus all round. No, no, there be ſome Souls who hear and open, even every one that hath heard and learned of the Father, *John* 6. 45. When the Spirit of God puts forth his Power with the Word, then, and not till then it becomes ſucceſsful.

4. Sometimes Chriſt knocks with a thick ſucceſſion of Convictions, a quick repetition of his calls. Some Men have had thouſands of Convictions in a few years; for in this caſe the Lord ſaith, as it is *Exod.* 4. 8. *If they will not hearken to the voice of the firſt ſign, yet they may believe the voice of the latter ſign.* And yet ſometimes neither the former nor the latter avail any thing. *How oft would I have gathered thy Children, and ye would not? Matth.* 23. 37. How often? intimating the many calls Chriſt gave *Jeruſalem* to come unto him, yet all in vain. Obſtinate ſinners, Chriſt hath been knocking and calling at ſome of your Conſciences from your very Child-hood; thouſands of Convictions have been tryed upon ſome of you, and yet to this day your Souls are ſhut faſt againſt him. The Lord hath waited from year to year for your anſwer, by this ſignifying how loth he is to part with you; ſuch a time thou waſt upon a ſick-bed nigh unto Death; at ſuch a time under ſuch a Sermon, and then Chriſt knockt at thy Soul: if all this be in vain, ſo many Convictions as you have ſtifled, ſo many fagots you carry with you to Hell to increaſe your flames and torments. Yet commonly thoſe quick repetitions and redoublings of the ſtroaks of Convictions end well; and it is a good ſign when one Conviction revives another, and the Lord keeps the Soul ſtill waking. But O take heed and try not his Patience too long, leſt the next ſtroak be more dreadful than all the former; not to open your Hearts, but ſmite dead your hopes for Heaven.

5. Sometimes Chriſt knocks *intermittingly*, knocking and ſtopping, a call and ſilence, and that at a conſiderable time and diſtance; a conviction this day, and it may be not another in many Months. There be ſome aged ſinners that have not had more than one or two remarkable rouzings of Conſcience in fifty or ſixty years time, and then no more. Don't think that the Lord will make his Spirit always ſtrive with Men, *Gen.* 6. 3. no, there is a time when God ſaith to the Word, convict the Conſcience of that Man or Woman no more, not a ſtroak more by way of Conviction, but henceforth be thou for Obduration, not to open but to ſhut him up, *Iſa.* 6. 10. Reader, bethink thy ſelf, how long was it ſince thy Conſcience was rouzed and awakened? O ſaith one, ſeven or ten years ago I heard ſuch a Sermon, which tore my Conſcience to pieces. I

fell under ſuch a ſad Providence which rouzed and awakened all my fears, but ſince that time all hath been ſtill and quiet; the Lord give a ſecond awakening leſt you awake with the flames of God's wrath about you. I obſerve, it is uſual when God works upon any very early, he knocks thus intermittingly: now the Conſcience is active and full of trouble, then the vanities of Youth extinguiſh theſe Convictions again; but the Lord follows his deſign, and at laſt the Conviction ſettles and ends in Converſion.

6. Chriſt ſometimes knocks with both Hands at once, with the Word and with the Rod together; the latter in ſubſerviency to the former: and if ever the Soul be like to open, it will open then, when Ordinanees and Afflictions work together. The Word ſmites the Conſcience with Conviction, and at or about the ſame time Providence ſmites the outward man with ſome affliction, to make the Word work effectually; or under ſome ſmart Affliction, a ſutable word is ſeaſonably directed to the Conſcience: and thus *Juncta juvant*, the one aſſiſteth the other, and both together produce the deſired effect. Thus the Lord wrought upon the *Theſſalonians*, 1 Theſſ. 1.6. *And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction.* A Child dies, an Eſtate is loſt, or a Sickneſs ſeizeth at the time when Conſcience is prepared by a Conviction from the Word, or Afflictions have prepared it for the Word. The Rod upon the Back, helps the Word to work upon the Heart; and if both theſe working in fellowſhip will not do the work, there is little hope that any thing will do it.

7. Every knock of Chriſt diſturbs the ſinful reſt of the Soul; it rouzeth guilt in the Conſcience, and puts the inner-man into great diſtreſs and trouble: before Chriſt comes and knocks at the door of the Heart, all is ſtill and quiet within; the Soul is in a quiet ſleep of ſinful ſecurity, no fears or troubles moleſt its reſt. *Luke* 11.21. *When a ſtrong man armed keepeth his Palace, his goods are in peace: But when a ſtronger than he ſhall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he truſted.* The armour which Satan puts into the Hands of ſinners to defend themſelves againſt the convictive ſtroaks of the Word, are the general Mercy of God, the outward Duties of Religion, partial Reformations, &c. But when Chriſt comes by effectual Conviction, he diſarms the ſinner of all theſe pleas, and then the Soul ſees what broken Reeds it leaned upon. *When the Commandment came,* (ſaith *Paul*) *ſin revived, and I died,* Rom. 7. 9. *i. e.* all my vain hopes expired; no artifice of Satan can any longer quiet the ſinners Conſcience; he apprehends himſelf in a miſerable condition, meditates an eſcape; farewel now to ſound and quiet ſleep; no peace till out of danger.

8. Every effectual knock of Chriſt gives an alarm to Hell, and puts Satan to all his ſhifts and arts to ſecure the poſſeſſion of the convinced ſinner. The Devil is a jealous Spirit, and when his intereſt is in danger, he beſtirs himſelf to purpoſe; the time of Conviction is an hour of temptation. *We wreſtle not with fleſh and blood,* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *but againſt Principalities, againſt Powers, againſt the Rulers of the darkneſs of this World, againſt Spiritual wickedneſs* (or wicked Spirits) *in high-places,* or about heavenlies, *Eph.* 6.12. The ſtrife betwixt Satan and the Soul is now for no leſs than the prize of eternal Life; 'tis now for all, or none; for life or death, for Heaven or Hell: the Powers of Hell are now all in Arms to deſtroy Convictions, and ſecure the poſſeſſion of the Soul againſt Chriſt; as when a *Granado* falls into a Gariſon, the firſt care of the Defendants is, to ſtifle and choak it before it break. Whilſt Chriſt is ſpeaking by his Spirit in one Ear, the Devil is whiſpering in the other; and the things he whiſpers to quench Convictions are uſually ſuch as theſe: It is time enough yet, what need ſuch haſt? Enjoy thy pleaſures a little longer, thou may'ſt come to Chriſt and be ſaved at laſt: if that will not do, then he changeth his voice, To what purpoſe wilt thou go to Chriſt? 'Tis now too late; the time of Grace is over; hadſt thou come to him in thy youth, and obeyed his firſt call, it had been ſomewhat, but now it is to no purpoſe. If this will not quiet the Soul, then he ſaith, Thy ſins are too great to be pardoned, there's no hope for ſuch a prodigious ſinner as thou art. If the Lord help the Soul to overcome this, by diſcovering to it the riches of mercy, pardoning the greateſt of ſinners; then he repreſents the multitudes which are in the ſame caſe with the convinced ſinner; Come, fear not, if it go ill with thee, it will be as bad for millions of Men and Women; if thou go to Hell, thouſands will go with thee: but if the Soul be loth to be damned for company, then he bids it look upon the train of troubles and afflictions that come along with Chriſt, and will certainly follow him if the door be opened to let him in; if Chriſt come in, reproaches, loſſes and ſufferings will certainly come in with him; troops of miſeries and calamities follow him; himſelf hath told thee ſo, and art thou mad to ruin all thy comforts in the World, and plunge thy ſelf into a Sea of trouble, for what thine Eyes never ſaw? But if the Soul reply, Theſe are more tolerable than damnation, better my fleſh ſuffer for a time than my Soul be caſt away for ever; then he repreſents the inſuperable difficulties of Religion, what a hard thing it is to be ſaved, how many painful duties and acts of mortification the Soul muſt paſs through. Thus you ſee what an alarm Conviction gives to the powers of Hell.

9. Every effectual knock of Chriſt is followed on, and new Convictions revive old and former ones; and the Lord never leaves knocking till the door be opened; if one Sermon will not do, another ſhall; if one wound be plaiſtered, and healed by the art of Satan, a freſh wound ſhall be made; if a former Conviction vaniſh, the next ſhall be ſealed upon the Soul; and when the Spirit of the Lord ſealeth a Conviction upon the Conſcience, raze it out who can? And here's the difference betwixt ſpecial and common Convictions; common Convictions come and go, they put the Soul in a fright for a day or a month, and then trouble it no more for ever; but ſpecial Convictions will be continued, one thing backs another, for Chriſt is in purſuit of the Soul, and will give it chaſe till at laſt he overtake and come up with it.

10. Laſtly, All the knocks of Chriſt ceaſe and end when the ſinners day of Grace is ended. This is of dreadful conſideration; when the time of Mercy is over, no more ſtrivings of the Spirit with a Man after that. Chriſt ſaith to the drouſie ſinner, as he ſpake to the drouſie Diſciples in the Garden, *Sleep on now, and take your reſt.* So

here, I called thee in ſuch a Sermon, but thou heardeſt not; by ſuch a Providence, but thou obeyedſt not; ſleep on now, and take thy reſt: *My people would not hearken to my voice, and* Iſrael *would none of me; ſo I gave them up to their own Hearts luſt, to walk in their own counſels*, Pſal. 81. 11, 12. *q. d.* I have done with them, the treaty is ended, I will make no more eſſays towards their Converſion and Salvation. *So I gave them up.* Methinks it ſounds as much as this, Take him Sin, Take him Devil, I will have no more to do with him. So *Hoſea* 4. 17. Ephraim *is joined to Idols, let him alone.* His Heart is glued faſt to ſin, he is enamoured upon other Lovers, let him alone. O beloved, 'tis a dreadful thing for God to ſay, Let this Man alone in his formality, and that Man in his carnal ſecurity. Let not this be miſapplyed by poor trembling Souls under Conviction. I know the fear of this Judgment is upon their Hearts, nothing makes them tremble more than leſt the day of Grace be ended with them. But there is no ground for this fear whilſt the Spirit continues convincing, and the Soul trembling leſt his Convictions ſhould prove ineffectual. Thus much of the nature, inſtruments, and manner of Chriſt's knocking at the door of a ſinners Heart. Our way is now opened to a fruitful Application of this Point, which I will wind up in divers neceſſary Uſes.

### I. *Uſe for Information.*

And firſt, The Point before us will be uſeful for Information, in the following Inferences and Deductions.

Infer. 1. *Into how deep a ſleep hath Sin caſt the Souls of ſinners, that Chriſt muſt ſtand ſo long, and give ſuch loud repeated knocks, before it will awake and open to him?* There is the Spirit of a deep ſleep fallen upon Men, like that into which God caſt *Adam.* God ſpeaks once, yea twice, but Man regards it not; 'tis the hardeſt thing in the World to rouze and awaken a Man out of his carnal ſecurity. Look over Satan's Kingdom, and you ſhall find a general ſtilneſs and quietneſs among his Subjects. There's no trouble for Sin, no ſtrivings after Salvation, no cryings out, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* Go into the Crouds of carnal Men and Women, and you ſhall find them all intent and buſie about other matters. How long ſhall you be in their company, before you hear one groan for ſin, or ſee one tear ſlide from their Eyes on that account? Oh, what a marvelous thing is here! Do not their Conſciences know the guilt that lies upon them? Are they not aware of a day of reckoning which approacheth? Yes, yes, theſe things are not hid from their Conſciences: What art then is uſed to keep them ſo ſtill and quiet? Why, there are divers Rattles to ſtill the Conſciences of ſinners, and they do it effectually. There are four cauſes and occaſions of this wonderful ſtilneſs in the Souls of ſinners.

1. Ignorance of the nature of regenerating Grace, taking that for Regeneration which is none of it; thus did the *Jews*, *John* 8. 25. confidently affirm God to be their God, and yet they did not know him. How many poor ignorant creatures think there is no need of any other work of Regeneration, but what paſſed upon them in Baptiſm? They were born and baptized Chriſtians, and that's enough they think to ſave them, *Mat.* 3. 9. *We have* Abraham *to our Father*; they thought it ſufficient that *Abraham*'s blood ran in their Veins, tho there were not a ſpark of *Abraham*'s faith kindled in their Souls: the Lord forgive the ſin of thoſe Men that lead poor Souls into ſuch fatal miſtakes. O if Men were but aware of the neceſſity of a greater and further Work to paſs upon their Souls than their Baptiſm, common powerleſs profeſſion, or the *ſimilar* Works which appear upon formal Hypocrites, Heaven and Earth would ring with their cries. But ignorance of the nature and neceſſity of ſpecial regenerating Grace, like a doſe of *Opium*, caſts the Conſciences of many into this deep ſleep.

2. Freedom from groſſer ſins and pollutions of the World, ſtills and quiets the Conſciences of thouſands; they have had a civil, ſober and fair Education; and tho there be no Grace and Regeneration, yet what Saints do they ſeem to themſelves, being adorned with ſobriety and civility! This ſtilled the Conſcience of the *Phariſee*, Luk. 18. 11. *God I thank thee that I am not as other Men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this Publican.* Thus like delicate *Agag* they ſpruce up themſelves with moral homolitical virtues, wherein many thouſand Heathens were more gay than themſelves; but Juſtice will hew them to pieces as *Agag* was, for all their moral ornaments and endowments.

3. The ſtrict performance of the external Duties of Religion quiets the Conſciences of many; they queſtion not but thoſe that do ſo well ſhall fare well, and that God will never damn Men and Women that keep their Church, and ſay their Prayers as they do. Thus the carnal Jews deluded themſelves, crying, *The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord:* as malefactors in ſome of our neighbouring Kingdoms, fly to the Church from the hand of Juſtice, ſo do theſe; but God will pluck them from the Horns of the Altar, and convince them that the empty name of Religion is no ſecurity from damnation.

4. Many Conſciences are ſtill'd and quieted in a natural ſinful ſtate, by miſinterpreting the voices of Providence; it may be God proſpers your earthly affairs, ſucceeds and ſmiles upon your undertakings; and this you conclude muſt be a token of his love and favour: But alas, this is a great miſtake, the Lord give you better evidences of his Love than theſe; for who proſper more in the World than wicked Men? And who are moſt croſt than the People of God? Read *Job* 21. and *Pſal.* 73. and compare both with *Eccleſ.* 9. 1. and you will quickly find the vanity of all hopes built upon ſuch a foundation.

However by ſuch things as theſe are, the God of this World blinds the Eyes of multitudes.

Infer. 2. *If every conviction be a knock of Chriſt, how deeply are all Souls concerned in the ſucceſs and iſſue of them?*

Conviction is an *Embrio* of the new Creature; if it go out its full time, and come to a perfect new Birth, it brings forth Salvation to your Souls; if it miſcarry finally, you are finally loſt. It is of infinite concernment therefore to every Man and Woman to be tender over thoſe Convictions their Conſciences go big withal. 'Tis true, Conviction and Converſion are two things; there may be Conviction without Converſion, tho there can be no Converſion without Conviction. The bloſſoms upon the Trees in the Spring of the Year, cannot properly be called Fruit, they are rather the rudiments of Fruit, or ſomething in order to fruit: if they open kindly and knit or ſet firmly, perfect Fruit follows them; but if a blaſt, or a froſty morning kill them, no Fruit is to be expected. Thus it is here, great care therefore ought to be taken about the preſervation and ſucceſs of Convictions, both by

1. The Soul it ſelf that is under them,
2. And by all others that are concerned about them.

1. What care ſhould the Soul it ſelf have, upon whom Convictions are wrought: Have a care Friends how you quench them, divert or hinder the operations of them; leſt you hinder, as much as in you lies, the very conception of Chriſt in your Souls by them. I remember it is ſaid, *Exod.* 21. 22. *If Men ſtrive and hurt a Woman with Child, and miſchief follow; life ſhall be given for life.* The life of your Souls is bound up in the life of your Convictions. I know it is hard for Men and Women to dwell with their own Convictions; Guilt and Wrath are ſad Subjects for Mens thoughts to dwell upon; but yet 'tis far better to dwell with the thoughts of Sin and Wrath here, than to lie ſweltring under them in Hell for ever. You may be rid of your Convictions and your Salvation together; be not too eager after Peace, a good Trouble is better than a falſe Peace. And on the other ſide, beware that your Convictions and Troubles turn not into diſcouragements to Faith; this will croſs the proper intention of them: They are Chriſt's knocks for entrance, and were never intended to be bars or ſtumbling blocks in your way to him; not ſtops, but ſteps in your way to Chriſt.

2. Let all others that are concerned about convinced Souls beware what Counſels they give, and what Rules they preſcribe, leſt they render them abortive, and deſtroy all in the bud. There are two errors too commonly committed, one *in exceſs*, perſwading Souls under trouble of Conſcience that there's no coming for them to Chriſt, unleſs they be ſo and ſo prepared, humbled juſt at ſuch a degree; this is dangerous Counſel, it over-heats the troubles of Conſcience, and keeps the Soul from its proper preſent duty and remedy. I am ſure *Paul* and *Silas* took no ſuch courſe with the convinced Jailor, nor *Peter* with the three thouſand wounded Conſciences, *Acts* 2. Nor do I find where God hath ſtated the time and degree of Spiritual Troubles, ſo that there muſt be no addreſſes to Chriſt in the way of Faith, until they have ſuffered them ſo long, and to ſuch an height: If they have imbittered ſin to the Soul, and made it ſee the neceſſity of a Saviour, I think they cannot move too ſoon after Chriſt in the way of Faith. Let not Men ſet bounds where God ſets none.

There is another error committed *in defect*, when Promiſes and Comforts are preſently applied, before the nature of Faith is known, or one act of recumbency put forth towards Chriſt: Theſe haſty comforts come to nothing; they will not, they cannot ſtand. 'Tis a dangerous thing to apply Goſpel-cordials, and pour out the precious Ointment of the Promiſes upon them that were never heartſick for ſin; when upon every ſlight trouble, which is but as an early dew, the peculiar conſolations of penitent and believing Souls are hand over head applied to them: How many ſuch unskilful *Empericks* are there in every place? ſuch as the Prophet *Jeremy* complains of, *They have healed the hurt of the Daughter of my People ſlightly, crying Peace, Peace, where there is no Peace.* Remember the foundation is now laying for Eternity, and that this is the time of deep conſideration; Men and Women muſt ponder the terms, and count the coſt, and deliberately accept and cloſe with Chriſt, before the Conſolations of the Promiſes can be regularly adminiſtred to them.

Infer. 3. *What a ſingular bleſſing is a rouzing faithful Miniſtry among the People?* By ſuch a Miniſtry Chriſt knocks powerfully; this is one of the greateſt bleſſings God can beſtow upon a People, next to the ſaving effects of it, when he ſends among them Powerful, Judicious Preachers of the Goſpel, under whoſe Miniſtry their Conſciences cannot ſleep quietly. Theſe are the proper Inſtruments Chriſt knocks at Mens Hearts by: and as for thoſe Prophets that ſow pillows for drowſie ſinners to ſleep quietly upon, the Lord owns them not for his, *Lam.* 2. 14. *Thy Prophets* (not mine but thine) *have ſeen vain and fooliſh things for thee, they have not diſcovered thine iniquity.*

'Tis true, thoſe Miniſters that give Men no reſt nor quietneſs in their ſins, muſt expect but little reſt and quietneſs themſelves. What is it for Miniſters to preach home to the Conſciences of others, but to pull down the rage of the World upon their own Heads? But certainly you will have cauſe to bleſs God to Eternity for caſting your lot under ſuch a Miniſtry; and the Lord accounts ſuch a mercy ſufficient to recompence any outward affliction that lies upon you, *Iſa.* 30. 20. You fare richly under ſuch Doctrine, tho the Lord ſhould feed you with the bread of affliction, and give you the waters of adverſity to drink; this makes amends for all, *Thine Eyes ſhall behold thy Teachers, and they ſhall be driven no more into corners.* O bleſſed be God that *England*'s corners are this day emptied, that its Pulpits may be filled with laborious faithful Miniſters. O that the knocks of Chriſt might this day be heard in all the Cities, Towns, and Villages of this Nation! The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto us; this mercy is invaluable; pray that the Lord would continue it, and make all your Miniſters and Means, whether more publick or private, ſucceſsful.

Infer. 4. *And then Laſtly, let all Men beware of thoſe things that deafen their Ears, and drown the ſound of Chriſt's knocks and calls in the Goſpel.*

What pernicious Enemies to the Souls of Men are thoſe Perſons and things that turn away Mens Ears from attending to the knocks and calls of Chriſt in his Word? Such are (1.) Prophane wicked Men, who like *Elimas* the Sorcerer, make it their buſineſs by wicked inſinuations, flouts and jeers, to turn away Mens Ears from the Goſpel, *Acts* 13. 10. *O full of all ſubtilty, and all miſchief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteouſneſs; wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* All oppoſition of Godlineſs hath a ſpice of Deviliſhneſs; and no Child more reſembles his Father than a ſcoffing Enemy reſembles his Father the Devil. But beſſed be God for that good Providence which, in a great meaſure, hath ſtopt the Mouths both of the Father and his Children this day. (2.) Take heed of carnal and ungodly Relations which diſcourage and threaten their Children, Servants, and all that depend on them, from attending upon the means, or giving way to the Convictions which God by them hath ſet upon their Hearts. Cruel Parents, who had rather ſee their Children turned into their Graves, than turning to the ways of ſerious Godlineſs. O that any ſhould dare to quench the beginnings of ſpiritual life in thoſe to whom they were inſtruments to convey natural life. (3.) Take heed of the World, its diſtracting cares and charming pleaſures; what a din, what a confuſed buz and noiſe do theſe things make in the Ears of Men! *Mark* 4. 19. *The cares of this World choak the Word, and it becometh unfruitful.* Tell not them of getting Chriſt, they muſt ſtudy how to get Bread. Theſe are ſome of thoſe diſtracting and diverting ſounds which drown the voice of Chriſt's knocks and calls in the Goſpel. As you value your Souls beware of them.

### II. *Uſe for Exhortation.*

Chriſt is now come near us in the Goſpel, *Behold he ſtands at the door and knocks:* And I am here this day to demand your anſwer, and in his name I do ſolemnly demand it; what ſhall I return to him that ſent me? What ſayeſt thou ſinner? Wilt thou open to Chriſt, or wilt thou ſhut him out; and with him thy own Pardon, Peace and Salvation? Once more let me try the force of a few more arguments upon your Hearts, and refute your vain Pleas to the contrary; methinks no Heart ſhould be able to reſiſt ſuch Motives and rational Perſwaſions as theſe following will be found to be.

*Motive* 1. You are in extream need of Chriſt; you want him more than Bread or Breath: many things are convenient for your Bodies, but Chriſt is the one thing neceſſary for your Souls, *Luke* 10. 9. *One thing is neceſſary.* Neceſſity is an Engine that will open any thing in the World that can be opened; Neceſſity will make all fly before it. Now there is a plain, preſent, abſolute neceſſity lying upon every one of you to open your Hearts to Chriſt, and that without delay. Neceſſity goes before the face of Chriſt to open the way for him into the Heart; thou muſt have him, or be loſt for ever. Chriſt and Faith are not among the *may bees*, but the *muſt bees*, to the happineſs of thy Soul. A man may be poor, and happy; reproached, and bleſſed; but he cannot be Chriſtleſs, and ſafe; nor Chriſtleſs, and comfortable: you muſt have Chriſt, or you cannot have life, *John* 3. 36. You muſt have Chriſt, or you can have no hope, *Col.* 1. 27. Chriſt and Life, Chriſt and Hope go together; no Chriſt no Life, no Chriſt no Hope: ſinner, thou muſt have Chriſt, or thou canſt have no pardon; for Chriſt and Pardon are undivided, *Epheſ.* 1. 7. In a word, you muſt have Chriſt or you can have no Salvation, *Acts* 4. 12. Well then, if thou canſt have no life, nor hope; no Pardon, nor Salvation without Chriſt; then a plain neceſſity goes before Chriſt to open his way into thine Heart: methinks, thou ſhouldſt now ſay, Then will I open to Chriſt whatever the terms be. Come ſufferings, loſſes, reproaches, yea death it ſelf, all is one; Chriſt I muſt have, and Chriſt I will have; neceſſity is layed upon me, and my Heart is opened to Chriſt by it; wo to me for ever if I miſs of Chriſt.

*Motive* 2. The Lord Jeſus is this day come nigh to every one of your Souls. I may ſay to you as Chriſt did to them, *Luke* 10. 9. *The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* The Lord grant he be not as nigh to ſome of you as ever he ſhall be; for he muſt come nearer or elſe you are loſt for ever. It is not Chriſt among you in the means of Grace, but Chriſt within you by the work of Grace, which muſt be unto you the hope of Glory, *Col.* 1. 27. He is not only among you in reſpect of external means, but he is come into your Underſtandings and Conſciences. Yea, ſome motions of his you may feel upon your affections, there wants but a little more to make you eternally happy. O what would one effectual touch upon your Wills be worth now! The Head-work is done, but O that the Heart-work were done too. You are *almoſt ſaved*; but to be almoſt ſaved, is to be wholly and eternally loſt, if it go no further. 'Tis a ſad thing for a Man that hath one Foot in Heaven, to ſlide from thence into Hell. 'Tis ſad to be ſhipwrack'd at the Harbours mouth.

*Motive* 3. Jeſus Chriſt hath unqueſtionable right to enter into and poſſeſs every one of your Souls. Satan is but an Uſurper. Chriſt is your lawful Owner and Proprietor; thy Soul, ſinner, hath not ſo full a Title to thy Body, as Chriſt hath to thy Soul. Satan keeps Chriſt out of his right. Chriſt knocks at the door of his own Houſe; he built it, and therefore may well claim admiſſion into it; it is his own Creature, *Col.* 1. 16. *By him were all things made, whether they be viſible or inviſible*; Bodies or Souls. The inviſible part, thy Soul, is his Workmanſhip, a ſtately ſtructure of his own raiſing. He hath alſo a right by Redemption, Chriſt hath bought thy Soul, and that at the invaluable price of his own Blood. Who then can diſpute the right of Chriſt to enter in to his own Houſe! But alas he cometh to his own, but his own receive him not.

*Motive* 4. Open the door to Chriſt, for a train of bleſſings and mercies come in with him; a troop of privileges follow him: In the ſame day and hour that Chriſt comes into thine Heart by a full conſent and deliberate choice, a Pardon comes with him of all the ſins that ever thou committedſt in thought, word or action. Will ſuch a Pardon be welcome to thy Soul? Then let Chriſt be welcome, *Eph.* 1. 7. for where Chriſt comes, pardon comes: if you open to Chriſt, you open to peace; and who would ſhut the door of his Soul againſt Peace? If Peace be welcome, let Chriſt be welcome; for Peace follows faith in Chriſt, *Rom.* 5. 1. Where Chriſt comes, liberty comes, *John* 8. 36. *If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, then are you free indeed.* Are you in love with Bonds and Fetters? Satan's Laws are written in Blood: Chriſt's yoak is eaſy, and his commands not grievous. If you love liberty, love Chriſt. In a word, where Chriſt comes, Salvation comes; *for he is the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him.* If therefore you love Pardon, Peace, Liberty and Salvation, ſhut not the door againſt Chriſt; for all theſe follow him wherever he goes.

*Motive* 5. Chriſt this day ſolemnly demands entrance into thy Soul, he begs thee to open to him, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. he commands thee to open to him, 1 *John* 3. 23. He denounceth eternal Damnation to thoſe that refuſe him entrance. Now conſider well, here is entrance demanded under pain of the eternal wrath of God; this demand is filed and recorded in Heaven, at your own peril be it if you ſhut the door againſt him: only this will I ſay in my Redeemers's behalf, If you refuſe, bear witneſs Heaven and Earth this day, that Chriſt ſolemnly demanded entrance into thy Soul, and was refuſed; bear witneſs, that the door was ſhut againſt the only Redeemer, who intreated, commanded, and threatned eternal Damnation to the rejecters of him. O methinks that Scripture, *Prov.* 1. 24, 25. is able to ſtrike terror into the very center of that Soul that refuſes the offers of Chriſt.

*Motive 6.* And ſo I have done my Maſter's errand; if you now refuſe the knock of Chriſt at your Hearts, he may never knock more; and where are you then? There is a knock which will be the laſt knock, a call which will be his laſt call; and after that no more knocks or calls, but an eternal ſilence as to any overture of Mercy or Grace.

Object. *But if I do open to Chriſt, he will never come into ſuch a filthy polluted ſinful Soul as mine is.*

*Anſw.* Who ſaith ſo? Who dare affirm ſo impudent a falſhood in the very face of the Text? *If any Man open unto me, I will come in to him.*

Object. 2. *If I open to Chriſt, I muſt bid farewel to eaſe and reſt in this World; reproaches, ſufferings, loſſes follow him.*

*Anſw.* If Chriſt, Pardon, and Salvation, be not worth the enduring and ſuffering theſe ſmall things, ſure thou valueſt Chriſt and thy Soul at a low rate. O who can ſufficiently bewail the ignorance and folly of Unbelievers, that will ſell their Souls and hopes of Heaven for ſuch trifles! And if Chriſt and thy Soul muſt part upon theſe terms, then hear me ſinner, and let it ſink into thine Heart; thy Damnation will be both

1. Juſt and Righteous.
2. Unavoidable and ſure.

1. Thy Damnation will be Juſt; for thou hadſt thy own choice, and deliberately preferredſt the inſignificant trifles of this World before Chriſt and Salvation. It was plainly told thee what the iſſue of thy rejecting Chriſt would be, and yet after ſufficient warning thou adventuredſt upon it; whatever other ſinners will plead I know not, but as for thee thou muſt be ſpeechleſs, *Mat.* 22. 12. If thou die Chriſtleſs, thou muſt appear at his Bar ſpeechleſs; and the day of Judgment will be the day of the revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, *Rom.* 2. 5.

2. It will alſo be unavoidable, for there is no other way to Salvation but this, *Acts* 4. 12. No Chriſt, no Heaven; no Faith, no Chriſt: *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation?* Heb. 2. 3. Mercy it ſelf cannot ſave thee out of Chriſt, for all the ſaving Mercy of God is diſpenſed to Men through him, *Jude* 21. 'Tis to no purpoſe to cry Mercy, Lord, Mercy, when Chriſt, in whom all the Mercies of God are diſpenſed to Men, is rejected by thee.

### III. *Uſe for Conſolation.*

This Point winds up in Conſolation to all ſuch, as hearing the knocks of Chriſt, have opened, or are now reſolved to open their Hearts unto him; and that nothing henceforth ſhall keep Chriſt and their Souls aſunder: to ſuch I ſhall addreſs the following grounds of Comfort.

*Conſolation* 1. An opening Heart to Chriſt is a work wholly and altogether Supernatural; a ſpecial work of the Spirit of God, never found upon any but an elect Soul. There are common gifts of the Spirit, ſuch as Knowledg, vaniſhing Convictions, *&c.* but the opening of the Heart by Faith is the ſpecial, ſaving, and peculiar work of the Spirit, *John* 6. 29. *This is the work of God, that ye believe.* Yea, it is the effect of the Almighty Power of God, the exceeding greatneſs of his Power is exerted in the work of Faith, *Eph.* 1. 19. It riſes not out of Nature, as common gifts do; but of this it is expreſly ſaid, *Eph.* 2. 8. *It is not of your ſelves, it is the gift of God.* Where this work is effectually wrought, we may reaſon as ſolidly, as comfortably from it; both backward, to the electing love of God; and forward, to our eternal glorification with him, *Rom.* 8. 30.

*Conſolat.* 2. The opening of thy Heart to Chriſt by ſaving Faith, gives thee intereſt in Chriſt the very ſame hour; the relation is then conſtituted, the conjugal tie or bond is faſtned betwixt him and thy Soul: *John* 1. 12. *To as many as received him, to them gave he power* (*viz.* right or privilege) *to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believed on his Name.* You neither need nor may expect an extraordinary meſſenger or voice from Heaven to tell you that Chriſt is yours, and you are his; you have a better foundation in this Word and Work of Faith: for my part if God will give me the clear and ſatisfying experience of this Work upon my Heart, I would never deſire more ſatisfaction on this ſide Heaven. I know not but the Devil may counterfeit an extraordinary voice, and cheat the Soul by a lying Oracle; but if I really feel my Heart and Will ſincerely opening to Chriſt upon Goſpel-terms, I am ſure there is no deceit in that.

*Conſolat.* 3. The opening of thy Heart to Chriſt by Faith, is a good aſſurance that Heaven ſhall be opened to thy Soul hereafter: Heaven is ſhut againſt none but thoſe that ſhut their hearts againſt Chriſt by Unbelief. Will you bar Chriſt out of your Souls by Ignorance and Unbelief, and then cry, Lord open to us? No, God will open to none but them that open to Chriſt. Eternity it ſelf ſhall but ſuffice to bleſs God for this opening act of Faith; *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved,* Mark 16. 16.

*Conſolat.* 4. The opening of thy Soul to Chriſt by Faith makes it Chriſt's habitation for ever; in that hour out goes Sin and Satan, and in comes Chriſt and Grace: *If any Man open unto me, I will come in to him,* ſaith the Text. Of ſuch a Soul Chriſt ſaith, as it was ſaid of the Temple, *Pſal.* 132. 13, 14. *The Lord hath deſired it for his Habitation. This is my reſt for ever: here will I dwell, for I have deſired it.* Thy Soul now becomes an hallowed Temple to the Lord; as he hath ſaid, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and will be their God, and they ſhall be my People,* 2 Cor. 6. 16. O what a Heaven upon Earth is here! Chriſt dwelling in the Soul, is the glory of the Soul; as God's dwelling in the Temple was the glory of the Temple.

*Conſolat.* 5. In a word, the opening of the Heart to Chriſt is that work which anſwers the great deſign of the Goſpel. Wherefore hath God ſet up Ordinances and Miniſters, yea wherefore is the Spirit ſent forth, but to open the Hearts of ſinners to Chriſt by Faith? When this is done, the main end and intention of the Goſpel is attained and anſwered; the union is effected betwixt Chriſt and the Soul; it is now put out of hazard. The whole work of the Goſpel after that is but to build up, confirm and comfort the Soul; ripen its implanted Graces, and make it meet for glory.

And thus through the aſſiſtance of the Spirit I have finiſhed the fifth Obſervation, *That every Conviction of Conſcience, and motion upon the Affections, is a knock or call of Chriſt for entrance into the ſinners Heart.*

# SERMON VI.

## Revel. III. 20.

*Behold I* [*ſtand*] *at the Door and knock*, &c.

[*I ſtand and knock.*]

HEre's pains and patience, all means uſed by Chriſt to gain entrance into the Souls of ſinners. It ſpeaks the earneſtneſs of his ſuit, and vehemency of his deſire to be in union with the Souls of Men. The ſixth Obſervation therefore will be this,

Doct. 6. *That Jeſus Chriſt is an earneſt Suitor for union and communion with the Souls of ſinners.*

This Point lies directly and fully in the very eye and intention of the Text. In the opening of it two things muſt be ſpoken to in the Doctrinal part, *viz.*

I. The demonſtration of this Truth that he is ſo.

II. The marvelous and admirable grace and condeſcenſion of Chriſt that he ſhould be ſo.

I. For *Demonſtration* of this Truth, That Chriſt is an earneſt ſuitor for Union and Communion with the Souls of ſinners. I ſhall draw down the Demonſtration of this Truth from a view and conſideration of the diſpoſitions, carriages and actions of the Lord Jeſus towards poor ſinners from firſt to laſt: And when you have compared them all together, and by them ſeen the temper of his Heart, how great and clear a light will ſhine upon this Point! That his Heart hath ſtill enclined towards union and communion with ſinful Man, will evidently appear by conſidering him in a fourfold ſtate, and time.

1. Before his Incarnation.
2. In the days of his Fleſh.
3. At his Death. And,
4. At, and ſince his Aſcenſion into Heaven.

Firſt, Conſider him before his Incarnation, and you will find two things in that ſtate which plainly ſpeak his deſires after union with us.

1. *Demonſt.* In the Covenant of Redemption he made with God concerning us before this World had a being; for ſuch Covenants and Promiſes did really paſs betwixt him and the Father before all time, or elſe I know not how to underſtand that Scripture, *Tit.* 1. 2. *In hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, promiſed before the World began.* To whom could that Promiſe be made, but unto Chriſt, which bears date before the Creation? what elſe can this mean but the Covenant of Redemption, made betwixt the Father and the Son; the terms whereof are ſet down in *Iſa.* 53. 10, 11. where you find what Chriſt was to do, *viz. To put his Soul an offering for ſin?* And what ſhould be his reward for pouring out his Soul unto Death, *viz. To ſee his Seed, to ſee the travail of his Soul*, even a Church purchaſed with his own Blood? Whether this be not a great demonſtration of the propenſion and inclination of Chriſt's heart and deſire towards union and communion with poor ſinners, let all Men judg. O what a value did Chriſt ſet upon our Souls, that upon ſuch coſtly terms he would conſent to redeem them? Unto this agreement God the Father held him, *Rom.* 8. 32. *God ſpared not his own Son.* And this very Covenant Chriſt pleaded with the Father, *John* 17. 6. *I have manifeſted thy Name to the Men whom thou gaveſt me out of the World; thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me.* This plainly ſhews the vehement deſire of Chriſt's Heart to be in union with Men; according to that, *Prov.* 8. 31. *Rejoicing in the habitable parts of his Earth, and my delights were with the Sons of Men.* Bleſſed Jeſus! nothing but the ſtrength of thine own deſire and love could ever haave drawn thee out of that Boſom of delights, to ſuffer ſo many things for the ſake of poor ſinners.

2. *Demonſt.* Secondly, Let us conſider Chriſt's temper and diſpoſition towards union and communion with ſinners, within time; and every thing done by Chriſt carries and confirms this Concluſion.

1. His Aſſumption of our Nature plainly ſpeaks it.
2. His whole Life upon Earth evidently diſcovers it.
3. His Doctrine is a clear proof of it.
4. His Joy at the Converſion of Souls proves it.
5. His Sorrows for Mens unbelief evidence it.
6. His indefatigable Labours plainly ſhew it.
7. His admirable Encouragements to coming ſinners.
8. His dreadful Menaces to obſtinate ſinners.
9. His ſending and encouraging Miniſters to draw and gather the World to himſelf.

All theſe things, which were tranſacted in the Life of Chriſt, plainly demonſtrate how greatly and earneſtly his Heart did propend and incline towards this deſirable union with the Sons of Men.

1. Chriſt's Aſſumption of our Nature manifeſteth his deſire after union with us. Herein he gave two incomparable proofs of his tranſcendent love to us, and deſire after us.

(1.) In paſſing by a more excellent Nature.

(2.) In marrying our Nature to himſelf.

(1.) He paſſed by a ſuperiour and more excellent

lent Nature, *Heb.* 2. 16. *Verily he took not on him the Nature of Angels.* Angels were excellent Creatures, but behold veſſels of Gold caſt into the fire, and Earthen potſherds fitted for glory. 'Tis true, the Angels that kept their integrity are members of Chriſt's Kingdom; he is a Head to them by way of Dominion, but unto us by way of Vital union. Chriſt takes the Believer into a nearer union with himſelf than any Angel in Heaven; but for the multitudes of apoſtate Angels, he never deſigned their recovery, but left them, as they were before, bound in chains of darkneſs unto the Judgment of the great Day, *Jude* verſ. 6. This preterition of Chriſt heightens his love to poor Man.

(2.) In marrying our Nature to himſelf, and that after ſin had blaſted its beauty, and let in ſo many direful calamities upon it. *Rom.* 8. 3. *He was found in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, i. e.* Fleſh ſubject to wearineſs, pains and death, which tho there be no ſin in them, yet are the effects and conſequences of ſin: Such a Nature he aſſumed into a perſonal union with himſelf, not to experience any new pleaſure in it, but to capacitate himſelf to ſuffer and ſatisfie for us; and therein to give a convincing proof of the ſtrength of his love, and vehemency of his deſire to us. His perſonal union with our Nature ſhews his deſire after a myſtical union with our Perſons. He would never have been the Son of Man, but to make us the Sons and Daughters of the living God; He came in our likeneſs, that we by Sanctification might be made in his likeneſs. Behold how near Chriſt comes to us by his Incarnation! O what a ſtoop did he make therein to recover us! Rather than loſe us, he was contented to loſe his manifeſtative glory for a time; for his Incarnation made him of no reputation, *Phil.* 2. 7. Behold the deſires of a Saviour after union with ſinners.

2. The whole Life of Chriſt upon Earth was an evident proof and demonſtration of the deſires of his Heart to be in union and communion with us, *John* 17. 19. *For their ſakes I ſanctify my ſelf.* The Life of Chriſt was wholly ſet apart for us; therefore it is ſaid, *Iſa.* 9. 6. *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.* What was the errand and buſineſs upon which Chriſt came into this World, but to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt?

All the Miracles he wrought on Earth were ſo many works of Mercy; he could have wrought his Miracles to have deſtroyed and ruined ſuch as received him not; but his Almighty Power was imployed to heal and ſave the Bodies of Men, that thereby he might win their Souls unto him: *Acts* 10. 38. *God anointed Jeſus of* Nazareth *with the Holy Ghoſt and with Power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the Devil: for God was with him.* When the Apoſtles deſired a Commiſſion from him to fetch fire from Heaven to deſtroy the *Samaritans*, he rebuked them, ſaying, *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man came not to deſtroy Mens lives, but to ſave them,* Luke 9. 54, 55, 56. The whole Life of Chriſt in this World was nothing elſe but a wooing, drawing motive to the Hearts of ſinners; he rejected not the vileſt of ſinners, *Luke* 7. 39. He rejected none that came unto him; he would not have little Children forbid to be brought unto him, *Mark* 10. 13. What his winning carriage ſhould be, was long before predicted by the Prophet, *Iſa.* 42. 3. *A bruiſed Reed ſhall be not break, and ſmoaking Flax ſhall be not quench.* *Lentulus*, the Proconſul, in his Epiſtle *ad S. P. Q. R.* having graphically deſcribed the Perſon of Chriſt, gives this account of his carriage and deportment; *In his reproofs he was terrible, in his admonitions fair and amiable, chearful without levity; he was never ſeen to laugh, but often to weep; his words grave, few, and modeſt,* &c.

Chriſt was in the World as a load-ſtone drawing all Men to him; his deportment was every way ſutable to his Commiſſion, which was *to preach good tidings to the Meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound,* Iſa. 61. 1.

3. As his Life, ſo his *Doctrin* was a wooing, and inviting *Doctrin*; a moſt pathetical invitation unto ſinners: *Never Man ſpake as he ſpake*; whenever he opened his Lips, Heaven opened, the very Heart of God was opened in it to ſinners; the whole ſtream and current of his Doctrin was one continued powerful perſwaſive to draw ſinners to him. This was his Language, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you reſt,* Matth. 11. 28. *In the laſt day, the great day of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood up and cried, If any Man thirſt, let him come to me and drink,* John 7. 37. Himſelf reſembles it to the clucking of a Hen to gather her Chickens under her wings, *Luke* 13. 34. *O* Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, *how often would I have gathered thy Children together, as a Hen doth gather her brood under her wings!* Certainly the whole ſtream of the Goſpel is nothing elſe but the charming voice of the Heavenly Bridegroom.

4. The Joy he always expreſt for the ſucceſs of the Goſpel, ſpeaks him to be an earneſt ſuitor for the Hearts of Sinners. 'Tis very remarkable that all the *Evangeliſts* who have recorded the life of Chriſt, never mentioned one laugh or ſmile that ever came from him, *for he was a Man of ſorrows:* yet once you read *that he rejoiced in Spirit*; and you ſhall ſee the occaſion of it, in *Luke* 10. 21. *In that hour Jeſus rejoiced in Spirit.* And what was it that gladded his Heart, but the report brought him by the Seventy, who returned with joy, ſaying, *Lord even the Devils are ſubject to us through thy Name*; and he ſaid unto them, *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven,* verſ. 17, 18. Satan's Kingdom; was going down in the World, and the myſteries of Salvation revealed unto Babes; this made his holy Heart leap with Joy within him, to behold the ſucceſs of the Goſpel, deſtroying Satan's Kingdom; and the pooreſt, meaneſt among Men inlightned and converted by it. This was a Cordial to his very Soul, and ſpeak the earneſtneſs of his deſire after union and communion with ſinners.

5. His Sorrows and Mournings upon the account of the obſtinacy and unbelief of ſinners, ſpeak the vehemency of his deſire after union with them; it is ſaid, *Mark* 3. 5. *When he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardneſs of their Hearts,* &c. You ſee from hence, that a hard Heart is a grief to Jeſus Chriſt. O how tenderly did Chriſt reſent it, when *Jeruſalem* rejected him! 'Tis ſaid, *Luke* 19. 41. That *when Jeſus came nigh to the City, he wept over it.* The Redeemer's tears wept over obſtinate *Jeruſalem*, ſpake the zeal and fervency of his affection to their Salvation; how loth Chriſt is to give up ſinners: what a mournful voice is that, in *John* 5. 40. *And you will not come unto me that you might have life.* How fain would I give you life? but

you will rather die than come unto me for it: What can Chriſt do more, to expreſs his willingneſs? All the ſorrows that ever toucht the Heart of Chriſt from Men were upon this account, that they would not yield to his calls and invitations.

6. This appears to be the great deſign of Chriſt, by the unwearied labours he underwent Day and Night to accompliſh it; many weary Journies Chriſt took, many Sermons and Prayers he preached and poured out, and all upon this deſign, to open the Hearts of ſinners to him, and win the conſent of their Wills to become his; this was the Work which he preferred to his neceſſary food, *John* 4. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work: q. d.* My bringing home the Elect of God, and ſaving them from wrath to come, is more to me than meat and drink; ſo vehement and intenſe were his deſires after the winning of ſinners, that he would loſe no occaſion to accompliſh it. If he were never ſo weary with his travels and labours, yet if any occaſion offered to ſave a loſt Soul, he would be ſure to improve it; you have an inſtance of this in *John* 4. 6. *Then cometh he to a City of* Samaria, *called* Sychar, *&c. now* Jacob's *well was there. Jeſus therefore being wearied with his Journey, ſat thus on the well*, &c. Chriſt was weary with his Journey, and ſat on the Well for a little reſt and refreſhment, in the heat of the day; at the ſame time comes a Woman of *Samaria* to draw water, a great ſinner ſhe was; Chriſt compaſſionately beholding this miſerable object, forgets his own wearineſs, preſently falls a preaching Repentance to this ſinner, and opens her Heart; a greater refreſhment to him than that Well could afford him, by giving him a ſeat to ſit on, or water to drink.

7. The great and admirable Encouragements Chriſt always gave to coming and willing Souls, plainly ſpeak the earneſt deſire of his Heart after union with them; never were the like Encouragements given that Chriſt gave, to draw the Souls of Men to him. 'Tis remarkable in what general terms and forms of expreſſion he delivered them, that none might be diſcouraged, but come on in hope towards him: *Come unto me all ye that labour*, Matth. 11. 28. *If any Man thirſt*, John 7. 37. All along the terms of invitation are exceeding large, which ſpeak the deſires of his Heart to be ſo alſo; and his practice was anſwerable to his invitation; his mercies and compaſſions never failed when the vileſt of ſinners came to him in the way of Repentance and Faith: you read in *Luke* 7. 41, 42. that when Chriſt ſat at meat in the Houſe of *Simon* the *Phariſee*, there came in a poor convinced ſinner who had guilt enough upon her to ſink ten thouſand Souls to the bottom of Hell; this poor wretch comes with a great deal of humility unto Chriſt, not preſuming to come before his Face, but falls down behind him, kiſſeth his Feet, waſhes them with Tears, and wipes them with the hair of her Head; all demonſtrations of a broken Heart: And how did the *merciful Jeſus* welcome this poor ſinner? He ſeals her pardon, commends the fervor of her affections, and ſends her away a joyful Soul; herein making good that gracious promiſe, *John* 6. 37. *He that cometh unto me I will in no wiſe caſt out.*

8. The dreadful Threatnings of Chriſt againſt all that refuſe him, and ſhut the doors of their Hearts againſt him, ſpeak his vehement deſires to prevent the loſs and ruin of Souls. The threats of Chriſt are not intended to diſcourage any from coming to him, to fright away Souls from him; no, no, that's not their intention; but to bring them under a bleſſed neceſſity of compliance with his terms. O the dreadful threatnings which, like claps of Thunder, brake from the Mouth of Chriſt againſt all that ſhould refuſe or delay to come unto him. *If you believe not, you ſhall die in your ſins: He that believeth not, ſhall not ſee life*, John 3. 36. What a terrible Thunderclap is that againſt all Unbelievers? So *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth not, ſhall be damned.* All theſe, and many more, are warning pieces ſhot off from Heaven to prevent the ruin and damnation of Men; the very threatnings of the Goſpel carry a deſign of Mercy in them; damnation is threatned, that it may be prevented.

9. And then in the laſt place, herein appears the earneſtneſs of Chriſt after union with ſinners, that when he could be no longer a Preacher to this World in his own Perſon, he ordained a ſucceſſion of Miniſters in his Bodily abſence from us, to gather and build the Church, and to continue to the end of the World; to carry on the Suit that Chriſt had begun, as long as there was one elect Soul in the World lying in the ſtate of Sin and Nature.

Reader, Chriſt could not always abide here; he muſt die, or we could not live; he muſt riſe again, or we could not be juſtified; our buſineſs call'd him to another Place and State: Now when Chriſt was to aſcend to Heaven, what doth he do? Why, he chuſeth and calleth Men, Men made of the ſame clay with our ſelves, whoſe preſence and appearance ſhould not afright or diſcourage us; who ſhould treat with us in a familiar way about the great concerns of our Salvation in his Name and ſtead, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *We then are Ambaſſadors for Chriſt; as tho God did beſeech you, we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.* He did not commiſſionate Angels to be his *Legates*, their preſence would confound and terrifie us; but Men caſt into the ſame mould with your ſelves, who may ſay to you as *Elihu* ſaid to *Job*, *Job* 33. 6, 7. *Behold, I am according to thy wiſh in God's ſtead; I alſo am formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror ſhall not make thee afraid, neither ſhall my Hand be heavy upon thee.* Upon theſe Commiſſion-Officers of Chriſt he poured forth excellent gifts in great diverſity, and uſeful variety, to fit the capacities and various diſpoſitions of Mens Souls: *When he aſcended up on high, he gave gifts unto Men*; this Miniſterial Office is by him eſtabliſhed in the Church, *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledg of the Son of God, to a perfect Man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*, Epheſ. 4. 11, 12, 13. Unto theſe his Miniſters he gives the higheſt encouragements to quicken them to their labours: if one do but one part of the work, and another the other; one ſoweth, and another reapeth; he tells them both, *He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that ſoweth, and he that reapeth may rejoice together*, John 4. 36. He tells them, that every Soul they win to him ſhall be as a Jewel in their Crown of glory, *Dan.* 12. 3. *And they that be wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament; and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever and ever.* What is Chriſt's intention in all theſe incouragements to his Miniſters? Surely it is as if he ſhould ſay to his Servants, Study hard, Pray earneſtly, Plead with ſinners affectionately; every Soul you win to me ſhall make an addition to your glory in Heaven.

Weigh now the force of this ſecond Demonſtration from the Life of Chriſt; will you have a proof of Chriſt's earneſt ſuit to gain the Hearts of ſinners? his whole Life upon Earth was a great proof of it; his Doctrin, ſo full of pathetical invitations, proves it; the Joy of his Heart at the ſucceſs of the Goſpel; his Tears and Sorrows for the obſtinacy of unbelievers; his Labours and Travels to gather ſinners to him; his admirable Encouragements put into general invitations; his dreadful Threatnings to all that reject his motions; his commiſſionating and qualifying, continuing and encouraging his Miniſters to carry on this Suit in his Name: all theſe things make up a full Demonſtration that Jeſus Chriſt is an earneſt ſuitor for union and communion with the Souls of ſinners; which was the thing to be proved.

3. *Demonſt.* Thirdly, The Death of Chriſt is the fulleſt Demonſtration that ever was, or can be given of his love to ſinners, and deſire after union and communion with them. His Doctrin and Life diſcovered much, but his Death and Sufferings abundantly more; in his Doctrin he ſpent his *Breath*, but upon the Croſs he ſpent his *Blood.* Here he comes a ſuing to the Souls of ſinners in his Scarlet robes, his Red garments; garments dipt in his own Blood. You may now propound the ſame admiring queſtion the Church propounded, *Iſa.* 63. 1, 2. *Who is this that cometh from* Edom, *with died garments from* Bozrah? *this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength? Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the Wine-fat?* Wilt thou know ſinner why he comes to thee in Red garments? It is to give thee ſuch a Demonſtration of his love as may draw forth all the love of thy Heart to him; by this Blood he hath bought and purchaſed thy Soul for a Spouſe for himſelf, *Acts* 20. 28. Now there are two things in the Death of Chriſt evidential of the fervency of his deſires after us.

1. The greatneſs of the ſufferings which he endured.
2. The Uſe and End to which they were deſigned.

Both theſe ſhew how the Heart of Chriſt is heated with the vehemency of his own deſires after union with our poor Souls.

1. The greatneſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt diſcover the ardency of his affection. Chriſt's ſufferings are two-fold.

(1.) External, in his Body.
(2.) Internal, in his Soul.

Both together making up the fulneſs of his Sufferings: When you ſhall hear what Chriſt hath endured in both kinds to purchaſe you to himſelf, then you may gueſs what value he put upon you, what deſire he hath after you. Now (1.) as to the external Sufferings of Chriſt in his Body, they were exceeding great, for the Death he died was not a Natural but a Violent Death; indeed he could not die a Natural Death, for there was no ſin in his Nature to open a door to Death that way: His Body was intended for a Sacrifice to God, and as a Sacrifice it died; therefore it is ſaid, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. *He was put to Death in the Fleſh*; his Soul and Body were violently rent aſunder in the fulneſs and perfection of his ſtrength and vigour. And this violent Death was alſo a curſed Death; He was made a Curſe for us, *For it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree*, Gal. 3. 13. A ceremonial Curſe was affixed to the Death of the Croſs; *He that is hanged is accurſed of God*, ſaith the Law: The intention of that Death was to ſhew the Perſon that died, to be ſo vile, that he was not worthy to touch Heaven or Earth, and therefore was hanged betwixt both. Moreover, this violent Death Chriſt died was a moſt painful Death; full of Torture, and very ſlow and lingering: the Croſs was a Rack to the Body of Chriſt; *I may tell all my bones*, ſaith he, *they look and ſtare upon me*, Pſal. 22. 17. But yet (2.) the Sufferings of his Body were but the Body of his Sufferings; it were the Sufferings of his Soul, that were the very Soul of his Sufferings. Theſe inward Sufferings of Chriſt may likewiſe be conſidered two ways. (1.) In his bitter propaſſions in the Garden; O what Agonies and Conflicts, what ſharp Encounters and Diſtreſſes did his Soul there meet with, from the Wrath of God there endured for your ſakes! Once and again he cried out, *Abba* Father, all things are poſſible, let this Cup paſs; Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs: thrice he returned to the ſame place, rolling himſelf on the ground. The Sufferings of his Soul caſt his bleſſed Body into a bloody Agony. *His ſweat was as it were great drops of Blood falling to the ground*, Luke 22. 43, 44. (2.) In the fulneſs of his Paſſions on the Croſs, there was his bleſſed Soul for a time deſerted of the Father, as to any ſenſible communications of Joy and Comfort from him; which occaſioned that bitter out-cry, *Mat.* 27. 46. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Never was there ſuch a cry heard ſince the Heavens were ſpread over the Earth; never had Chriſt ſeen one frown in his Father's Face from Eternity before this time: but now the ſmiling Face of God was hid, and a ſtrong impreſſion of his Wrath made upon him. And now, Brethren, you ſee what Chriſt hath endured both in his Body and in his Soul, and all for the ſake of Sinners. What think you now, is not Chriſt an earneſt Suitor? Doth not all this fully and plainly ſpeak the ardours of his Love, the fervency of his deſires after union and communion with us? If this do not, then nothing can demonſtrate Love and Deſire. That's the firſt thing, the greatneſs of the Sufferings he endured.

2. Let us next conſider the Uſe and Intention of theſe Sufferings of Chriſt, and how this alſo demonſtrates the earneſtneſs of his deſires after conjugal union with us. Now there was a double Uſe and End of the Sufferings of Chriſt.

(1.) To make us free, that we might be capable of Eſpouſals.
(2.) To win our Affections by the argument of his Sufferings.

(1.) One end of Chriſt's death was to purchaſe our Freedom, that we might be capable of being eſpouſed to him; for you muſt know that we were not in a capacity whilſt under the curſe of the Law, to be married unto Chriſt: the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 7. 2, 3, 4. compares the Law to a Husband, to whom the Wife is bound as long as he liveth, and not capable of a ſecond marriage until her Husband be dead. The death of Chriſt was the death of the Law, as a Covenant of Works holding us under the bond of the Curſe of it; and ſo it gave us a *manumiſſion* or freedom from that bond, and a capacity of eſpouſals to Chriſt, as *verſ.* 4.

*Wherefore my Brethren, ye alſo are become dead to the Law by the Body of Chriſt, that ye ſhould be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead.* A Slave to another is not capable of being diſpoſed in marriage until made free; you were in bondage to the Law, the ſlaves of Sin and Satan: Chriſt bought out your liberty (for his Blood is call'd a ranſom, *Mat.* 20. 28.) and ſo put you in the capacity of being eſpouſed unto himſelf; here you ſee Chriſt loved you not for any advantage he could have by you, for you had nothing to bring him; nay, he muſt purchaſe you, and that with his own Blood, before he can be united to you. O incomparable Love! O fervent Deſires!

(2.) Another deſign and end of the death of Chriſt was to win and gain our Hearts and Affections to himſelf, by the argument of his death; this himſelf hath declared to be the very end and intention of it, *John* 12. 32. *And I if I be lifted up from the Earth will draw all Men unto me; this he ſaid, ſignifying what death he ſhould die.* Chriſt endured all that you have heard, and infinitely more than the Tongue or Pen of Man can expreſs; and all to draw thy Soul, and win thy conſent to come unto him: the Lord Jeſus by his ſufferings caſts a threefold cord over the Souls of Sinners to draw them to himſelf.

1. The Death of Chriſt obtains compleat Righteouſneſs for guilty ſinners; and if any thing in the World will draw the Heart of a ſinner, this will. The anxious ſearch and enquiry of a convinced Sinner is after a perfect Righteouſneſs to juſtifie him before God. O that's it the ſinner wants! Conſcience ſaith, thou haſt broken all the Laws of God, and art therefore a Law-condemned wretch; the ſentence of the Law caſts thee for Hell. Now what would a poor ſinner give for a releaſe from this ſentence of the Law? O ten thouſand Worlds for a Pardon! Why here it is, ſaith Chriſt, Come unto me, and thou ſhalt receive a free, full and final Pardon; my Blood cleanſeth from all ſin, my Righteouſneſs anſwers all the demands of the Law. I have taken away the Hand writing that was againſt thee, and nailed it to my Croſs, *Col.* 2. 14. Come unto me, and take up thy Bonds, thy cancelled Bonds; come unto me, and that dreadful attribute of Divine Juſtice ſhall never ſcare or fright thy Conſcience any more; nay, thou ſhalt build thy hope upon it. You read, *Rom.* 3. 25. *That God hath ſet forth Chriſt to be a propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I ſay, at this time his righteouſneſs; that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus.* Here you ſee the juſtification and pardon of a ſinner built upon that very attribute which was ſo frightful and dreadful to him before. Well then, poor ſinner, is there guilt upon thy Conſcience? And doth thy Soul ſhake and quiver to think how it ſhall ſtand before the juſt and terrible God in the great Day? Hearken to the voice of Chriſt crucified, who calls thee to him to receive thy diſcharge; which if thou refuſe, the Law ſtill ſtands in its full force and virtue againſt thy Soul. This is one cord Chriſt caſts from the Croſs over the Souls of guilty ſinners, to draw them to him.

2. The death of Chriſt purchaſes and procures perfect cleanſing from the filth and pollution of Sin, to waſh the defiled Souls of ſinners from all their uncleanneſs. For *this is he that came by water and by blood; not by blood only, but by water alſo,* 1 Joh. 5. 6. He comes by way of Sanctification as well as by way of Juſtification. Lord, ſaith a convinced ſinner, what an unclean Nature, Heart and Life have I? O I am nothing but a heap of uncleanneſs, an abhorrence to God and my ſelf; how ſhall ſuch a Heart as mine, ſuch an *Augean* Stable be cleanſed? Come unto me, ſaith Chriſt, I came by Water as well as Blood; in me thou ſhalt find a Fountain for Sanctification, as well as Juſtification; come unto me, my Spirit ſhall undertake the cleanſing of thy Heart; he ſhall take away the pollutions of ſin perfectly, ſo that it ſhall be preſented to God without ſpot.

3. And laſtly, The tranſcendent love of Chriſt ſhines out in its full ſtrength upon the Souls of Sinners from the Croſs; and there's nothing like Love to draw love: when Chriſt was lifted up upon the Croſs, he gave ſuch a glorious demonſtration of the ſtrength of his Love to ſinners, as one would think ſhould draw love from the hardeſt Heart that ever lodged in a ſinners Breaſt. *Herein is love* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be a propitiation for our ſins,* 1 Joh. 4. 10 *q. d.* Here's the triumph, the riches and glory of Divine Love, never was ſuch love manifeſted in the World. There's much of God's love in Temporal Providences, but all's nothing to this, this is Love in its higheſt Elevation, Love in its Meridian Glory; before it was none like it, and after it ſhall none appear like unto it. And thus you ſee Chriſt from the Croſs caſting forth a threefold cord (which is not eaſily broken) to draw the Hearts of ſinners to him.

4. *Demonſt.* Fourthly, to conclude, What mighty Demonſtration of the deſires of his Heart towards us, did our Redeemer give at, and ſince his Aſcenſion into Heaven? As the whole Life of Chriſt upon earth was a perſwaſive Argument to draw ſinners to him, ſo his Aſcenſion to Heaven hath many things in it which are mighty attractives to the Hearts of Men. I will only mention two,

1. The gifts he beſtowed at his Aſcenſion.
2. The ends and deſigns of his Aſcenſion.

1. The gifts he beſtowed on Men at his Aſcenſion, for this very end and purpoſe; whereof the *Pſalmiſt* gives this account, *Pſal.* 68. 18. *Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt received gifts for Men; yea, for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* He alludes to the *Roman Conquerors*, who in the day of their triumph did *ſpargere miſſilia*, ſcatter their largeſſes among the People. Thus Chriſt at his Aſcenſion ſhed forth the gifts of the Spirit in various kinds, qualifying Men for the Work of the Miniſtry; to enable them to plead with your Souls, and carry on his ſuit when he ſhould be in Heaven. Theſe gifts were extraordinary in the firſt Age; as the gift of Tongues, and Miracles, *&c.* and ordinary, to continue to the end of the World, *Eph.* 4. 8, 9. To ſome he gives depth of Learning and Judgment, to others a mighty *Pathos*, a melting influence upon the Affections; but all deſigned to win over your Hearts to Chriſt. This ſhews what care he took, and what proviſion he anſwerably made, for the ſucceſs of his great deſign, to draw the Hearts of ſinners to him.

2. The ends of his Aſcenſion, as they are declared in Scripture, plainly ſpeak the vehemency

of Chriſt's deſire to draw Souls to him. Now the declared ends of his Aſcenſion were, (1.) To make way for the Spirit's coming to convince, convert and comfort the Souls of all that come unto him, *Joh.* 16. 7. *Nevertheleſs I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the World of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment.* Without the Conviction of theſe things no Man can come to Chriſt; and no ſuch Convictions can be wrought upon the Conſcience of any Man without the Spirit; and the Spirit could not come to effect theſe things upon Mens Hearts if Chriſt had not aſcended. *Joh.* 7. 39. *But this ſpake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive: for the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified.* Thus Chriſt provided for the carrying on his great deſign upon your Hearts when he was entring into his own glory: The thoughts of that Glory made him not to forget his great deſign upon Earth. (2.) Another end of Chriſt's Aſcenſion was to make interceſſion with the Father for all and every Soul that ſhould come unto him; that their future ſins might make no breach of the Bond of the Covenant betwixt God and them. A Privilege able to draw the Hearts of all ſinners to him, 1 *Joh.* 2. 1, 2. *My little Children, theſe things write I unto you, that ye ſin not:* Mark it, the interceſſion of Chriſt muſt incourage and embolden no Man to ſin; that would be a vile abuſe of the Grace of God. *But if any Man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our ſins.* i. e. If ſin ſurprize and deceive any gracious Soul, the bent of whoſe Heart is againſt it, let him not be diſcouraged, he hath a potent Advocate aſcended into the Heavens to continue the Peace betwixt God and that Soul. O what an encouragement is here to gain the conſent of a ſinner's Heart to embrace Jeſus Chriſt! (3.) Another declared end of Chriſt's Aſcenſion was to lead Captivity captive, as in the forecited place, *Pſal.* 68. 17. that is, to captivate, and triumph over Satan as a conquered Enemy; who led us captive in the days of our vanity: He conquered Satan upon the Croſs, *Col.* 2. 15. but he triumphed over him at his Aſcenſion: And without ſuch a conqueſt and triumph no Soul could come to Chriſt. (4.) In a word, Chriſt aſcended into Heaven to prepare Manſions of reſt and glory for every Soul that ſhould embrace him in the way of repentance and faith in this World, *John* 14. 2. *In my Father's Houſe are many manſions, if it were not ſo I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you.* q. d. It ſatisfies me not to enjoy my glory in Heaven alone, all that come unto me by Faith ſhall be with me where I am; let them know for their encouragement, that the glory which God hath given me, I have given them, *John* 17. 22. All theſe things loudly ſpeak the fervent deſires of Chriſt's Soul after union and communion with poor ſinners; which was the thing to be demonſtrated.

II. Having proved the Point, that Chriſt is an earneſt Suitor for union and communion with the Souls of ſinners; we next come to ſhew the marvellous and admirable Grace, and Condeſcenſion of Chriſt that it ſhould be ſo. And this will appear five ways, to the aſtoniſhment of every conſidering Soul.

1. Tho Chriſt be thus intent and earneſt in his ſuit for your conſent, yet he gaineth nothing by you when you do conſent; the gain is to your ſelves, but not to him: *He is over all God bleſſed for ever,* Rom. 9. 5. above all acceſſions from the Creature. What doth the Sun gain by enlightning and animating the lower World? Or what doth a Fountain gain when Men drink and are refreſhed by its Waters? If any Soul that heareth me this day, ſhould preſently reſolve henceforth to break aſunder all the ties and engagements betwixt him and Sin, to ſubſcribe the Articles of the Goſpel, to give away himſelf Soul and Body to Chriſt, to live henceforth as a hallowed dedicated Creature to the Lord Jeſus; this indeed would turn to the infinite and everlaſting advantage of ſuch a Soul, but yet Chriſt cannot be profited thereby.

2. And that which ſtill encreaſes the wonder is this, that tho Chriſt makes no gain or profit by our Converſion, yet hath he impoveriſhed himſelf to gain ſuch unprofitable Creatures as we are to him. He hath made himſelf poor to make us rich; ſo ſpeaks the Apoſtle in 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that tho he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye thro his poverty might be rich.* He expends his riches, makes no advantage unto himſelf; his Incarnation impoveriſhed his reputation, *Phil.* 2. 7. How poor was Chriſt when he ſaid, *Pſal.* 22. 6. *But I am a Worm, and no Man; a reproach of Man, and deſpiſed of the People?* How poor in temporal comforts, when he ſaid, *Mat.* 8. 20. *The Foxes have holes, and the Birds of the air have neſts; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head.* Yea, how poor was he in ſpiritual Comforts, when that aſtoniſhing outcry break from him upon the Croſs, *Mat.* 27. 46. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* O let it aſtoniſh us that Chriſt ſhould earneſtly deſire union with our Souls upon terms of ſuch deep ſelf-denial to himſelf.

3. Tho Chriſt gain nothing by you, and impoveriſhed himſelf for you; yet doth he endure many vile repulſes, delays and denials of his Suit, and will not leave it for all that. O aſtoniſhing Grace! One would think that the leaſt delay, and much more a refuſal of an overture from Chriſt, upon ſuch terms as you have heard, ſhould make his indignation preſently to ſmoak againſt ſuch a Soul; and that he ſhould ſay, Thou haſt refuſed my offer, ſo full of ſelf-denying and condeſcending grace, never ſhall another offer be made to ſo unworthy a Soul; and yet you ſee he is contented to wait as well as knock, *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock.*

4. Herein the admirable Grace of this heavenly Suitor appears, that Jeſus Chriſt paſſeth by millions of Creatures of more excellent Gifts and Temperaments, and never makes them one offer of himſelf, never turneth aſide to give one knock at their door; but comes to thee the vileſt and baſeſt of Creatures, and will not be gone from thy door without his errands end.

Knoweſt thou not, ſinner, that among the unſanctified there are to be found multitudes of Men and Women of more raiſed and excellent Parts, nimble Wits, ſtrong Memory, ſolid Judgments; yea, Men and Women of cleaner Converſations, ſtrict Morality, adorned with excellent homilitical Virtues, capable if called to do him abundantly more ſervice than thou canſt; yet theſe are paſt by, and he becomes a Suitor to ſuch a poor worthleſs thing as thou art; yea, and rejoices in his choice, *Mat.* 11. 24. *I thank thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, becauſe thou haſt hidden theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto Babes.* Here is the triumph of Free-grace.

5. And laſtly, This juſtly increaſes the wonder, That ever Jeſus Chriſt ſhould deſire and delight to dwell in ſuch an unclean Heart as thine, which from the beginning hath been the Seat and Throne of Satan, full of all uncleanneſs and abominations. O that ever Chriſt ſhould make an overture of love to ſuch a polluted Soul! That he ſhould chooſe to erect his Throne where Satan's Seat was! Look into thine Heart ſinner, and think what can Chriſt ſee here to be deſired? Thou knoweſt thy Heart hath been a ſink of ſin, thy Conſcience like the common ſhoar, into which all the filth of thy life hath been caſt; yet Chriſt paſſeth by thee, as thou lieſt in thy blood and filthineſs, and caſteth love upon thee, and deſire towards thee, as it is *Ezek.* 16. 6, 8. All theſe things put together make it juſtly admirable and aſtoniſhing in our Eyes, that ever Jeſus Chriſt, the Lord from Heaven, ſhould become an earneſt Suitor for union and communion with the Souls of ſinners.

### I. *Uſe for Information.*

*Infer.* 1. If Chriſt be ſuch an earneſt Suitor for union and communion with the Souls of ſinners, then it follows, *That ſinners can juſtly charge their damnation upon none but themſelves.* Your blood muſt be upon your own Heads; Salvation by Chriſt is not only freely offered, but you are with great importunity perſwaded to accept it. Chriſt offers you life, you chooſe rather to die than accept it upon his terms; where now can your damnation be charged, but upon your own wilful obſtinacy? *Hoſ.* 13. 9. O Iſrael, *thy deſtruction is of thy ſelf.* Thou art the Author of thine own ruin: *I would have gathered thy Children,* ſaith Chriſt to *Jeruſalem, but thou wouldſt not*; your ruin therefore lies upon your ſelves, and upon none beſide. Indeed if the Miniſters of Chriſt be negligent in their duty, they may come in as acceſſories to your deſtruction; but that's a poor relief to you; as for my ſelf, I hope I may with *Paul* take God to record this day, that I am free from the blood of all Men. Now conſider what a diſmal aggravation of your deſtruction this will be, that you periſhed by your own Hands; this cuts off all Plea and Apology.

*Infer.* 2. Hence it alſo follows, *That diſtreſſed Sinners have no reaſon to queſtion Chriſt's willingneſs to receive them, when their Hearts are made willing to come unto him.* It were no leſs than a blaſphemous imputation of inſincerity to Chriſt himſelf to queſtion his willingneſs to receive broken-hearted ſinners, after ſo many proteſtations as he hath made in the Goſpel, of his zeal and earneſtneſs for their Salvation; that Scripture, *John* 6. 37. puts it out of doubt, *He that cometh unto me I will in no wiſe caſt out.* I know Guilt breeds many fears and jealouſies in the Hearts of ſinners; Will Chriſt ever accept, and receive ſuch a one as I? Try him Soul, he hath ſaid he will; let him have but the deliberate conſent of thy Heart to his terms, and then if thou be rejected, thou wilt be the firſt Soul in the World that ever met with a repulſe from him.

Infer. 3. *By Chriſt's earneſt Suit for the Souls of ſinners you may eſtimate the invaluable worth and precious Nature of the Soul of Man.* Were not the Soul a Creature of great value, Jeſus Chriſt would never be ſo deeply concerned about the winning and ſaving of it. Sinners have a vile eſteem of their own Souls, they will ſell them for nought; but Chriſt knows their true worth, and his ſolicitude to ſave them is anſwerable to his eſtimation of them; he counts when he hath gained a Soul, he hath gained a Treaſure. Therefore he pleads, ~~woos~~ and waits ſo earneſtly and aſſiduouſly for the Salvation of them. Two things ſpeak the great value of the Soul of Man.

1. That is is a marriageable Creature to Chriſt now.
2. That it is capable of Glory with Chriſt hereafter.

1. It is a marriageable Creature to Chriſt now, capable of eſpouſals to the Son of God; upon which account it is Chriſt ſo earneſtly ſeeks its love, and ſues for its conſent. Now this is a dignity beyond all other Creatures in Heaven or Earth; no Angels in Heaven, no other Creature but the Soul of Man on Earth, is capable of eſpouſals to Chriſt; 'tis a dignity above that of Angels, for Chriſt took not on him their Nature, and the Hypoſtatical union is the ground and foundation of the Myſtical union. They are Members indeed of Chriſt's Kingdom, and he is to them a Head of dominion; but this honor was never conferred upon Angels to be Members of his Body, Fleſh and Bones, as the Saints are, *Eph.* 5. 30.

2. As the Soul is capable of eſpouſals to Chriſt on Earth, ſo it is capable of glory with Chriſt in Heaven, throughout eternity, *John* 17. 24. *Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou haſt given me.* It hath a natural capacity of enjoying eternal Bleſſedneſs, which the Souls of other Creatures have not. And this will be the aggravation of Hell-torments, that Men capable of the higheſt happineſs ſhould as it were receive that capacity in vain; but that which conſtitutes an actual right to the everlaſting enjoyment of Chriſt in glory, is the Soul's eſpouſals to him here in the way of Grace. Upon theſe two accounts it is that Chriſt puts ſuch a price upon them, courts their love ſo paſſionately, laments their loſs ſo pathetically; and encourages his Miniſters to all diligence in perſwading ~~and wooing~~ them for him with ſuch abundant rewards, *Dan.* 12. 3. Know then your own worth and dignity, neither pawn nor ſell ſo precious a thing as thy Soul for any thing Satan can ſet before thee by way of exchange for it; *What ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?*

Infer. 4. *Is Chriſt ſuch an earneſt Suitor for union with ſinners? then certainly they are the enemies of Chriſt and the Souls of Men, that any way endeavour to hinder or break off the match betwixt Chriſt and them.*

Some there are that labour to create jealouſies, and beget diſtaſtes and prejudices in the Souls of Men againſt Chriſt and his ways; Men that bring up an evil report upon Chriſt, and ſtrict Religion, as that which will beggar them, and expoſe them to all the miſeries of the World: Who, inſtigated by Satan, whiſper ſuch ſtories into the Soul's ear whom Chriſt is wooing for himſelf, that the ſeverity of Religion will certainly extinguiſh all their joys and pleaſures; they ſhall never laugh more, never be merry more. Beſide, it will expoſe all their comforts upon Earth to hazard, their Eſtates and Lives muſt fall a prey to their Enemies; and this is the Eſtate which Chriſt will jointer them in if they conſent to his terms: and that this is no groundleſs jealouſie of their own, but that Chriſt himſelf hath openly declared as much; *That he that will come after him, muſt hate Father and Mother, Wife and Children, yea and his own Life alſo.* This is what they muſt expect as the fruit of their conſent to Chriſt's propoſals. But O what will theſe Men have to anſwer, and how will they ſtand before Chriſt another day, who are ſuch profeſſed enemies to his Croſs, and ſet themſelves ſo directly in oppoſition to the great deſign Chriſt is driving on in the World! It is not enough that you will not enter your ſelves, but you will hinder them that would, *Mat.* 23. 13. Thus carnal Parents diſcourage their Children, one Relation another. But to help Souls under this diſcouragement, I will leave only this one Caveat with them, *That ſuch ſeeming Friends are their real mortal Enemies, their Words are poiſon to your Souls:* Satan hath fee'd them to do his Work, hired their Tongues for his Service. But if the ſerious cares of Salvation and fervent love of Chriſt be in thy Heart, thou wilt reſolve as *Jerom* did, *If my Father who begat me, and my Mother who bare me, ſhould hang about my Neck with tears and entreaties, to keep me from Chriſt, I would fling off my Father, and tread upon my Mother that bear me, to go to Chriſt.*

To this Head alſo belong all thoſe ſcandals and offences which looſe and careleſs Profeſſors caſt in the way, to diſcourage others from coming unto Chriſt; *Wo to the World* (ſaith Chriſt) *becauſe of offences,* Mat. 18. 7. Wo to the World, this will be their ruin and undoing; by this means ſuch prejudices will be begotten in their Souls againſt Chriſt and Religion, as they will never be able to free themſelves from. *But wo to them by whom ſuch offence cometh; it were better a milſtone were hanged about their Necks, and they caſt into the bottom of the Sea.* Chriſtians, look carefully to your Converſations, for beſides the evil effects of ſin upon your ſelves, you ſee the miſchievous effects of it upon others. And thus we may underſtand thoſe words, *Cant.* 2. 7. *I charge you, O ye Daughters of* Jeruſalem, *by the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field, that ye ſtir not up nor awake my Love till he pleaſe. Roes,* and *Hinds,* are timorous Creatures, the leaſt crack of a ſtick will ſtartle and fright them away; ſuch are comers on toward Chriſt, young beginners in the ways of Religion; how ſmall a matter may damp and diſcourage them? O friend, you have ſins enough of your own, bring not the ſin and ruin of other Men upon your account alſo.

*Infer.* 5. To conclude, *How great is the blindneſs and ignorance of ſinners, that need ſo much entreaty and importunity to be made happy?* 'Tis your ignorance, ſinners, that makes all the Goſpel-importunity neceſſary; did you know your own miſery, and ſee Chriſt in his neceſſity, ſutableneſs, and excellency, all theſe perſwaſions might be ſpared; nay, you your ſelves would become importunate Suitors for Chriſt, you would not need to be twice offered: there is a Conſcience in every Man and Woman ſet there on purpoſe by the Lord to give them an Alarm; but the Alarm goes off for want of a ſpring, to wit, the knowledg of our ſin and miſery. Ah Soul, didſt thou but know who it is that ſues for thy love, what the benefits of union with Chriſt are, thou wouldſt anſwer his firſt call in ſuch Language as this: Lord Jeſus, write down thine own terms; be they what they will, I am ready to ſubſcribe them with the fulleſt conſent of Heart and Will; and then how ſoon would the match be made betwixt Chriſt and you! Yea, you would watch for and hang on half a word of encouragement from Chriſt's Mouth, as *Benhadads* Servant did on that word of *Ahab, my brother* Benhadad, 1 *Kings* 20. 32, 33. There is no need of Rhetorick to perſwade a condemned Malefactor to accept his pardon, a hungry Man to ſit down at a full Table; but alas, Sin is not felt, Chriſt is not known, therefore the one is not bewailed, nor the other deſired.

### II. *Uſe.*

In the next place, the Point naturally leads us to a Uſe of *Exhortation,* to perſwade ſinners to embrace Chriſt's motion, ſubſcribe his terms, and huckle no more with him, but end the treaty in a cordial preſent conſent; and ſo cloſe up the match betwixt him and your own Souls. How long ſinner wilt thou be at, ſhall I, ſhall I? and thy Will hang undetermined betwixt Chriſt and Sin, bivious and unreſolved in ſo great and deep a concernment? O that Chriſt's next overture might bring the matter to an Iſſue; why will you trifle and dally with him at this rate? There is indeed a Treaty on foot betwixt Chriſt and you, but you may periſh for all that; there's no concluſion or agreement made, Chriſt and you may yet part. The Lord help you therefore to ponder, and deliberate with all ſpeed and ſeriouſneſs the terms propounded by Chriſt in the Goſpel; to count the coſt, and yet not always to be deliberating neither, but to bring matters to an Iſſue, and that with all the convenient ſpeed you can; in order whereunto I will lay two things before you, for you to weigh and ſeriouſly ponder.

1. What are the advantages you will gain by Chriſt?
2. What is the moſt you can loſe by your conſent to his terms? and then bring your thoughts to an Iſſue.

Firſt, Ponder well the advantages you will gain by Chriſt; theſe are ſo great and manifold, that 'tis impoſſible for me to enumerate or value them: it ſhall ſuffice in this place to ſhew you one of thoſe bunches of the Grapes of *Eſhcol,* that by it you may eſtimate the riches and fertility of that good Land, ſettled upon you by Chriſt as a Dowry or Joynture; and theſe are four.

1. The payment of all your debts to the Law.
2. An Honour above Angels.
3. An eternal inheritance in Heaven.
4. A glorious and joyful preſentation of you to the Father in the great day, by Chriſt, as his Spouſe and Wife.

1. The ſame day and hour you give your cordial conſent to take Chriſt upon Goſpel-terms, that is to ſay, Chriſt with his yoak of obedience, and Chriſt with his Croſs of ſufferings, all your debts to the Law are diſcharged and paid. What have you been doing ever ſince you came into the World but running upon ſcore to God, deeper and deeper every day? O what a vaſt ſum oweſt thou to his Juſtice? and not able to pay one farthing. If thou conſent not to Chriſt's offer, the Bailiff and Executioner, Death and the Devil, will ſhortly be upon thy back, and hurry thee away to that priſon from whence thou ſhalt not

come until thou haſt paid the laſt farthing, *Mat.* 5. 25, 26. If thou conſent to Chriſt's terms, thy debts are paid upon thy marriage day; thy bonds cancelled, and thy diſcharge in Heaven ſealed. *Rom.* 8. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt*; and the reaſon is given, *verſ.* 4. in this, *That the righteouſneſs of the Law is fulfil'd in us that believe.* But how in us? certainly the meaning is not that the τὸ *credere*, the act of Faith doth, as it is a work of ours, ſatisfy the demand of the Law, and fulfil its righteouſneſs; no, but it apprehends the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, applies it, and makes it ours, and ſo *the righteouſneſs of the Law is fulfil'd in us that believe.* Is it an eaſe, is it a comfort to be out of debt? Then embrace the offer of Chriſt, for after thy eſpouſals to him, the Law cannot touch thee by any act of condemnation; it goes to the Husband Chriſt, thou art diſcharged. Well then, reſolve what to do; Shall the debt run on and increaſe till Juſtice come to levy it upon you in Hell-torments? Or will you accept of Chriſt and the riches of Righteouſneſs that are in him, and ſo be fully and finally acquitted from all your debts at once, and be able to lie down in peace, and enjoy your lives without ſlaviſh fear? He that owes nothing, fears no Bayliffs, but may (as we uſe to ſay) whet his Knife upon the *Counter* threſhold.

2. Your conſent to Chriſt's terms will advance you to an Honor above and beyond the Honor of Angels: 'Tis ſaid, That the Children of the Reſurrection ſhall be equal unto Angels; and it is moſt ſure that in ſome reſpect their union with Chriſt advances them far above Angels; for the Apoſtle tells us, *Heb.* 1. 14. *They are miniſtring Spirits ſent forth for the good of them that ſhall be heirs of Salvation.* As the great Peers and Nobles in a Kingdom, count it no diſhonour to perform their ſervice to the Heir apperent. The Miniſtry of Angels is a myſtery which we little underſtand, but by it we receive great and manifold advantages, and it certainly puts a great deal of Honour upon all the Members of Chriſt.

3. Chriſt will not only pay all your debts, and exalt you to a dignity above Angels; but in that day wherein you cordially conſent to his terms, he will intitle you to the moſt glorious inheritance purchaſed by his Blood; *You ſhall be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. 8. 17. O what an inducement is here to cloſe the match betwixt Chriſt and our Souls! If I conſent to take Chriſt upon Goſpel-terms, I ſhall thereby be intitled to all the Glory that is in Heaven; it ſhall be mine as truly as it is Chriſt's. 'Tis true, the glory of Chriſt will in ſome reſpects far ſurpaſs the glory of the Saints; he will ſhine among them as the Sun compared with the Stars; but yet the glory which God gave him, that is, the communicable glory, ſhall be truly theirs as it is his, *John* 17. 22. *The glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them.* Tell my Brethren (ſaith he) *John* 20. 17. *I aſcend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God.* This you ſhall gain alſo by cloſing this Treaty with a hearty conſent to Chriſt's terms and propoſals.

4. If you will conſider and conſent, you ſhall be preſented by him to the Father, pure and ſpotleſs, with exceeding joy and gladneſs in the great day. This will be ſuch a preſentation of your perſons to God, as will make your Hearts leap for joy, to read what the Scriptures ſpeak about it. This methinks ſhould induce every Soul, without farther delay, to preſent himſelf, Soul and Body, chearfully and willingly to Jeſus Chriſt. For (1.) Chriſt will bring you in the great day to his Father, in the ſhining beauty of perfect Holineſs, not a ſpot or wrinkle upon your Souls, *Epheſ.* 5. 27. The Blood of Chriſt perfectly waſhes off every ſpot of guilt, for then the Spirit of Chriſt hath perfectly cleanſed the Soul from all the defilement and filth of ſin; ſo that it ſhall come to God a pure and beautiful Creature out of Chriſt's Hand. (2.) This preſentation will be made with greateſt honour and ſolemnity; we little think in what ſtate and triumph Chriſt intends to bring the pooreſt believer to his Father, *Pſal.* 45. 14, 15. *With joy and gladneſs ſhall they be brought*, &c. So *Jude* verſ. 24. *They ſhall be preſented faultleſs before the preſence of his glory, with exceeding joy:* Joy running over, Joy upon all hands; God himſelf will rejoice that ever he created ſuch a Soul as hath ſincerely beſtowed it ſelf upon Chriſt: Jeſus Chriſt will rejoice that ever he ſhed his Blood for that Soul, that now places his ſole righteouſneſs therein; the Holy Spirit will rejoice, that ever he came with a commiſſion from the Father, and the Son, to draw ſuch a Soul to Chriſt, who hath obeyed his voice. The Angels will rejoice with joy unſpeakable, *Luke* 15. 10. *There is joy in the preſence of the Angels of God over one ſinner that repenteth.* If the conſent of any of your Souls ſhall be this day gained to Chriſt, if the Word you have heard this day ſhall ſend any poor Soul hence to his Cloſet, or into a Corner, there to make his Covenant with Chriſt, (for that's the way of making up the match with Chriſt) in that hour the news of it will be in Heaven, and excite joy among the Angels of God. Lay theſe and many other Privileges together, which I want time to mention, but the Scriptures will abundantly furniſh you with them; and then conſider what a rich bargain, what an advantageous match Jeſus Chriſt is for your Souls.

*Secondly*, Upon the other ſide caſt up the account, what you may loſe by your conſent to be Chriſt's; and whether thoſe loſſes be ſufficient to ballance or preponderate the gain that comes by ſuch a conſent; that ſo your choice of Chriſt may be a deliberate and full choice, and you may never repent afterwards of the choice you have made. It is a rule in the Civil Law, *Non conſentit qui non ſentit*; he cannot conſent, that doth not think, underſtand and deliberate: and this is the reaſon of ſo much flinching from Chriſt, and ſhameful apoſtacy in times of Perſecution; Men did not think of ſuch ſufferings and loſſes, they are meer ſurpriſals to them. To forelay all ſuch occaſions of offence, our Lord deals candidly and openly with us, and tells us beforehand what are the worſt things that may befal us for his ſake, *Joh.* 16. 1, 2. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that you ſhould not be offended: they ſhall put you out of the Synagogues; yea, the time cometh that whoſoever killeth you will think he doth God ſervice.* But *verſ.* 4. he adds, *Theſe things have I told you, that when the time ſhall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.* q. d. Remember your ſelves in times of Perſecution, that all theſe things were propounded, conſidered and conſented to; they were the very terms you ſubſcribed to me; had you not liked them, you might at the everlaſting damage and ruin of your immortal Souls have refuſed and rejected them. Now the things you are to ballance

lance with the gain of Chriſt, muſt by you be ſorted into two Ranks.

1. Things that *muſt* be parted with.

2. Things that *may* be parted with for Chriſt.

1. The things that you muſt part with, *viz.* your Luſts, and all the vicious pleaſures you have had in them: how much profit or pleaſure ſoever they have brought you in, away they muſt go; they muſt be devoted to deſtruction and mortification, or you can have no intereſt in Chriſt: you muſt ſhake hand for ever with all your ſinful courſes and companions, *Rom.* 6. 16. *His Servants you are to whom you obey.* Be they as pleaſant and profitable as your right Hand or Eye, they muſt be pluckt out, and cut off, *Mat.* 5. 29, 30. Doth this ſound harſh and unpleaſant to your Ears? Doth this cauſe the demur? O conſider, what it is to part with ſin; it is but to part with the Diſeaſe of your Souls, and the Inſtruments of your everlaſting ruin. Which of you would not be glad to part with a Fever, the Stone or Dropſie? What is Paſſion, but the Fever of the Soul? What is a hard Heart, but a Stone? What is Covetouſneſs and Earthly-mindedneſs, but the inſatiable Dropſie of the Soul? Now if Men would be glad to be rid of ſuch dreadful Diſeaſes in their Bodies, and be reſtored to ſoundneſs, eaſe and health; how much more ſhould you be glad to be rid of your Corruptions, and have the rectitude, eaſe and pleaſure of your Soul reſtored again? yea, inſtead of theſe impure, vitious, brutiſh pleaſures you have taken in ſin, you ſhall enjoy the pure, divine, ſutable and everlaſting pleaſures of Holineſs. Conſider now, and accordingly make your choice, whether you will take the pleaſures of Sin which are but for a ſeaſon, in exchange for the everlaſting Joys which are at God's right Hand for ever.

2. There are other things which you may be called to part with, and give up for Chriſt; it is uncertain whether God may actually call you to part with your Liberties, Eſtates, Relations, and Lives for Chriſt. Many are never actually called forth to ſuch ſufferings; but becauſe many are, and every one of you may be ſo called, you muſt realize them, ponder them, and ſubſcribe thoſe very terms, making full account of theſe things as if they were now before you, *Luk.* 9. 23. For ſo Chriſt hath propounded them; but then withal, weigh theſe troubles with the gain and advantages you ſhall have by them, and not ſingly and alone by themſelves; for ſo Chriſt hath preſented them to you, *Mat.* 19. 28. *And every one that hath forſaken Houſes, or Brethren, or Siſters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my Name ſake, ſhall receive a hundred fold, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life.*

Now, if you think ſuch gainful troubles, ſuch Soul-inriching loſſes, be worth accepting for Chriſts ſake; then cloſe the match with Chriſt, and bring the matter to a concluſion: Do not befool your ſelves with a fond and groundleſs preſumption that theſe things will never befal you. I fear many flatter themſelves with ſuch vain hopes; the Lord knows how ſoon theſe ſuppoſitions, at a diſtance, may be turned into realitys before your Eyes: You have much reaſon to expect them, and much more to embrace them whenever Chriſt ſhall call you to them. This is the great Work you have now to do; and really you cannot ſafely demur any longer; this matter muſt come to a concluſion, and the ſooner the better. For you know (1.) that your Lives are immediately uncertain, and it is an unaccountable madneſs to let the great concern of your Salvation lie one day or night at hazard; your breath is continually coming and going, and that which is going, muſt at laſt be gone, *James* 4. 14. Your Souls hang over everlaſting dangers by the ſingle thred of that feeble breath which plays in your Noſtrils, and every Diſeaſe is like the flame of a Candle held under that thred; and can it either be ſafe or comfortable, to delay ſo great Work as this, upon which all your expectations of eternal bleſſedneſs depend? (2.) Not only your Lives are hazardous and uncertain, but the enjoyment of the Goſpel, and all the opportunities and means of your Converſion, are as uncertain as they. 'Tis true, and to the glory of God be it acknowledged, we now enjoy the freedom and fulneſs of Goſpel-mercies: but where has God made any ſuch ſettlement of theſe bleſſings upon you as puts the enjoyment of them out of hazard? The rain is over, but yet the clouds may return after the rain; we are upon our good behaviour: if it bring forth the fruits of your Converſion, well; if not, the Ax lieth at the root of the tree, *Mat.* 3. 10. And if God removes the Goſpel from among us, (as our delays and triflings provoke him to do) then the Treaty is ended, and there's little probability that any thing further will be done betwixt Chriſt and you, *Luk.* 13. 25. (3.) Bring this matter to an iſſue, with all due ſpeed, becauſe you are not capable to give one ſound reaſon for a moments delay of ſo great and weighty a concernment. Can you be ſafe too ſoon? Can you be happy too ſoon? Certainly you cannot be out of the danger of Hell too ſoon; and therefore why ſhould not your cloſing with Chriſt upon the terms propounded, be your very next work? For certainly if the buſineſs, the main work and buſineſs of every Mans life, be to fly from the wrath to come, as indeed it is, *Mat.* 3. 7. and to fly for refuge to Jeſus Chriſt, as indeed it is, *Heb.* 6. 18. then certainly, all delays are highly dangerous in ſuch a buſineſs as this; the *Manſlayer*, when flying to the Refuge-City before the avenger of Blood, when his Heart was hot within him, did not think he could recover the City too ſoon. And now ſet all your own reaſon to work upon this matter; put the caſe as really it is: I am fleeing from wrath to come; the Juſtice of God, and Curſes of the Law are cloſely purſuing me; is it reaſonable that I now ſit down in the way to gather flowers, or play with trifles? For ſuch are all our other concernments in this World compared with our Salvation. (4.) Bring this Treaty to an iſſue with all due ſpeed, becauſe moſt Souls that periſh, periſh by delays; Men think they have time enough before them, and that to morrow will be as to day, and ſo Satan gets part by part, when he had not confidence to demand in the whole lump. Moſt that periſh under the Goſpel, had convictions upon their Conſciences, and vain purpoſes in their Hearts; but not bringing them to a ſpeedy execution, that was their undoing, *James* 1. 24. *He beholdeth himſelf and goeth his way, and ſtraightway forgets what manner of perſon he was.* It is an alluſion to a Man that looks in the morning into a Glaſs, where he diſcerns a ſpot upon his Face, and reſolves with himſelf anon to waſh it off; but ſome diverſion or other falls in, other matters take up his thoughts, and ſo the ſpot remains all day, and he carries it with him to bed at night.

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O theſe delays are the undoing of millions. (5.) Delay not to cloſe this Treaty with Chriſt, becauſe all delay increaſes the difficulty, and the longer you neglect, the more will your Hearts be hardned by the deceitfulneſs of ſin, *Heb.* 3. 13. Continuance in ſin, and quenching of Convictions, do ſenſibly harden the Heart, and ſtiffen the Will. Under the firſt convictions the Heart is tender, the affections flowing: O if this advantage were apprehended, and purſued, how ſoon might the work come to a comfortable concluſion! but after a while thoſe Soul-affecting words, Sin, Chriſt, Heaven, Hell, Death and Eternity, will become words of a common ſound. (6.) And laſtly, Beware of delays in this matter, becauſe you can never expect a fitter and fairer opportunity and ſeaſon for the diſpatch of this great concernment, than by the ſpecial indulgence of Heaven you enjoy this day, 2 *Cor.* 6. 1, 2. *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation.* You have now the Wind and Tide with you; if you will not weigh Anchor now, you may lie Windbound to your dying day; what advantages can you reaſonably expect, which God hath not furniſhed you with at this day? You have the means of Grace among you, you have liberty and freedom to attend on thoſe means without fear. Say not, I have ſuch, or ſuch troubles and encumbrances in the World; for you muſt never expect to be without them, except you only ſhall find the World another thing than all others find it. Have you health? O what a precious ſeaſon and advantage is that! Art thou ſick? O what a ſpur is that! What is to be done muſt be done quickly.

III. *Uſe for Direction.*

But it may be ſome Souls will plead ignorance, that they know not how to manage and tranſact ſo great a concernment with Chriſt, and therefore ſet not about it; and it is very likely there may be much truth in that Plea. For the help and aſſiſtance of ſuch Souls, I will gather up the ſum of what hath been, and ought to be further ſpoken about this matter, in the following Directions; ſo that nothing but your unwillingneſs and ſlothfulneſs ſhall remain to hinder you.

*Direct.* 1. If ever you bring the Treaty betwixt Chriſt and your Souls to a happy iſſue and concluſion, you muſt, as before was noted, ſit down and count the coſt, *Luke* 14. 28. 'twill be in vain elſe to engage your ſelves in the profeſſion of Religion; it is not Chriſt's deſign to draw you under a raſh inconſiderate engagement, and ſo to reap more diſhonour by your Apoſtacy and Hypocriſy than ever he ſhall have glory by your Profeſſion. No, he would have you to foreſee and ſeriouſly bethink your ſelves of all the outward troubles and inconveniences you may afterwards meet with for his ſake. You are to embark your ſelves with Chriſt, and abide with him in ſtorms, as well as Halcyon days; you muſt follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth, *Rev.* 14. 4. There's no retreating after engagement to Chriſt; *If any Man draw back, my Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him,* Heb. 10. 38. 'Tis eternal death by that martial Law of Heaven to run from Chriſt's colours in the day of battel. Well then, retire thy ſelf into the innermoſt cloſet of thy Soul; ſit quiet and patiently there till thou haſt debated this matter fully with thy own thoughts, and haſt ballanced the good and the evil, the profits and loſſes of Religion; for want of this the Church is filled with Hypocrites, and Hell with inconſiderate and raſh Profeſſors: the more we deliberate, the better we ſhall conclude.

*Direct.* 2. Having debated the matter over and over in thy moſt ſedate and ſerious thoughts, let not Satan diſcourage thee from caſting thy Soul at Chriſt's Feet with a hearty conſent to all his terms, for want of ſuch and ſuch qualifications as thou canſt not find in thine own Soul. 'Tis uſual for Satan to ſuggeſt at this time, the want of greater ſorrow and humiliation for ſin; that the Soul hath not lain long enough under the humbling work of the Law; that the aggravations of its ſins have been ſuch, that there is no hope of acceptance. Free thy Soul from theſe ſnares of Satan by the conſideration of this unqueſtionable truth; That Chriſt expects from thee no more humiliation than what produceth ſuch a hearty deliberate conſent, as thy Will is now to give; and ſuch a conſent once gained, no aggravation of ſin is pleadable againſt the duty of believing.

*Direct.* 3. Diſtruſt not the ſincerity of Chriſt in thoſe gracious offers he makes unto coming Souls. Be ſatisfied, he ſpeaks his very Heart in them to thee; the Devil labours to ſow jealouſie and beget ſuſpicions in the Hearts of poor convinced ſinners, that they will not find ſuch a welcom entertainment with Chriſt as he ſeems to promiſe them, in thoſe encouraging Scriptures, *Mat.* 11. 28, 29. *John* 6. 37. but that ſomething elſe lies hid in thoſe Scriptures, as a myſtery which they underſtand not; and ſo by ſhaking the aſſenting act, labours to hinder the accepting act of Faith. This is a caſe as common as it is ſad; the Lord help poor Souls to avoid this ſnare, leſt inſtead of honouring Chriſt by a reſolved adherence to him, they make him a lier, and impute inſincerity to the God of truth. *For he that believeth not, hath made him a lier.*

*Direct.* 4. Look up to God for power to enable you to come to Chriſt in this ſupernatural and difficult work of Faith. Don't think Faith is of the growth of thine own Heart; *No Man can come unto me,* ſaith Chriſt, *except my Father, which hath ſent me, draw him.* There is a legal Spirit working under Evangelical pretences in many Souls; they look within them to find that which is quite above them: the Apoſtle points you to the fountain of Faith, in *Eph.* 2. 8. *It is not of your ſelves, it is the gift of God.* 'Tis one of the greateſt difficulties in the World to believe. For if the power of God muſt be owned as the cauſe of every new degree of Faith, in the greateſt believers in the World, as is plain, *Luke* 17. 5. *The Apoſtles ſaid unto the Lord, Increaſe our Faith:* How much more is the production of Faith it ſelf, and the firſt vital act thereof, to be aſcribed to the Almighty Power of God?

*Direct.* 5. Keeping thine Eye of Expectation upon that Almighty Power, pray and plead with the Lord aſſiduouſly and importunately for the exerting of that Power upon thy Soul; and give not over thy Suit till thou feel that Power coming upon thee. The time of believing is a time of earneſt pleading thine own danger and neceſſity; and the Spirit of the Lord improving them, will abundantly furniſh thee with Pleas, and Arguments to inforce this Suit. Such as theſe, (1.) Lord, I have thy call and invitation, yea, I have thy command to encourage me to believe; it is not preſumption therefore in thy poor Creature to come after thou haſt invited and commanded me; hadſt thou not encouraged me, I durſt not

Prayer

have moved towards thee: Lord, whoſe Word is it, 1 *Joh.* 3. 23. is it not thine own? This makes my Faith an act of obedience. (2.) Yea, Lord, I have thy promiſe as well as thy command, made upon no other condition but my coming to thee: Bleſſed Jeſus, haſt not thou ſaid, *John* 6. 37. *Him that cometh unto me I will in no wiſe caſt out?* An invitation is much, but thy promiſe is more. (3.) O my God, I have not only thy command making it my duty to believe, and thy promiſe to encourage me to that duty, but I have the examples of other ſinners that came unto thee long ago, and thou didſt not reject them; nor do I abuſe thoſe examples in drawing incouragement from them, for it was thy very deſign in recording them, that they might be ſo many patterns to all that ſhould hereafter believe on thee, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. (4.) O my God, I am ſhut up under a plain neceſſity, I have no other way to take; thus ſtands the caſe with me, I am beaten off from all other refuges, there is no help for me in Angels nor Men, in duties or ſelf-righteouſneſs, in thee only my Soul can find reſt. I am ſhut up to thee as to the only door of hope, *Gal.* 3. 23. here I muſt ſpeed or periſh; my Soul is burdened and wearied, I know not how to diſpoſe of it, but into thy Hands; nor where to lay the burden of my guilt but upon thee: If I miſs here, I am gone for ever. (5.) Lord, I am willing to renounce and abandon all other hopes, refuges and righteouſneſſes, and to ſtick to, and rely upon thee only. Duties cannot juſtifie me, tears cannot waſh me, reformation cannot ſave me; nothing but thy Righteouſneſs can anſwer my end: I come to thee a poor naked Creature, ſaying as the Church, *Hoſ.* 14. 3. Aſhur *ſhall not ſave us, &c. for in thee do the fatherleſs find mercy.* Thus plead it with God, and ſtill remember you are pleading for Life, yea, for your eternal Life.

*Direct.* 6. Labour to make a reſolved adventure upon Chriſt amidſt all thoſe encouragements, let the iſſue be what it will; reſolve to venture tho you have not the leaſt degree of aſſurance that you ſhall be accepted and pardoned. This is that brave and noble act of Faith which carries the Soul to Chriſt; much as *Heſter* came to the King, *Yet will I go in to the King, and if I periſh, I periſh,* Heſt. 4. 16. It pities me to think how the ſaving act of Faith is groſly miſtaken in the World; the generality think it is enough for them to believe that Chriſt died for ſinners, and therefore for them as well as any other; but you ſee Faith is another matter: O there are great difficulties and mighty wreſtlings in the Work of Believing; 'tis a great matter for a poor convinced ſinner, in the face of ſo much guilt and vileneſs, and amidſt ſuch manifold damps and diſcouragements from Satan, to caſt and adventure himſelf upon Chriſt, and that upon ſuch ſelf-denying terms: but the pinch of neceſſity will bring the Soul to this, for now it reaſons with it ſelf as the *Lepers* did, 2 *Kings* 7. 4, 5. If we go to the Camp of the *Aſſyrians*, we can but die; and if we abide here, we muſt certainly die: thus here, if I ſit ſtill in the ſtate of Nature, and ſtill continue demurring and delaying, my damnation is unavoidable, to Hell I muſt go; and if I caſt my ſelf upon Chriſt, I can but be rejected: but he hath ſaid, *He will not caſt out thoſe that come unto him*; in this way of Faith there is a poſſibility of Salvation, yea, there dawns from it a ſtrong probability; this therefore is my only way, *To him I will go, and if I periſh, I periſh.*

*Direct.* 7. Never meaſure the grace of God, nor the mercy of Chriſt, by the Rule of your own narrow conceptions and apprehenſions of him; but believe them to be far greater than your contracted narrow underſtanding repreſents them to you. Our caſting of the pardoning power and mercy of God into the mold of our own thoughts, disfigures and alters them, ſo that they look not like themſelves, but with a very diſcouraging aſpect upon our Souls; by this Satan keeps off many a Soul from coming to Chriſt; The Lord knows how to forgive thee, tho thou ſcarce knoweſt how to forgive thy ſelf for the injuries thou haſt done againſt him; that's a very conſiderable Scripture to this purpoſe, in *Iſa.* 55. 7, 8, 9. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous Man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ſaith the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Man lies under a double miſery, one by reaſon of Affliction, another by reaſon of Tranſgreſſion; concerning both theſe, God's thoughts are not as ours, but far above what we can think: either (1.) with ſimple cogitation; *i. e.* we cannot think ſuch thoughts to others, under miſery in themſelves, or under tranſgreſſion againſt us, as God doth towards us. Or (2.) by way of reflexive comprehenſion; *i. e.* we cannot conceive what thoſe thoughts of God are towards us, when we are under miſery or ſin, juſt as he thinks them; ſtill his thoughts will be above ours, as the Heavens are above the Earth: ſuch is the altitude of Heaven above the Earth, that the vaſt body of the whole Earth is but a ſmall inconſiderable point to it; the higheſt Cedars, Mountains, Clouds, cannot reach it. God's thoughts are infinite, ours finite; his thoughts are continued, ours interrupted and at a ſtand; his are immutable, ours changeable; his are intuitive, ours diſcurſive: therefore never meaſure his by your own; the thoughts of pardoning Grace in him, are rich, plenteous, and glorious; but when our unbelieving Hearts have practiſed upon them, they are quiet another thing. Thou ſayeſt, how can ſuch a Wretch as I obtain mercy? Thou knoweſt not, but the Lord knoweth. O if we could take in ſuch a proper Idea and apprehenſion of the mercy and goodneſs of God, as he hath given of them himſelf, in *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. this would bring you to Chriſt with much incouragement.

*Direct.* 8. Be not diſcouraged in the work of Faith, tho no peace or comfort ſhould come in by the firſt act of it; nay, tho there ſhould be an increaſe of trouble for the preſent: the firſt ſaving act of Faith certainly puts you into a ſtate of peace, but it may not preſently produce the ſenſe of peace; you may after you have believed and really cloſed with Chriſt, meet with ſome diſcouragements which may make you queſtion whether Chriſt has received you or no, whether he has any love for your Souls or no? Yet hold on, whether comfort come or not; tho Chriſt and Comfort are inſeparable, yet Chriſt and the ſenſe of Comfort are not ſo: think not that all your troubles ſhall be over as ſoon as ever you believe, becauſe it is ſaid, *Heb.* 4. 3. *We who have believed do enter into reſt:* That Scripture ſpeaks of a ſtate of reſt, and not of the preſent or continued ſenſe of reſt. The Woman of *Canaan*, in *Matth.* 15. 26, 27. did really believe in Chriſt, yet met with ſore trials under the firſt act of her Faith; yet this took her not off from the work of Faith, but rather quickned and inflamed her the more; ſhe was glad of a word from Chriſt, and ſhe expected deeds. O but the words were diſcouraging, *It is not meet to take the Childrens bread and give it to Dogs*; yet this beats not off her Faith, the Dog belongs to the Family, and crumbs to the Dog. *O Woman*, ſaith Chriſt, *great is thy Faith.* If you reſolve for Chriſt, you muſt not be diſcouraged, a reſolute Faith overcomes all difficulties. You pray, you believe, and yet no comfort; well, the viſion of Peace is for an appointed time, at the end it will ſpeak and not lie.

*Direct.* 9. In your treating with Chriſt have a care of all ſecret reſerves, that will ſpoil the bargain betwixt Chriſt and you; *If I regard iniquity in my Heart, God will not hear my prayer*, ſaith *David*: If there be but a reſerve of one luſt, that reſerve will break off the Treaty; be honeſt with Chriſt, and ſay not of any ſin, *the Lord be merciful to me in this*; and be ſure there be no ſecret purpoſe or reſerve in thy Heart for a retreat in time of danger, but imbark thy ſelf with Chriſt for Storms and Tempeſts, Troubles and Afflictions, as well as Peace and Proſperity. Chriſt beſtows himſelf wholly upon you, and he expects the ſame from you; give up all, or you will get nothing from him.

*Direct.* 10. Cloſe up your Treaty with Chriſt by a ſolemn Covenant with him; ingage your ſelves to be the Lord's: *One ſhall ſay I am the Lord's, and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his Hand to the Holy One of* Iſrael. Here you have two things to do: (1.) To give your ſelves up to Chriſt, according to that expreſſion, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. *You gave your ſelves to the Lord.* Make over Soul and Body, Time and Talents, henceforth to be dedicated things to his Service. (2.) Take Chriſt in both his Natures, and in all his Offices to be yours; and to this Covenant you are to ſtand to the laſt breath, whatever times or troubles ſhall come. This conſent of thy Heart to be Chriſt's, this choice of thy Will in taking him for thine, is but the eccho of Chriſt's choice of thee; and I would rather have ſuch an evidence of my intereſt in him, than a voice from Heaven to aſſure me that Chriſt is mine.

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# SERMON VII.

## Revel. III. 20.

*Behold I ſtand at the door and knock; [if any Man] hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.*

*If any Man.*

*ἐάν τὶς. Qualiſcunque fuerit peccator, Hypocrita, qui diu obſtitit Evangelio.*

THIS expreſſion extends the gracious offer of Chriſt, and brings it home to every hearer. 'Tis a *Proclamation* with a *Si quis*, *if any Man*; as if Chriſt ſhould ſay, I will have this offer of my Grace to go round to every particular perſon; if thou, or thou, or thou, the greateſt, the vileſt of ſinners, of what quality or condition ſoever, old or young, profane or hypocritical, will hear my voice and open to me, I will come in to their Souls. And hereby all objections are obviated; as for example, I am the greateſt of ſinners, ſaith one; I have been a ſelf-cozening hypocrite, ſaith another; I have reſiſted Grace too long, and doubt the time of Mercy is paſt, ſaith a third. The ground of all theſe, and a thouſand more objections, is taken away by the gracious extent of Chriſt's offer in the Text: For who is he that can limit where Chriſt doth not? This gives us a Seventh profitable and comfortable Obſervation, which is this,

Doct. 7. *That Jeſus Chriſt will not refuſe to come in to the Soul of the vileſt ſinner, when once it is made heartily willing to open to him.*

*If any Man open, I will come in to him.* It is not *unworthineſs*, but *unwillingneſs* that bars any Man from Chriſt: thouſands have miſt of Chriſt by their unwillingneſs, but Chriſt never put off one Soul upon account of its unworthineſs; Chriſt is not the Sale, but the Gift of God; you come not to make a bargain, but to receive a free gift: Faith is a marriage with Chriſt, wherein nothing but your hearty conſent is expected; ſo runs the ſtrain of the whole Scriptures, *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money*, (*i. e.* no merit, no worthineſs of his own) *let him come.* Behold the free grace of Chriſt to the vileſt and unworthieſt of ſinners. So *Rev.* 22. 17. *Let him that is athirſt come; and whoſoever will, let him come, and take the water of Life freely.* And in the very phraſe of my Text he ſpeaks again, *John* 7. 37. *If any Man thirſt, let him come to me and drink.* 'Tis very obſervable, throughout the whole Goſpel, that Chriſt never made any objection againſt any Soul that came to him upon the account of its ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs; but all the complaints of Chriſt are ſtill upon the account of their unwillingneſs: ſo in his complaint over *Jeruſalem*, *Luke* 13. 34. *I would, but you would not*; ſo again, *John* 5. 40. *You will not come unto me, that you might have life.* The complaint is ſtill upon their unwillingneſs. In the ſtating of this Point, I ſhall Doctrinally diſcourſe theſe two things.

1. What it is to be truly willing to receive Jeſus Chriſt.
2. How it appears that they who are ſo, ſhall cer-

certainly be received, and graciouſly accepted of him.

Firſt, What it is to be truly willing to receive Jeſus Chriſt; for this is meant by opening to him. Now this implies and involves in it many great and weighty things.

1. It implies and neceſſarily includes the right underſtanding and true apprehenſion of Goſpel Terms and Articles: theſe muſt be known, pondered and duly conſidered, before the Will can ſavingly open in an act of conſent to Chriſt's offer. I deſire this may be eſpecially obſerved, becauſe multitudes are miſtaken and deceived about this thing: he that doth not conſider, doth not conſent; you muſt exerciſe your underſtandings upon the Terms and Articles of Chriſtianity, or elſe your conſent is raſh, blindfold and unſtable. This in *Luke* 14. 13. is called conſulting; the conſent of Faith is the reſult of many previous conſultations and debates in the mind; the Soul that comes to Chriſt muſt take up Religion in his moſt ſedate and ſerious thoughts; turn both ſides of it, the dark as well as the bright ſide of Religion, to the Eye of his mind; ballance all the conveniencies and inconveniencies, loſſes as well as gains. If I open to Chriſt, this I ſhall gain, but that I muſt loſe; I cannot ſeparate Chriſt from ſufferings, Chriſt will ſeparate me from my ſins; if I ſeek him, I muſt let them go; if I profeſs Chriſt, Providence will one time or other bring me to this *Dilemma*, either Chriſt or earthly Comforts muſt go: 'tis neceſſary therefore that I now propound to my ſelf what Providence may one time or other propound to me; he hath ſet down his terms, *Mat.* 16. 24. *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me.* This ſelf-denial deſerves ſerious conſideration; for Chriſt extends it to natural ſelf, righteous ſelf, and civil ſelf; and requires that I give up my Life, my Liberty, my Eſtate and Relations, my own Righteouſneſs, as hard to be parted with as any of the former. I muſt take up my Croſs, that is, the ſufferings and troubles God ſhall appoint for me, and which I cannot avoid or eſcape without ſin; and I muſt follow Chriſt, follow him whitherſoever he goes. I know not what Religion may coſt me before I die; all this it hath coſt others; and there is no bringing down Chriſt's terms lower than he has laid them. I muſt come up to them, they will not come down to me; if I like them not as Chriſt hath left them, the Treaty between him and me is ended: *Mat.* 10. 37, 38. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me: And he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: And he that taketh not his Croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.* Where by worthineſs we are not to underſtand the meritoriouſneſs of theſe acts, but the neceſſary qualification of the Will, and due qualification of a comer unto Chriſt; theſe previous conſultations, and debates in the Mind, prepare and enable the Will to make a ſerious and well adviſed choice of Chriſt, and for want of this there are ſuch ſwarms of Hypocrites and Apoſtates in the World.

2. It implies ſuch a ſenſe of miſery in us, and of the neceſſity and excellency of Chriſt, as determines the Will to the choice of him, notwithſtanding all thoſe difficulties and troubles which have fallen, or can fall under conſideration and debate in the Mind. When the Soul ſees that in Chriſt which preponderates all ſufferings, all loſſes, all reproaches, &c. and then determins, I will have Chriſt tho I ſacrifice all that is dear to me in the World for him; this is to be truly willing to open to Chriſt. 'Tis true, the enjoyments of this World are underſtood by Chriſtians as much as other Men; they have a feeling ſenſe of the ſweetneſs and comfort of earthly enjoyments; their Souls have as much affection to the Body as other Men; they underſtand the charming Language of the World, and their dear Relations in it as well as others; only they ſee a greater neceſſity of Chriſt, and a greater worth in Chriſt, than they do in theſe things. You read, *Lam.* 1. 11. that in the famine of *Jeruſalem* they gave their pleaſant things for meat to relieve their Soul; Jewels, Bracelets, Gold, Silver, any thing for Bread: they underſtood the worth of thoſe things, knew the price and coſt of them; but away they go to preſerve Life. So 'tis here, no earthly enjoyment, of what value ſoever it be, hath ſuch an excellency in it, ſuch an abſolute neceſſity of enjoying it as Chriſt hath.

*Obj.* But O ſaith the poor Soul, Who can do this? I am willing to have Chriſt, and to come up to every term he hath laid down in the Goſpel; I am willing to part with every ſin, and to endure any ſuffering for Chriſt: but O I tremble to think, if it ſhould come to a Priſon, to a Stake, to an actual ſeparation from all my Comforts and Relations in the World, what I ſhall do for ſtrength to go thro ſuch hard and difficult work as this. Here's the great rub in the way of many Souls, they find a willingneſs, but fear the want of ſtrength.

*Anſ.* How or where you ſhall find ſtrength to endure and ſuffer theſe things for Chriſt, is not the queſtion now before you. God will take care for that, and it ſhall be given you that hour, and ſo others have found, who have had the very ſame fears you have. I ſay, the queſtion is not whether you be able, but whether you be heartily willing. Chriſt asks but your Will, he will provide Ability: the greateſt Believer in the World cannot ſay I am able to ſuffer this or that for Chriſt; but the leaſt Believer in the World muſt ſay, I am willing, the Lord aſſiſting me, to endure and ſuffer all things for his ſake. And this is the ſecond thing included in opening to Chriſt.

3. The third thing which perfects and conſummates the whole act, is an entire choice of Jeſus Chriſt upon all thoſe terms preſcribed by him; the entireneſs of the choice, without halving or dividing, excepting or reſerving, makes the conſent full and effectual. There is a twofold conſent of the Will to Chriſt.

(1.) One partial, and with exception.

(2.) The other entire, and without any reſervation.

(1.) There is a partial conſent which is always hypocritical, defective, lame and ineffectual; thus the Hypocrite conſents to the offer of Chriſt: he is really willing to have the pardons of Chriſt, and the glory purchaſed by Chriſt; but to part with his beloved luſts, and to give up his earthly enjoyments, that his Will cannot conſent to.

(2.) There is a full and entire conſent of the Will, called, *A believing with all the Heart*, Acts 8. 37. Now this integrity and fulneſs of the Will's choice, is that which cloſes the match betwixt Chriſt and the Soul, and frees a Man from the danger of hypocriſie. And there are three things which make the conſent to, and choice of Chriſt compleat and full.

1. When we give up all we are and have, to him.
2. When we derive and draw all we want, from him.
3. When we are ready to deny any thing for his ſake.

1. We do then heartily conſent to be Chriſt's when we give up all we are and have, to him; ſo that after this choice of Chriſt we look upon our ſelves thenceforth as none of our own, but bought with a price, to glorifie God in our Body and Soul, which are his, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. Soul and Body is all that we are, and both theſe parts of our ſelves do now paſs, by an act of our own conſent, into the Redeemer's right; we are not to have the diſpoſe of them, that belongs to him that purchaſed them. You know in all purchaſes Property is altered: you did live as your own, followed your own Wills, Luſts, Paſſions, were under the dominion and at the beck of every Luſt; but now the caſe is altered, *Titus* 3. 3. *We our ſelves were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures:* So many Luſts, ſo many Lords; but now the caſe is altered, we have given our ſelves to Chriſt, no more to be ſwayed this way or that, againſt his Word, and the voice of our own Conſcience. Thus our Souls and Bodies are his, hallowed, dedicated things to Chriſt, Temples for God to dwell in: and then all other things follow of courſe; if I am the Lord's, then my time, my talents, and all that I have is his.

2. As we muſt give up all to Chriſt, ſo we muſt derive and draw all we want from him; elſe your choice of Chriſt is not entire and full: God hath ſtored up in Chriſt all that you want, a ſutable and full ſupply for every need; and made it all communicable to you, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *Who of God is made unto us wiſdom and righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption.* All the believers freſh ſprings are in Chriſt: Have I any difficult buſineſs to do that requires counſel? then I muſt repair to Chriſt for Righteouſneſs: Is my Soul defiled by corruption? then muſt I go to Chriſt for Sanctification: Do I groan under troubles of Soul or Body, temptations, afflictions? *&c.* then muſt I relieve my ſelf by the Faith and Hope of that compleat Redemption, and final deliverance procured by Chriſt from all theſe. If you conſent to be Chriſt's, you muſt not look for Juſtification, partly upon his Righteouſneſs, and partly upon your own Graces and Duties; but muſt make mention of his Righteouſneſs, even of his only. If there be but one Conduit in a Town, and not a drop of Water to be had elſewhere, then all the Inhabitants of that Town repair thither for Water. In the whole City of God there is but one Conduit, one Fountain, and that is Chriſt; there's not a drop of Righteouſneſs, Holineſs, Strength or Comfort to be had elſewhere: Then do we fetch all from Chriſt, when we live upon him, as the new-born Infant doth upon the Mothers Breaſt.

3. Then is our conſent to, and choice of Chriſt intire and full, when we are ready to deny, give up, and part with any thing we have for his ſake; reckoning nothing to be loſt to us, which goes to the glory of Chriſt; how dear ſoever our Liberties, Eſtates or Lives are to us, if the Lord have need of them, we muſt let them go: thus you read, *Rev.* 12. 11. *They loved not their lives unto the death.* Theſe three things ſhew ſaving Faith to be another manner of thing than the World generally underſtands it to be; and it is impoſſible for any Mans Will to open to, and receive Chriſt upon terms of ſuch deep ſelf-denial as theſe, until there be,

1. A Conviction of our ſin and miſery.
2. A Diſcovery of Chriſt in his glory and neceſſity.
3. The drawing Power of the Spirit upon the Soul.

1. Conviction of our ſin and miſery makes theſe terms of Religion acceptable; poor ſinners ſtand huckling with Chriſt, excepting and objecting againſt his terms until the Lord hath ſhaken them by Conviction over Hell, made them to ſee the dreadful danger they are in; and then the next cry is, *Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do? Acts* 2. 37. q. d. Preſcribe any means, impoſe upon us the greateſt difficulties, we are willing to comply with them.

2. Nor will Souls ever comply with theſe terms of the Goſpel until a diſcovery hath been made to them of Jeſus Chriſt in his glory and neceſſity: when a Man feels his wants, and ſees a compleat remedy, his Will then complies and bows readily and freely; the convinced Sinner ſees a full and ſutable ſupply in Chriſt for all his wants, a compleat Saviour in whom there is nothing defective, but in all reſpects according to the wiſh of a ſinners heart, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24.

3. To all this muſt be ſuperadded the powerful drawings of the Spirit; in the virtue whereof the Will comes home to Chriſt, *John* 6. 44. *No Man can come unto me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him.* When theſe things are paſt upon the Soul, then it hears Chriſt's voice, his powerful call, which breaks aſunder all the ties and bonds betwixt a Man and his Luſts, a Man and his earthly enjoyments; and without theſe things the Will is unperſuadable to comply with the difficulties and ſeverities of Religion. This is the firſt thing, what the opening of the door, or conſent of the Will to receive Chriſt is.

Secondly, the next thing to be opened in its order, is, How it appears that Jeſus Chriſt will not refuſe to come into the Soul of any ſinner, be his ſins or unworthineſs never ſo great, when once he is made heartily willing thus to embrace and receive Chriſt upon his own terms. O ſinner, what good tidings are theſe to thy Soul, that Chriſt will not diſdain to be in union and communion with thee, as vile as thou art, if thy Will thus ſtand open to him! The tidings are ſweet, and I hope thou wilt find them as ſure and certain, as they are ſweet and comfortable, when thou ſhalt have ſeriouſly peruſed and pondered the following Evidences.

*Evidence* 1. The truth of this ſweet aſſertion clearly evidenceth it ſelf from the form and manner of Goſpel-invitations; they are deſignedly put into large, general, free, and moſt extenſive terms, to aſſure ſinners that Chriſt will not be ſhy of the worſt ſinner in the World, thus made willing to embrace him; they are ſo framed on purpoſe to anticipate or take away all objections from ſinners. No other condition is put in the Goſpel, but this only, Art thou heartily willing to take Chriſt upon his own terms? The offers of Chriſt are extended to all that thirſt and deſire after him, *John* 7. 37. to the greateſt of ſinners, upon this only condition, that they be willing and obedient, *Iſa.* 1. 18, 19. *Go preach the Goſpel to every Creature: He that believeth ſhall be ſaved,* Mark 16. 15, 16. 'Tis extended to all Nations, *For in Chriſt Jeſus there is neither Greek nor Jew, Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond or Free,* Col. 3. 11. If there be any poor Soul, of any quality or condition whatſoever, under the cope of Heaven, whoſe Will is wrought up to a hearty compliance with the terms of the Goſpel, Chriſt will not be ſhy of coming into that Soul, tho it have been never ſo vile and abominable; the Heart of a *Mary Magdalen,* which had been a Habitation of Devils; the Soul of a *Saul,* a bloody raging perſecutor, will make as delightful Habitations for Chriſt, as the Soul of the moſt civilized perſon in the World, when once the Will is thus opened.

*Evidence* 2. The truth of this aſſertion further appears, from the incouraging Promiſes made by Chriſt unto all who are thus made willing to come unto him: All the promiſes, with one Mouth, aſſure the willing ſinner of a welcome with Chriſt; ſo doth that glorious Promiſe to which ſo many thouſand Souls have been beholden for encouragement and help, at their firſt coming to Chriſt, *John* 6. 37, 38. *All that the Father hath given me, ſhall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out. For I came down from Heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that ſent me.* Note here, (1.) That this is not a Promiſe made to them that are already in Chriſt, that they ſhall never be caſt out by Apoſtacy, or final deſertion; but it is a Promiſe made to coming Souls, to ſuch as are moving towards Chriſt under great diſcouragements, fears and tremblings. When a poor ſinner looks to Chriſt, ſees his fulneſs and ſutableneſs; and feels the pinching need and want of him; O ſaith he, that I had an Intereſt in him, tho I ſhould beg my Bread in deſolate places! But looking into his own Heart, and ſeeing ſuch a heap of guilt and unworthineſs there, then ſaith he, how can I think that ever Jeſus Chriſt will come into ſuch a Heart as this? Theſe are the Perſons upon whom this Promiſe caſts an encouraging aſpect. (2.) And becauſe the fears of ſuch poor Creatures are double to the fears that others have, Chriſt hath put a double negative into this Promiſe, for the Souls encouragement; *I will not, in no caſe, or at any hand, caſt out ſuch a Soul as this.* (3.) And to put all out of doubt, he doth not only aſſure the Soul that he will not, but condeſcends to give it the reaſon why, *verſ.* 38. *I came down from Heaven not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me.* As if he ſhould ſay, This was the very errand upon which I came from Heaven; it was my great buſineſs to receive all that were made willing to embrace me; for this I had my Father's Commiſſion, *Iſa.* 61.1. *To preach good tidings to the meek, and to bind up the broken-hearted; and to comfort all them that mourn.* I cannot be faithful to the truſt committed to me by my Father, ſhould I ſhut the door upon ſuch Souls: How can Chriſt comfort the Soul that mourns, but by opening his Arms of mercy to receive it? If Chriſt ſhould ſay to a convinced mourning ſinner, Hold thy peace Soul, I will give thee Riches, Honours, and Pleaſures in the World; but as for me thou canſt not have union with me: I ſay, this would never comfort the Heart of a convinced ſinner; 'tis Chriſt, and none but Chriſt can quiet it. Like unto this is that Teſtimony and Promiſe, made on purpoſe for the incouragement of willing Souls, *Acts* 10. 43. *To him give all the Prophets witneſs, that through his Name, whoſoever believeth in him ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.* This you ſee is a truth confirmed by the Teſtimony of all the Prophets, who foretold what his gracious readineſs to receive poor broken-hearted ſinners ſhould be; and ſure they neither did, nor could conſpire to deceive the World: Theſe gracious Aſſurances and Promiſes cut off all Pleas againſt Faith, from the greatneſs of ſin; and why ſhould we except, where God hath not excepted? Had Chriſt ſaid, all ſinners of ſuch a ſize and degree may come unto me, but let all others ſtand back, the caſe had been otherwiſe; but this Promiſe aſſures us, all that are ſincerely willing ſhall be truly welcome to Jeſus Chriſt. Moreover, theſe univerſal Promiſes take away all fear and doubt of preſumption in coming to Chriſt. That's the caſe of many a poor Soul; I am afraid, I am running out of deſpair into preſumption; I doubt I am an unbidden, and therefore ſhall be an unwelcome gueſt to Chriſt. All this is prevented and cut off by thoſe ſweet univerſal Terms inſerted on purpoſe in theſe Promiſes for our encouragement. That's the ſecond Evidence of this truth.

*Evidence* 3. The willingneſs of Chriſt to receive the willing Soul, how many and great ſoever its ſins and unworthineſs be, appears from the *actual grants* of Pardon and Mercy, even to the vileſt ſinners that ever were upon the Earth, when they thus came unto him. Here you ſee how the Waters of Free Grace riſe higher and higher; an Invitation is much, a Promiſe of welcome is more; but the actual grant of Mercy is moſt ſatisfying of all. Come on poor trembling Soul, don't be diſcouraged, ſtretch out the ſmall weak Arms of thy Faith to that great and gracious Redeemer; open thy Heart wide to receive him, he will not refuſe to come in: he hath ſealed thouſands of Pardons to as vile Wretches as thy ſelf; he never yet ſhut the door of Mercy upon a willing, hungering Soul. It is a great matter to have the Way beaten, and the Ice broken before thee, in thy way to Chriſt. If thou wert the firſt ſinner that had caſt thy Soul upon Chriſt, I confeſs I ſhould want this encouragement I am now giving thee; but when ſo many have gone before thee, and all found a welcome beyond their expectation, what incouragement doth this breath into thy trembling diſcouraged Heart, to go on and venture thy ſelf upon Chriſt as they did? What an Example have we in *Manaſſeh, 2 Chron.* 33. *from verſe* 3 *to* 12. an *Idolater,* one that uſed Enchantments and Divinations, familiar Spirits, ſhed innocent Blood in the Streets of *Jeruſalem?* A Man might rake the World, and hardly bring to ſight a viler Wretch, a greater Monſter in ſin and wickedneſs; yet his Heart being broken, and his Will bowed, this Man found Mercy. How great a ſinner was *Mary,* that came to Chriſt in the Houſe of *Simon* the *Phariſee, Luke* 7. 39. ſo notorious a ſinner, that *Simon* took offence at Chriſt for ſuffering ſo vile a Wretch to come into his preſence. *If this Man were a Prophet,* ſaith he, *he would have known who, and what manner of Woman this is that toucheth him; for ſhe is a ſinner.* Yet *Mary*'s Heart being broken for ſin, and made willing to accept of a Saviour; what a gracious demonſtration of welcom did Chriſt give her, and to all other ſinners a ſingular encouragement in her Example? Once more, you have an eminent example of the abundant welcom of another ſinner to Chriſt, who own'd himſelf for the greateſt of ſinners; a Perſecutor, a Blaſphemer, Injurious; but ſaith he, *I obtained Mercy*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. And the Example of his gracious Entertainment with Chriſt, is recorded on purpoſe for an encouragement unto all that ſhould hereafter believe. How many thouſands are now in Hell that never ſtood guilty of greater enormities than the *Corinthians* did; Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, Thieves, Covetous, Drunkards, Revilers, Extortioners, ſuch were ſome of them; yet Sanctified, Waſhed, Juſtified, in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God. If ever Chriſt would have ſhut the door of Mercy upon any; if ever he would have been coy and ſhy of coming into any Souls, certainly theſe were the Souls he would have diſdained to come near. O what a demonſtration is here of that comfortable Point before us! That Chriſt will not refuſe to come into the Soul of the vileſt Sinner when once it is made heartily willing to open to him.

*Evidence* 4. A further Evidence of this comfortable Truth ſhall be taken from the *Scripture-reſemblances* of the abundant Grace of God, and riches of Mercy in Chriſt towards all broken-hearted and willing Sinners. There are ſome choſen Reſemblances and excellent Emblems, which bring down the Grace of God before the very Eyes of Men; amongſt which I will ſingle out three glorious Reſemblances of Free Grace, choſen by his Wiſdom on purpoſe for the incouragement of poor drooping Sinners. A Reſemblance from the Heavens, a reſemblance from the Sun, and a Reſemblance from the Sea; all ſuch as the Wiſdom of Men and Angels could never have choſen for ſuch a purpoſe as this is.

1. A Reſemblance from the Heavens, thoſe vaſt extended Heavens that cover and compaſs this Earth. What an inconſiderable ſpot is the whole Terreſtrial Globe, to thoſe high and all ſurrounding Heavens? and yet theſe Heavens are not at ſo vaſt a diſtance above the Earth, as the pardoning Grace of God is above the guilt, yea and the very thoughts of poor Sinners. For of the pardoning Grace of God to penitent and willing Souls, that precious Scripture ſpeaks, *Iſa.* 55. 8, 9. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous Man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* O ſaith the Soul, I cannot think God will ever have Mercy on ſuch a Wretch as I; why ſaith he, *verſ.* 8. *My thoughts are not your thoughts*, and 'tis well they are not; *but as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, ſo are my thoughts higher than your thoughts.* You cannot take the height, nor ſound the depth of my pardoning Grace. That's one Emblem, from the unconceivable height of the Heavens above the Earth.

2. Another is taken from the *Sun* in the Heavens, a Creature of admirable Power and Virtue. You know, that anon this part of the World will be the Throne of Darkneſs, the Sable curtains of the Night will be ſpread over all the beauties of this part of the Earth, and it may be in the Morning a thick Fog or Miſt will cover it; thick and dark Clouds may darken the Heavens: but behold this glorious Creature the Sun chaſing before him the darkneſs of the Night, breaking up the Miſts and Fogs of the Morning, ſcattering the dark and thick Clouds of Heaven; they are all gone, and there is no appearance of them. Juſt ſo, ſaith God, ſhall it be with thy ſins, and thy Cloudy fears ariſing out of ſin, *Iſa.* 44. 22. *I have blotted out as a thick Cloud thy tranſgreſſions, and as a Cloud thy ſins.* Thy Soul is beclouded, thy fears have bemiſted thee, ſo that thou canſt not ſee the grounds of thine encouragement; but my Grace ſhall ariſe upon thee, like the Sun in the Heavens, and ſcatter all theſe diſmal Clouds both of guilt and fear, and make a clear Heaven over thee, and a clear Soul within thee. *Unto you that fear my Name, ſhall the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing under his wings*, Mal. 4. 2.

3. Another Reſemblance you have from the *Sea*, the great Abyſs, that vaſt Congregation of Waters, whoſe depth no line can fathom; Veer out as much Line as you will, you cannot touch the bottom. To this unfathomable Ocean the pardoning Grace of God is alſo reſembled, *Mich.* 7. 18, 19. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage? he retained not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us; he will ſubdue our iniquities, and thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depths of the Sea.* If the loftieſt Pyramid, or higheſt Mountain were caſt into the depth of the Sea, it would never be ſeen more by the Eyes of Men. God hath on purpoſe choſen theſe Emblems of his Grace to obviate that common diſcouragement of Satan taken from the greatneſs and aggravation of ſin; and in that caſe thou art to make uſe of them, and bleſs the Lord for them; he never deſign'd them for incouragement to Sin, but for incouragement to Repentance and Faith. That's the fourth Evidence of the Truth before us.

*Evidence* 5. The Truth of this Concluſion will alſo evidently appear, from the innate characters and properties of the Grace and pardoning Mercy of God towards penitent and hungring Sinners. Now there are three glorious Characters of Divine Grace, which all aſſure ſuch ſinners welcom to Chriſt, whatever they have been or done; the Grace of God ſhines forth in Scripture in three illuſtrious Characters.

1. As ſuperabounding Grace.
2. As Free Grace.
3. As Grace exerciſed with delight.

1. It is ſuperabounding Grace. Waters do not ſo abound in the Ocean, nor Light in the Sun, as Grace and Compaſſion do in the bowels of God towards broken-hearted and hungry ſinners: *Iſa.* 55. 6. *Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* The compaſſions of our God inſerted that word on purpoſe to relieve poor Souls fainting under the ſenſe of their abounding iniquities. Here's abundant Pardon, for abounding Guilt; and yet leſt a deſponding ſinner ſhould not find enough here to quiet his fears, the Lord goes yet farther in the expreſſion of his Grace, *Rom.* 5. 20. *Where ſin abounded, Grace did much more abound.* It overflowed all the bounds, it roſe quite above the highwater mark of Sin and Guilt; but theſe overflowings of Grace run only through that channel of all Grace, Jeſus Chriſt, to broken-hearted and obedient Sinners.

2. The Grace of God to ſuch Souls is free, every way free; it is the very deſign of the Goſpel to exhibit it in this its glory. It coſts you nothing

but acceptance; it's free without merit, yea free againſt merit: you can deſerve nothing of God, therefore his Grace is free without merit; yea, you have deſerved Hell, as often as you have ſinned againſt him, and ſo it is free againſt merit. If a pardon were to be purchaſed by us, we want a ſtock for ſuch a purchaſe; neither can we borrow from Men or Angels a ſufficient ſum for ſuch a purchaſe: Bleſſed be God therefore, that it flows freely to us without money and without price, *Iſa.* 55. 2.

3. Grace glorious in another property alſo; which is very encouraging to the Soul of a drooping ſinner, *viz.* That it is the darling Attribute which God greatly delights to exerciſe. The tender Mother draws not out her aking Breaſt with ſuch delight to her hungry crying Child, as the Lord doth his Mercy and Compaſſion to broken hearted and hungry Sinners. In this Attribute, and in this property of it, his people therefore admire him: *Mich.* 7. 18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy.* You cannot put Jeſus Chriſt upon a more delightful imployment, than to bind up the Wounds, and ſet the broken Bones of poor convinced humbled Sinners. Let every ſuch Soul come to Chriſt and welcom, for he greatly delights in ſuch imployments.

*Evidence* 6. Such Sinners need not doubt a welcome reception with Chriſt: for ſhould he reject and turn back ſuch as theſe, then none can have the benefit of his Blood; and conſequently it muſt be ſhed in vain as Water ſpilt upon the ground. The Blood of Chriſt is invaluably precious, and it cannot be loſt; it were a deſperate impeachment of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God to think ſo; yet ſo it muſt be, if broken-hearted and willing Souls be rejected and turned back from him. There are but two ſorts of Sinners in all the World, *viz.* hardned and broken-hearted Sinners; willing and unwilling Sinners. The whole World falls into theſe two ranks; as for impenitent, hardned, and obſtinate ſinners, 'tis certain they can have no benefit by the Blood of Chriſt; they ſhall die in their ſins; the Goſpel cuts them off (ſo continuing) from all expectation of pardon and mercy. x Now there is but one ſort of Sinners more left in the World, and they are convinced and humbled Sinnres, who are made heartily willing to receive Chriſt upon his own terms; who ſtretch forth the Hands of their deſires to him, and pant after an intereſt in him. Should Chriſt reject theſe alſo, who then ſhall receive the benefit of his Blood? Did Chriſt die in vain? Or can the Counſels of Heaven to prove abortive? No, no; fear not therefore to go to Chriſt, thou broken-hearted Sinner, thou poor panting, longing Soul; fear not, he will not caſt thee out.

*Evidence* 7. Moreover, for the encouragement of all ſuch Souls, mercy and pardon are deſigned for, and beſtowed upon the greateſt and vileſt of ſinners, to enhance and raiſe the glory of Free Grace to the higheſt pitch. God picks out ſuch ſinners as you are, on purpoſe to illuſtrate the glory of his Grace in and upon you; he knows that you to whom ſo much is forgiven, will love much, *Luke* 7. 47. You that have done ſo much againſt his Name and Glory, will excel others in zeal and obedience, 1 *Cor.* 15. 9, 10. You will go beyond others in ſervice for God, as you did in ſinning againſt him. All theſe things laid together make up a full demonſtration of the Point, *That Jeſus Chriſt will not refuſe to come into the Soul of the vileſt Sinner, when once it is made heartily willing to open unto him.* Which was the thing to be proved; and now our way is open to the Application of the Point, which will be exceeding uſeful for Information, Exhortation, and Conſolation.

### I. *Uſe for Information.*

Infer. 1. *Learn hence what an invaluable Mercy it is to enjoy the Goſpel in its light and liberty, which is ſo great a relief to the diſtreſſed Conſciences of ſinners.*

Here only that Balm is to be found, that heals your ſpiritual Wounds. The Goſpel hath been a low-prized commodity in *England*, the Lord pardon the guilt thereof to us. x Ah Brethren, if you were in the Heathen World with your ſick and wounded Conſciences, what would you do? There are no Bibles, Miniſters, or Promiſes, not a breath of Chriſt, or the Blood of ſprinkling, which are the true and proper remedies of ſick Souls: that's a pitiful cry, *Mich.* 6. 6. *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow my ſelf before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with Calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams, or ten thouſand Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my firſt-born for my tranſgreſſion; the fruit of my Body for the ſin of my Soul?* Behold here the anguiſh of a diſtreſſed, ſin-burdened Conſcience, it would give up any thing in the World for peace and eaſe; they would caſt their Children, their deareſt Children, their firſt-born, into the burning flames, if that might be an atonement for their ſins. O the efficacy of Conſcience! and the miſery of an unrelieved Conſcience! But the Goſpel which you enjoy leads you to the Fountain of pardon and peace, *Iſa.* 53. 5. *By his ſtripes we are healed.* The voice of the Goſpel is peace, peace to every one that believeth; a rational peace, founded upon the full ſatisfaction of Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 1. 7. *in whom we have redemption through his Blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his Grace.* Here you ſee Juſtice and Mercy kiſſing each other; God ſatisfied, and the Sinner juſtified: for Conſcience demands as much to ſatisfy it, as God demands to ſatisfy him; if God be ſatisfied, Conſcience is ſatisfied. *O bleſſed are the people that hear this joyful ſound,* Pſal. 89. 15. And doubtleſs it is a joyful ſound to every convinced humbled Soul; *Beautiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of them that bring good tidings, that publiſh peace.* It is a Goſpel worthy of all acceptation, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. it brings with it a fulneſs of bleſſings among the People. O *England!* O *Dartmouth!* Provoke not thy God to extinguiſh this bleſſed Light. Great is our wantonneſs, and ominous is our barrenneſs and ingratitude; *Yet a little while the light is with you, walk whilſt ye have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you: for he that walketh in darkneſs, knoweth not whither he goeth,* John 12. 35. Should God blow out this light, whither will you go? Who ſhall pour in Balm to your diſtreſſed bleeding Conſciences?

Infer. 2. *Hence in like manner it follows, that the greatneſs, heinouſneſs of paſt ſins is no bar to believing and accepting Chriſt upon Goſpel-terms.* Let no ſinner be diſmay'd by the atrocity and heinouſneſs of ſins paſt, from coming unto Jeſus Chriſt for remiſ-

ſion

x - Bleſsed be God since this Sermon was delivered - both Bibles and Ministers have been sent to Heathen Lands tion and peace. I am aware what miſchievous uſe Satan makes of former ſins, to diſcourage Souls from the work of Faith; by heaping them together, he raiſeth up a Mountain betwixt Chriſt and the diſtreſſed Soul: but behold this day Chriſt leaping over theſe Mountains, and skipping over theſe Hills. Could this objection be rolled out of the way, ſinners would go on in hope; but certainly if God hath given thee a broken Heart, and a willing Mind, the greatneſs of thy ſin need not diſcourage thee from believing. For (1.) thou haſt ſufficient encouragement from the ſufficiency of the cauſes of pardon, whatever thy particular enormities have been; there is a ſufficiency in the impulſive cauſe, the Free Grace and Mercy of God, *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. *Micah* 7. 18, 19. *Iſa.* 55. 7, 8, 9. It is well there is Mercy enough in God to heal and cover all: and there is no leſs ſufficiency in the meritorious cauſe of pardon, the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, which taketh away all ſin, 1 *John* 1. 7. *John* 1. 29. And it muſt needs be ſo, becauſe it is Divine Blood, *Acts* 20. 28. Neither is there any defect in the applying cauſe, the Spirit of God, who hath already begun to work upon thy Heart, and is able to break it and bow it, and bring it home fully to Chriſt, and to compleat the work of Faith upon thee with Power. Thou complaineſt, thou canſt not mourn, nor believe as thou wouldſt; but he wants no ability to ſupply all the defects of thy repentance and faith. Well then, if the mercy of God be ſufficient to pardon the ſin of a Creature; if the Blood of Chriſt, the Treaſures and Revenues of a King be able to pay the debts of a Beggar; if the Spirit of God, who works by an Almighty Power, be able to convince thee of righteouſneſs, as well as ſin, *John* 16. 9. I ſay, if all the three cauſes of forgiveneſs be ſufficient, every one in its kind, the firſt to move, the ſecond to purchaſe, and the third to apply; what hinders but thy trembling Conſcience ſhould go to Chriſt, and thy diſcouraged Soul move onward, with hope, in the way of believings, whatever thy former enormities have been? (2.) If God raiſes glory to his Name, out of the greatneſs of the ſins he pardoneth, then the greatneſs of ſin can be no diſcouragement to believing; but ſo God doth, as appears from *Jer.* 33. 8, 9. *I will cleanſe them from all their iniquity, whereby they have ſinned againſt me; and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have ſinned, and whereby they have tranſgreſſed againſt me: And it ſhall be to me a name of joy, a praiſe and an honour before all the Nations of the Earth, which ſhall hear all the good I do unto them. And they ſhall fear and tremble for all the goodneſs, and for all the proſperity that I procure unto it.* As a cure performed upon a Man labouring under a deſperate Diſeaſe; it magnifies the Phyſician, and ſpreads his Name far and near. The Devil envies God this glory, and thy Soul this comfort; and therefore ſcares thee off from Chriſt, by the aggravations of thy ſins. *David* was willing to give God the glory of pardoning his great iniquities, and with that very argument moves him for a pardon, *Pſal.* 25. 11. *Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.* You ſee there are ſtrange ways of arguing in Scripture, which are not in uſe among Men; this is one, *Lord pardon my ſin, for it is great*: he doth not ſay, *Lord pardon it, for it is* but a ſmall offence; no, but pardon it, becauſe it is *great*; and the greater it is, the greater Glory wilt thou have in pardoning it. And then there is another way of arguing for pardon in Scripture, which is peculiar; and that is to argue from former pardons unto new pardons: when Men beg their pardon one of another, they uſe to ſay, I never wronged you before, and therefore forgive me now; but here it is quite otherwiſe; Lord thou haſt ſigned thouſands of pardons heretofore, therefore pardon me again: ſuch is that plea, *Numb.* 14. 19. *Pardon, I beſeech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatneſs of thy mercy, and as thou haſt forgiven them from* Egypt *even until now.* (3.) As great ſins as thoſe that now ſtare in the Face of thy Conſcience, have been actually forgiven to Men, upon their humiliation and cloſing with Chriſt. Poor ſinners under trouble of Conſcience, are apt to think, there is no ſin like theirs. God forbid I ſhould diminiſh and extenuate ſin, but certain I am that Free Grace hath pardoned as great Sinners as thou art, upon their repentance and faith. What think you, had you had a hand in putting Chriſt to Death, would not that ſin have been as dreadful as any that now diſcourages you? Yea, certainly you would have thought that an unpardonable ſin; and yet behold that very ſin was no bar to their pardon, when once they were pricked at their heart, and made willing to come to Chriſt, *Acts* 2. 36, 37, 38. (4.) If it be the deſign and policy of Satan to object the greatneſs of your ſins, to prevent the pardoning of them; then certainly 'tis neither your duty nor intereſt to plead it to the ſame end the Devil doth, to lay a confederacy, and join with your mortal Enemy in a plot againſt the Honour of Chriſt, and Salvation of your own Souls: take heed what you do, ſeal not Satan's concluſions. Do you think it is a ſmall matter to be confederate with the Devil? Certainly this is his deſign, he magnifies your ſins, on purpoſe to diſcourage you from faith: while you were ſecure and carnal, the Devil never aggravated, but diminiſhed your ſins to you; but now the Lord hath opened your Eyes, and you are come near to the door of hope, mercy and pardon, now he magnifies them; hoping thereby to hamſtring and lame thy faith, that it ſhall not be able to carry thee to Chriſt. (5.) If thy ſin be really unpardonable, then God hath ſomewhere excepted it in the Goſpel-grant. He hath ſomewhere ſaid, The Man that hath committed this ſin, or continued ſo many years in ſin, ſhall never be forgiven: but now in the whole Goſpel there is but one ſin that is abſolutely excepted from the poſſibility of pardon, and that ſuch a ſin as thy ſorrows and deſires after Chriſt do fully acquit and clear thee from the guilt of; this indeed is excepted, *Mat.* 12. 31. *But the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall never be forgiven.* This is that which the Scripture calls a ſin unto death. Let Apoſtate Profeſſors, transformed into Perſecutors, Scoffers, and Haters of Godlineſs and the profeſſors of it, look to themſelves; the dreadful ſymptoms of this ſin ſeem to appear upon ſuch. But the humbled, thirſty Soul after Chriſt, ſtands clear of the guilt of that ſin. (6.) If there were no forgivneſs with God for great ſinners, then great ſinners had never been invited to come to Chriſt. The invitations of the Goſpel are no mockeries, but things of moſt awful ſolemnity. Now ſuch ſinners are called and invited under the encouragement of a pardon; conſult *Iſa.* 1. *from verſ.* 10 *to* 17. and ſee the horrid aggravations of that Peoples ſins; and yet at *verſ.* 17, 18. you may read the gracious invitations of God, with conditional Promiſes of a plenary remiſſion. So in *Jer.* 3. *from* 1 *to* 13. what a ſad Catalogue of ſins, with their horrid aggravations, do you find there? and yet it is ſaid, *verſ.* 12. *Go and proclaim theſe words towards the North, and ſay, Return thou backſliding* Iſrael, *and I will not cauſe mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful.* (7.) If thy ſins had not been capable of remiſſion, God would never have given thee conviction and compunction for ſin, nor have drawn forth the deſires of thy Heart in this manner after Chriſt. He hath tack'd remiſſion to repentance, *Acts* 5. 31. a bleſſing to gracious deſires and hungerings, *Mat.* 5. 6. There is therefore hope that when God hath given the one, he will not long withhold the other. This very wounding of thy Heart by compunction, and drawing forth thy Will by inclination, ſhews that remiſſion is not only poſſible, but even at the door. (8.) And Laſtly, Let this be thine encouragement, (whatever Satan, or thine own Heart ſuggeſts to diſcourage thee) that great Sinners are moving in the way of repentance and faith to a great Saviour, who hath merit enough in his Blood, and mercy enough in his Bowels, to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him, *Heb.* 7. 25. The Lord open to the Eyes of your Faith, that rich Treaſury of Free-Grace, *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. and give you a ſight of that plenteous Redemption and Forgiveneſs that is with God, *Pſal.* 130. 4, 7. that you may not at once caſt reproach upon the moſt glorious Attribute of God, impeach the precious Blood of Chriſt, and ſtab your own Souls with a death-wound of deſperation; which is that the Devil intends, and the whole ſtrain of the Goſpel deſigns to prevent.

Infer. 3. *If the vileſt of ſinners ſtand as fair for pardon and mercy upon their cloſing with Chriſt by faith, as the leaſt of ſinners do; then certainly the pardon and ſalvation of ſinners is not built upon any righteouſneſs in themſelves, but purely and only upon the Free Grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt.* Don't think God hath ſet the Blood of Chriſt to ſale, and that thoſe only are capable of the benefits of it, who have lived the ſtricteſt and ſobereſt lives. No, no; tho ſobriety, morality, and ſtrictneſs in Religious duties be things commanded, and commended in the Goſpel; yet no Man by theſe things can purpchaſe a pardon for the leaſt ſin, *Rom.* 11. 6. *And if by Grace, then it is no more of Works, otherwiſe grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwiſe work is no more work.* See how theſe exclude one another: thus *Titus* 3. 5. *Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us.* No Man can ſatisfy God by any thing himſelf can do or ſuffer; not by *doing*, for all we do is mixt with ſin, *Job* 14. 4. and that which is ſinful can be no atonement for ſin. All we do or can do, is due debt to God, *Luke* 17. 10. and one debt cannot ſatisfie for another. Nor yet by *ſuffering*, for the ſufferings awarded by the Law are everlaſting; and to be ever ſatisfying, is never to ſatisfie: So then by the works of the Law ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified in his ſight. The Saints in all generations have fled to Mercy for remiſſion, *Pſal.* 130. *ult.* The two debtors, *Luke* 7. 43, 44, 45. tho there were a vaſt difference in the debts; yet of the leſſer, as well as of the greather, it's ſaid they had nothing to pay; nothing but the Satisfaction of Chriſt can quit your ſcores with God.

Infer. 4. *If the Grace of Chriſt be thus free to the greateſt of ſinners, then it is both our ſin and folly to ſtand off from Chriſt, and draw back from believing, for want of ſuch and ſuch qualifications, which we yet find not to be wrought in our Hearts.* Poor convinced Souls think, O if they had more humility, tenderneſs, love to God, ſpirituality of mind, this would be ſome encouragement to believe; but becauſe they have no ſuch ornaments to dreſs up their Souls withal, they are not fit to go to Chriſt. Now to remove this great miſtake, let two things be conſidered.

1. That ſuch a conceit as this croſſes the very ſtream of the Covenant of Grace, where nothing is ſold, but all freely given: this is the very Spirit of the Covenant of Works, fain we would find ſomething in our ſelves to bring to God, to procure his favour and acceptance; but the Goſpel tells us we muſt come naked and empty handed, to be juſtified freely by his Grace, *Rom.* 2. 24. We muſt be juſtified as *Abraham* was, who believed in him that juſtifieth the ungodly; *Rom.* 4. 5. *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs.* The meaning is, to him that worketh not in a Law-ſenſe, to procure pardon and acceptance by and for working. Go then poor ſinner unto God through Chriſt, and tell him thou haſt nothing to bring him; thou comeſt not to bring, but to receive: Lord, I am a vile ſinner, I have nothing to plead but thy mercy, and Chriſt's merit. This is the Spirit of the Goſpel.

2. By ſtanding off from Faith for want of theſe qualifications, you invert the ſettled order of the Goſpel; by putting conſequents in the place of antecedents, and antecedents in the place of conſequents: it is as if a Man ſhould ſay, If I were cured of ſuch and ſuch diſeaſes, then I would go to the Phyſician; alas, could you otherwiſe procure the healing of your corruptions, or the gracious qualifications you ſpeak of, you would have no need to go to Chriſt at all; nothing is required of us in our coming to Chriſt, but ſuch a ſenſe of, and ſorrow for ſin, as makes us heartily willing to accept Chriſt, and ſubſcribe the terms on which he is offered in the Goſpel.

Infer. 5. *Behold the admirable condeſcenſion of Chriſt, that he will come into the Heart of the vileſt ſinner, and not diſdain to take his abode in that Soul which hath been the ſeat of Satan, where he hath ruled, and every unclean luſt hath been harbour'd!*

There are two things wherein the admirable condeſcenſion of Chriſt appears. (1.) In taking union with our Nature after ſin had blaſted the beauty of it; this was a marvellous ſtoop indeed, and juſtly admired by the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 2. 7. *He made himſelf of no reputation, and was found in the likeneſs of Man.* Yea, *God ſent his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. But (2.) 'tis juſtly admirable in our eyes, that Chriſt ſhould alſo take union with our Perſons, and take his habitation and abode in our Hearts, after Satan and Sin had ſo long inhabited and defiled them; that he ſhould accept thoſe Members as inſtruments of his ſervice, that very Tongue to praiſe him that had blaſphemed him, *&c.* yet ſo he is willing to do, and commands us to deliver them up to him, *Rom.* 6. 19. *As ye have yielded your members ſervants to uncleanneſs, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even ſo now yield your members ſervants to righteouſneſs unto holineſs.* One would have thought Jeſus Chriſt ſhould have ſaid, Vile wretch, Satan hath had the uſe and ſervice of thy Soul and Body from thy beginning to this day; thy Memory hath been his Storehouſe, thy Mouth his Shop, thy Will his Throne, and all thy Members his Tools and Inſtruments to ſin againſt me; thou haſt been a Creature dedicated to Satan, and to him thou ſhalt go. No, but the merciful Lord declares his willingneſs, if thou wilt open thy Soul to receive him, to cleanſe it by his Spirit, and make it his Temple to dwell in. O admirable grace!

*Infer.* 6. Laſtly, *How juſt and inevitable will their damnation be, who conſent not to the neceſſary and reaſonable terms of the Goſpel, which is the only point on which Chriſt and their Souls part for ever?*

The terms required by the Goſpel are every way equal and reaſonable; if a gracious Prince will beſtow a Pardon upon a Traitor on this condition, that he lay down his Arms, acknowledg his Offence, and liſt himſelf in his Prince's Service, and he ſhall refuſe ſo to do, how juſt and unpitied will his deſtruction be? and what elſe doth God require of thee but only this? *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous Man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,* Iſa. 55. 7. And as the damnation of ſuch is juſt, ſo it will be inevitable: for if there be no way to Glory but by Chriſt, as you know there is not, *Acts* 4. 12. *Neither is there Salvation in any other:* And if there be no way to Chriſt but by our accepting him upon theſe very terms, as it plainly appears, from *Luke* 14. 26. there is not; what then remains but inevitable damnation to all that come not up to the terms of the Goſpel? If you think not Chriſt a good bargain with all the ſufferings, loſſes and reproaches that attend him; your Mouths will be ſtopt, no plea will be left you in the great Day. You refuſed a fair offer when it was ſeaſonably and graciouſly made you by the Goſpel, and now you muſt expect no more ſuch offers to Eternity; thy Blood, ſinner, be upon thine own Head; the freeneſs and importunity of the tenders of Grace will then only ſerve to illuſtrate and clear the righteouſneſs of God in thy condemnation.

II. *Vſe for Exhortation.*

In the next place, the point naturally leads me to a vehement perſwaſive unto all ſinners, of what rank or ſize ſoever they be, to hearken to the voice of Chriſt, who takes them all within the compaſs of his gracious invitation in the Text, ſaying, *If any Man open I will come in.* Let all ſorts of ſinners bleſs God for the extenſiveneſs of this invitation, and that they find themſelves by it as yet within the reach and compaſs of the Arms of a merciful Redeemer: And that there is nothing wanting to ſecure their Salvation, but the hearty conſent of their Wills to the reaſonable and neceſſary terms of the Goſpel. Look over the whole Book of God, and you ſhall there find but one caſe abſolutely excepted from the poſſibility of forgiveneſs; but one wound abſolutely incurable, of which Chriſt ſpeaks, *Matth.* 12. 31, 32. And what may be the reaſon that this only is an incurable wound? certainly it cannot be, becauſe the malignity of this ſin exceeds the meritorious and pardoning virtue of the Blood of Chriſt; but rather becauſe there is no ſacrifice appointed by the Lord for it. God never deſigned that the Blood of Chriſt ſhould be an expiatory Sacrifice for that ſin, as the Apoſtle plainly ſpeaks, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6, 7. Other ſins and blaſphemies ſhall be forgiven unto Men, ſaith Chriſt; that is, they are capable of forgiveneſs upon ſincere and actual repentance and faith; yea, they have been actually pardoned unto many: now the greater any Man's ſins have been, the greater need he hath to haſten to Chriſt for pardon. There are ſome of you greater ſinners than others; for tho no ſin be venial, light and trivial in it ſelf, yet compared one with another, there is a vaſt difference found betwixt them in the weight and aggravations of them. Now I will labour to ſhew you by what rules men are to eſtimate the greatneſs and aggravation of ſin; and then to convince you that the greateſt of ſinners ſtand yet fair for mercy, as well as the leſſer, and ſometimes much fairer: *Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you,* ſaith Chriſt, *Mat.* 21. 31. Now the rules to eſtimate the aggravations and greatneſs of ſin by, are theſe.

1. There be ſins of infirmity, committed out of weakneſs, and there are crying ſins in the Ears of the Lord; of the former ſort, ſins of infirmity, you read *Gal.* 6. 1. where it is called a being overtaken in a fault; here's no premeditation, nor deliberate conſent, but a ſurprize; theſe go not to the account of groſs and heinous enormities, called in Scripture crying ſins, ſuch as are the ſin of oppreſſion, *Hab.* 2. 10, 11. *The ſtone ſhall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber ſhall anſwer it.* The meaning is, that the injuſtice and oppreſſion which Men have uſed in raiſing their own Houſes, ſhall cry in the Ears of the Lord for vengeance. The Stone in the Wall ſhall ſay, I was digged out of the Quarry, hewn, and laid here by the unrewarded labours of the poor *Maſon*; and the Timber out of the Beam ſhall ſay, I was hewn, ſquared and placed here by the unrewarded Hands of the poor *Carpenter.* This is a crying ſin; ſo alſo is the ſin of Murder, when our Hands have been defiled with innocent blood; this makes a diſmal cry to Heaven, *Gen.* 4. 10. *The voice of thy Brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.* A ſin that makes a horrid outcry in both Worlds at once; in Heaven, and in the ſinners Conſcience. Such alſo is the ſin of unnatural luſts; the ſin of *Sodom* made a cry which came up to Heaven, *Gen.* 18. 20. *Becauſe the cry of* Sodom *and* Gomorrah *is great, and their ſin is very grievous.* Compare theſe ſins with the ſins of common infirmity which come by way of involuntary ſurprize, and what vaſt odds will be found in the weight and aggravations of them?

2. You find in Scripture a great difference put betwixt ſins committed againſt the clear ſhining light of Knowledg in the ſinners Conſcience, and ſins of Ignorance which are committed for want of Knowledg: Chriſt himſelf puts a great difference betwixt them, *Luke* 12. 47, 48. and ſo doth the Apoſtle, *James* 4. 17. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is ſin;* Sin with a witneſs.

3. There are ſingle acts of ſin, and continued or repeated acts of ſin, Sins committed after Convictions, Promiſes, and Reſolutions. Now there is not ſo much of guilt in a ſingle act of ſin, as there is in a repeated and continued courſe of ſin, called *Deut.* 29. 19. *Adding of drunkenneſs to thirſt*; and *Iſa.* 30. 1. *Adding ſin to ſin.* For as it is in numbring, ſo it is in ſinning; if the firſt figure be 1, the ſecond is 10, the third 100, the fourth 1000; and every addition makes a greater multiplication. O what a dreadful reckoning will here be for the Conſciences of poor ſinners!

4. Contrivers and Studiers of ſin are always in Scripture placed in the firſt rank of ſinners. The beſt Servant God hath in the World may be ſurpriſed by the deceitfulneſs of ſin, againſt the gracious bent and reſolution of his Soul; but the contrivance and plotting of ſin is quite another thing: therefore it is ſaid of the wicked, *Job* 15. 35. *They conceive miſchief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.* That is, Sin like the *Fœtus* in the Womb, hath its time of conception, growth, and birth; and all this by the deliberate conſent of the naughty Heart and Will, which foſters and cheriſhes it.

5. There are ring-leaders in ſin, and ſingle perſonal ſins, which ſpread no farther than our ſelves: a ringleader in ſin, is in Scripture reckoned amongſt the greateſt of ſinners; ſo *Rev.* 2. 14. *Thou haſt them that hold the Doctrine of* Balaam, *who taught* Balak *to caſt a ſtumbling block before the Children of* Iſrael. Thus *Jeroboam* the Son of *Nebat* made *Iſrael* to ſin. There is the ſame difference betwixt theſe and ſingle perſonal Sins, as there is betwixt a chain-ſhot, and a ſingle bullet: Mind this, you that have induced others to Sin by your counſel or example.

6. There are Sins in which men glory and take pleaſure, and Sins for which men groan and mourn. Now the more pleaſure any man takes in Sin, the greater doth the Sin ariſe in its aggravation. We read of ſome, *Job* 20. 12. in whoſe mouths *wickedneſs is ſweet, and they hide it under their tongue:* that is, they draw a great deal of contemplative delight before and after the commiſſion of Sin, as well as in the commiſſion of it. 'Tis bad enough to ſin and ſigh, to ſin and weep; but to ſin and boaſt, to ſin and make a mock of ſin, what a prodigious way of ſinning is this? O Sinner, what a Heart haſt thou, that canſt play and ſport with that which grieves God, crucified Chriſt, and which without deep and ſound Repentance will damn thine own Soul!

7. The more Bonds of reſtraint any Man breaks aſunder to commit Sin, the greater and more aggravated always that Sin is in the ſight of God. There be ſome Perſons upon whom God hath laid more bonds of reſtraint to keep back their Souls from iniquity, than he hath upon others. The more mercies he hath beſtowed upon yon, the more reſtraints from ſin. So many mercies, ſo many ties, *Jer.* 2. 5, 6. eſpecially ſpiritual Mercies; as Light in your minds, Pardons ſealed to your Conſciences, Love manifeſted to your Souls. Such alſo are your own Vows, Promiſes and Reſolutions; *Jer.* 2. 20. *Thou ſaidſt, I will no more tranſgreſs.* Didſt not thou promiſe me, ſaith God, more care and circumſpection for time to come? And ſuch are all the Examples and Warnings God hath given us by his Judgments upon others, 1 *Cor.* 10. 11. Theſe things put an Accent upon Sin, and make it out of meaſure ſinful.

And now my Friends, what have I been driving at all this while, in opening the greatneſs and aggravations of Sin? The deſign of all this is to ſhew you the indiſpenſible need of Repentance and Faith to carry you to Chriſt.

*Obj.* But I am the Perſon on whom theſe crying aggravated ſins are found. You tell me of going to Chriſt; alas, there is no hope of mercy for ſuch a wretch as I am. There it ſticks. Poor ſinners think 'tis to no purpoſe, they had as good go on in ſin, for they conclude there's no hope for them.

*Anſw.* Come ſinners, give me leave to tell you, you have a Text before you, that clears the way of your Duty and Salvation at once; *If any Man*, be he what he will, be his ſins never ſo great, yet if *he bear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him*, ſaith Chriſt. There is mercy in Jeſus Chriſt for thee who art guilty of crying ſins: For thee, that haſt ſinned againſt light and knowledg: For thee, that haſt added drunkenneſs to thirſt: For thee, that haſt contrived ſin with deliberation: For thee, that haſt induced others to ſin by counſel or example: For thee, that haſt taken pleaſure in Iniquity, and made a ſport of ſin: Yea, and for thee alſo, that haſt broken aſunder the bonds of Mercies, Vows and Warnings, provided thou wilt now hear the voice of Chriſt, and thy Will open to him with a hearty firm conſent, *Iſa.* 55. 4. You are great and heinous ſinners, but I ſhew this day a Great and Almighty Saviour; one that is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him, *Heb.* 7. 25. There is a Sacrifice laid out and appointed for theſe ſins. O bleſs God for that. They are no where excepted from the poſſibility of forgiveneſs. Nothing but the impenitency of thy Heart, and obſtinacy of thy Will, can bar thee from a full and final Pardon. Jeſus Chriſt can ſave thee to the uttermoſt. Say not within thy ſelf, Can the virtue of his Blood extend it ſelf to the remiſſion of this or that ſin? He can ſave to the uttermoſt. Look round about thee to the uttermoſt *Horizon* of all thy Guilt, and Chriſt can ſave thee to the uttermoſt that the Eye of thy Conſcience can diſcern, yea and beyond it too; but then thou muſt come unto him. You ſpeak of the greatneſs of Sin, and you have cauſe to have ſad thoughts about it; but in the mean time you conſider not, that your Unbelief, by which you ſtand off from Chriſt your only Remedy, is certainly the greateſt of all the ſins that ever you ſtood guilty of againſt the Lord. This is the ſin that binds the guilt of all your other ſins upon you. Let me therefore addeſs my ſelf, (1.) To you who cry out of the greatneſs of ſin, that diſcourages you from going to Chriſt. (2.) To leſſer ſinners, who becauſe they are clear of great Enormities, ſee not their need of Chriſt.

1. This Exhortation ſpeaketh to you, whoſe Conſciences are ſeared with the horrid and hideous aggravations of your ſins, by reaſon whereof your own miſgiving Hearts, aſſiſted by the policy of Satan, diſcourage you from all Attempts to gain Chriſt and Pardon in the way of Repentance and Faith. Let me at this time hint three or four Conſiderations to you by way of Encouragement.

(1.) The ſparing Goodneſs of God till now, gives ſome encouragement that God may have a reſerve of mercy for ſo great and vile a ſinner as thou art. O what a mercy is it that thy life hath been ſpared hitherto! Many of thy Companions in ſin are beyond hope and mercy, whilſt thou art left. I confeſs this is no ſure ſign God's gracious intention to thee, unleſs his Goodneſs and Forbearance do lead thee to Repentance: then the gracious intention of God in prolonging thy life would evidently appear. But however, it is in it ſelf a very great mercy, becauſe without it no ſpiritual mercy could be expected.

(2.) 'Tis matter of encouragement and hope, that tho your Diſeaſe be dreadful, yet it is not deſperate and incurable. The Text takes it within the compaſs of mercy: O bleſs God for that, *If any Man*, &c.

(3.) As great ſinners as you have been have found mercy, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. and God would have it to be recorded for your encouragement. If now the Lord ſhall make thy Heart to break, and thy Will to bow, whatever thy ſins have been, they ſhall not bar thee from mercy and forgiveneſs. But if thou reſolve to go on in ſin, or ſit down deſponding or diſcouraged, and wilt not come in at the Invitation and Call of Chriſt, then thy Wound is incurable indeed; and there is but one way with thee, thy *Mittimus* is already made for Hell; and that Scripture in 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. will tell thee whither thou art going. But God forbid that this ſhould be the Iſſue of Chriſt's gracious Invitations to thee, and forbearance of thee. Seeing Mercy is tendred to any man that will accept it upon Chriſt's terms, exclude not thy ſelf when he hath not excluded thee.

2. I will cloſe up this Uſe of Exhortation to another ſort of Perſons who are not of the notorious, infamous rank of profane Sinners, but their lives have been drawn more ſmoothly through a courſe of Civility. Theſe have as great need to be preſt to Repentance and Faith as the moſt notorious Sinners in the World. Theſe are a Generation that bleſs themſelves in their own Eyes, and thank God with the *Pharisee*, Luk. 18. 11. *That they are not as other men.* They acknowledg Converſion to be the duty of the profane; that ſuch Sinners as I laſt dealt with, ſtand in apparent need of it. But as for themſelves, they ſcarce know where to find matter for Repentance, nor do they feel any need of Chriſt. Now I would lay three Conſiderations before ſuch Perſons, to convince them that their caſe is as ſad and hazardous, yea, and in ſome reſpect more hazardous than the ſtate of the moſt notorious Sinners in the World; and that a change muſt alſo paſs upon them, or elſe *it had been good for them they had never been born.*

*Conſid.* 1. Let the civilized part of the World lay this thought cloſe to their Hearts, That tho their ſins be not ſo groſs and horrid to appearance as other mens are, yet continued in, they will prove as mortal and deſtructive, as thoſe greater abominations of other men. No ſin abſolutely conſidered is ſmall. Every ſin is mortal and damning without Chriſt; *Rom.* 6. *ult. The wages of ſin is death.* 'Tis no great odds, if a man be killed, whether it were by a broad Sword, or by a ſmall Penknife. The leaſt ſin violates the whole Law, *James* 2. 10. *He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all.* The leaſt tranſgreſſion of the Law pulls down the guilt and curſe of the whole Law upon the Sinners head. And this is your miſery that are out of Chriſt, and ſtand under the rigorous terms of the firſt Covenant. Moreover, the Law of God is violated groſly and externally, or ſpiritually and more internally. Thus every unchaſt thought is Adultery: And the very inward burning of Malice and Anger in the Heart is Murder. Now if the Lord ſhall bring the ſpiritual ſenſe of the Law home to your Conſciences, as he did to *Paul's*, *Rom.* 7. 9. you will certainly give up that Plea, that you have not ſo much need of converſion as other Sinners have. There are ſins of greater infamy, and ſins of deeper guilt. There may be more guilt in thoſe ſins that are ſtifled in thy Heart, and never defamed thee, than there may be in ſome ſins that make a louder noiſe in the World.

*Conſid.* 2. You are guilty of one ſin (how civil and blameleſs ſoever your lives are) which is certainly more great and heinous than any outward act of ſin can ordinarily be, and that is, your truſting to your own Righteouſneſs, as the *Phariſees* did, *Luke* 18. 9. *He ſpake this Parable unto certain which truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others.* Here's an Idol of Jealouſie ſet up in the room of Chriſt. 'Tis true, this ſin makes not ſo loud a noiſe in the World, raiſes not ſuch a duſt as the ſins of profane ones do. But certainly it is as abominable in the Eyes of God, as the ſins that ſtink ſo much in the noſtrils of Nature. Civilized Perſons thus truſting to their own Civility, and neglecting Jeſus Chriſt, will be one day put into the Van of that wretched Crew that are going to Hell; a *portion with Unbelievers*, as the Scripture ſpeaks.

*Conſid.* 3. Laſtly, It hath been always found a more rare and difficult thing to convince and bring home to Chriſt the civilized part of the World, than it is to convince and work upon the profane part of it, *Mat.* 21. 31. *Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you. Publicans* were reckoned the vileſt ſort of men, and *Harlots* the worſt ſort of Women; yet either of theſe were eaſier to be brought to Chriſt, than ſelf-rigtheous *Phariſees.* Well then, away with your vain and idle pretenſions, that your caſe is ſafer and better than others. By what hath been ſaid, it evidently appears that you ſtand in as much need of Chriſt as the moſt infamous Sinners in the World do.

### III. *Uſe.*

This Point winds up in encouragement to every willing and obedient Soul whom the Lord ſhall perſwade to comply with the Call of the Goſpel, whatever his former Rebellions have been. There are ſome whoſe Hearts the Lord hath touched with a deep ſenſe of their ſin and miſery, and of the all-ſufficient remedy that is in Chriſt; but the ſenſe of former rebellions appals and daunts them, they cannot hope for acceptance with him. Here's good news for ſuch Souls; Chriſt is at the door, and former Rebellions are no Bar to him, provided there be now a hearty compliance with his voice; *I will come into him.* A glorious promiſe, compriſing five ineſtimable benefits or mercies in it. (1.) This is the moſt glorious work of God that ever was or can be wrought upon the Heart of a poor ſinner, to open it by Repentance and Faith, and put Chriſt into the full poſſeſſion of it. The Power of all the Angels in Heaven, Miniſters on Earth, Duties and Ordinances cannot effect this; this is the peculiar work of God, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus.* Look, as it was the marvellous work of God to unite our Nature unto Chriſt by an *Hypoſtatical* Union; ſo it is no leſs a marvellous work of God to unite our Perſons to Chriſt by a *Myſtical* Union, to prepare the Soul as a habitation for Chriſt, and give him the poſſeſſion of it. (2.) This coming of Chriſt into the Soul is the very foundation of all our hopes for Glory; till this be done, we are without hope. But in the ſame hour Chriſt comes in to the Soul, a ſolid Foundation of the hopes of Glory is laid in that Soul, *Col.* 1. 27. *Which is Chriſt in you the hope of Glory.* I know the unregenerate World is full of hope, but their hopes are built upon the Sand. Union with Chriſt is the ſteady foundation on which the hopes of Heaven are laid. (3.) *I will come in to him*, that is, to dwell in his Soul for ever, never to leave him more: Therefore (*Eph.* 3. 17.) he is ſaid to *dwell in our Hearts by Faith*; not ſojourn for a night, but abide there for ever: Nothing can ſeparate Chriſt and that Soul, *Rom.* 8. 35. Thy Soul ſhall never be an habitation for Satan any more. When Chriſt comes in, he ſaith, as of the Temple, *Here will I dwell for ever.* (4.) This coming in of Chriſt intitles the Soul to all Spiritual Privileges; 1 *John* 5. 12. *He that hath the Son hath life*: and 1 *Cor.* 3. *ult. All is yours, for ye are Chriſt's.* (5.) This is the higheſt honour that ever God put upon a Creature, I will come in to him. O how ſhould the Soul feel it ſelf advanced by ſuch an honour as this! What, to be the living Temple of Jeſus Chriſt! for Chriſt to dwell and walk in thy Soul! as it is 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. I tell you this is an honour beyond and above the honour done to Angels.

And how near art thou to all theſe bleſſed Privileges in the day that thy Heart is wounded for ſin, thy thoughts become ſolicitous about union with Chriſt, and thy Will begins to bow and yield, after a ſerious debate of the terms of the Goſpel in thy moſt ſolemn thoughts! Now is the door half open, and Chriſt ready to make his firſt entrance into thy Soul. God forbid any thing ſhould now hinder the compleating of ſo great a Work.

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# SERMON VIII.

## Revel. III. 20.

*Behold I ſtand at the door and knock*; [*if any Man hear my voice*] *and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.*

IN the former Sermon Chriſt's free and general Invitation to ſinners hath been conſidered; in the next place, we are to take into conſideration the principal means or inſtrument by which the Heart of a ſinner is opened to receive Chriſt; and that is not by the native power of his own Will, nor by the alone efficacy of the Goſpel preached, but by *the voice of Jeſus Chriſt*, which opens the Will, and makes the perſwaſions of the Goſpel effectual. *If any Man hear my voice.*

Hearing is either *External*, or *Internal*; for the Soul hath its Ear, as well as the Body. *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the Churches*, Rev. 2. 17. *i.e.* He that hath a *Spiritual Ear*, to perceive and judg the voice of the Spirit by. And it is a ſore Judgment when God denies ſuch an Ear to the Soul, *Iſa.* 6. 9. *Go tell this People, hear ye indeed, but underſtand not.* Spiritual hearing is the Work of the inner Man. And tho we have many *Auditors*, yet in this ſenſe no more Hearers than Believers; Words of ſenſe do in Scripture connote affections. This hearing of Chriſt's voice implies not only the receiving of the ſound of the Goſpel into the external Organ; but it notes the work of the *Underſtanding*, which by the Ear trieth words, as the Mouth taſteth meat, *Job* 12. 11. And the work of the *Affections*, which receive the truth in love, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10. It alſo implies the *Obedience* of the Soul to what we hear. We cannot be ſaid in this ſenſe to hear what we obey not. Our minds may be delighted with the pleaſant air and melody of the Goſpel, and yet it is all one as if we heard it not, when obedience doth not follow hearing: *Ezek.* 33. 32. *Thou art unto them a very lovely ſong*, &c. *for they hear thy words, but they do them not.* But in this place it eſpecially ſignifies the *vital ſound of Chriſt's efficacious internal voice*, which is the principle of Spiritual Life to the Souls of dead ſinners; according to that expreſſion of Chriſt, *John* 5. 25. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live.*

From hence the Eighth Obſervation will be this,

Doct. 8. *That no Mans Will ſavingly and effectually opens to receive Chriſt, till the Spiritual quickning Voice of Chriſt be firſt heard by the Soul.*

Now touching this Almighty Spiritual voice of Chriſt, by which the Hearts of ſinners are effectually opened; Six things muſt be explained in order.

1. The divers ſorts and kinds of Chriſt's voices.
2. The general Nature of this internal voice.
3. The innate Characters and ſpecial Properties of it.
4. The Objects to whom it is directed.
5. The Motives inducing Chriſt to ſpeak to one, and not to another.
6. The ſpecial Effects wrought and ſealed by it upon eeery Soul that hears it.

Firſt, We will ſpeak of the divers ſorts and kinds of Chriſt's voices. I am here only concerned about two, *viz.*

1. His External.
2. His Internal voice.

1. There is an *External voice of Chriſt*, which we may call his Miniſterial voice in the preaching of the Goſpel; the Scriptures are his Word, and Miniſters his Mouth, *Jer.* 15. 19. He that heareth them, heareth Chriſt,

2. There is alſo an *Internal energetical voice of Chriſt*, conſiſting not in Sound, but Power: And betwixt theſe two, there are two remarkable differences. (1.) The External or Miniſterial voice of Chriſt, is but the Organ or Inſtrument of conveying his Internal and Efficacious voice to the Soul; in the former he ſpeaks to the Ear, and in or by that ſound conveys his Spiritual voice to the Heart. (2.) The External voice is evermore ineffectual and ſucceſsleſs, when it is not animated by this Internal Spiritual voice. It was marvellous to ſee the walls of *Jericho* falling to the ground at the ſound of Rams-horns; there was certainly more than the force of an external blaſt, to produce ſuch an effect; but more marvellous

it is, to ſee at the ſound of the Goſpel, not only the Weapons of iniquity falling out of ſinners Hands, but the very Enmity it ſelf out of their Hearts. Here you ſee is a voice in a voice, an Internal efficacy in the External ſound; without which the Goſpel makes no ſaving Impreſſion.

Secondly, this Spiritual voice of Chriſt muſt be conſidered in its general Nature, which implies two things in it:

1. Almighty Efficacy.
2. Great Facility.

1. Almighty Efficacy, to quicken and open the Heart with a word, O what manner of voice is this, which carries ſuch a vital power along with it! In all the mighty works of Chriſt, his power was ſtill put forth in ſome voice, as at the Reſurrection of *Lazarus*, Joh. 11. 43. *He cried with a loud voice,* Lazarus *come forth; and he that was dead came forth.* So in curing of the deaf Man, *Mark* 7. 34. *He ſaith unto him,* Ephphatha, *and ſtraightway his Ears were opened.* Thus in the exerting of his Almighty glorious Power in quickning a Soul ſpiritually dead, and opening the Heart that was lockt up by ignorance and unbelief; an Internal Almighty Efficacy paſſeth from Chriſt, along with the voice of the Goſpel, to effect this glorious work upon the Soul; an Emblem whereof we have in *Ezek.* 37. 9, 10. *Then ſaid he unto me, Propheſie unto the wind, propheſie Son of Man to the wind, ſaith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breath upon theſe ſlain, that they may live. So I propheſied as he commanded me, and the Breath came into them, and they lived and ſtood up upon their Feet, an exceeding great Army.* The animating vital Breath which quickned the dead, came in or with the four winds of Heaven, as this Almighty power of Chriſt doth with the ſound of the Goſpel; and before it the Heart opens, the Will bows, *Pſal.* 110. 3. Man can no longer oppoſe the power of God; Man and Man ſtand upon equal ground; the power of Man can repel the power of a fellow Creature; but when the power of Chriſt comes along with the voice of Man, there is no more power to reſiſt. * This voice of Chriſt then, of which the Text ſpeaks, is an Almighty impreſſion made upon the Soul inſtead of a voice; and as fully expreſſive of God's mind concerning it, as any articulate voice in the World can be. It is a beam of light ſhining immediately from the Spirit, into the Soul of a ſinner; as plainly and evidently diſcovering both its danger and duty, as if a voice from Heaven had declared them: thus it is ſaid, *Iſa.* 8. 11. The Lord ſpake to *Iſaiah* with a ſtrong Hand, that is, by a mighty impreſſion upon the Prophet's Spirit, which was as a voice to him. Thus here, the Lord not only directs a ſutable word to a ſinners condition; but alſo impreſſes it with ſuch a ſtrong hand upon his Heart, as leaves no doubt behind it, but that it was the Lord himſelf that ſpake to his Soul. This is Chriſt's way of ſpeaking by his Spirit, to the inner Spiritual Ear of the Soul; not by oraculous voices, which I take to be but the ſuppoſitions of an overtroubled fancy; but by an efficacious impreſſion upon the Heart. As to oraculous voices, we may ſooner meet Satanical deluſions, than Divine illuminations in that way. The Learned *Gerſon* ſpeaks of a good Man who being in Prayer ſeemed to hear ſuch a voice as this; *I am come in perſon to viſit thee, for thou art worthy:* but he juſtly ſuſpecting a deluſion of Satan, ſhut his Eyes and ſaid, *Nolo hic videre Chriſtum,* &c. *I will not ſee Chriſt here, it ſhall ſuffice me to ſee him in glory.* I am ſure Chriſt's voice in the written Word is more ſure than a voice from Heaven, 2 *Pet.* 1.19. This inward ſpiritual impreſſion is Chriſt's effectual call from Heaven; and it is a voice *ſine ſtrepitu ſyllabarum,* without ſound of ſyllable.

* *Clamor hic & pulſatio ſignificant cogitata a Deo injecta, ad monendam peccatoris conſcientiam; id Deus aliquamdiu facit, non ſemper.* Pools Synopſ. *in loc.*

2. As this voice of Chriſt implies Almighty Efficacy, ſo it implies in like manner the *facility* of converſion unto Chriſt; he can do it eaſily with a word of his Mouth: as in the bodily cures performed by him in the days of his fleſh, how ſuddenly and eaſily did Chriſt effect them? *Speak the word only,* ſaid the *Centurion, and my Servant ſhall be healed.* Thus let the Spirit but ſpeak internally to the deadeſt Soul, and it lives. *Elijah* did but caſt his mantle upon *Eliſha,* as he was plowing in the Field, and he preſently entreats the Prophet to give him leave to go home and bid his Friends farewel, and he would follow him; thus it is here, let a beam of ſaving light ſhine from the Spirit into a Mans Heart, let an effectual impreſſion be made upon his Soul, and he is preſently made willing to quit and give up his deareſt Luſts and Intereſts, and to imbrace Chriſt upon the ſevereſt terms of the Goſpel. Converſion is too difficult a work for Angels or Men to effect in their own ſtrength; but Chriſt can do it with a word. And thus much of the general nature of Chriſt's Spiritual Internal voice; but all this gives us but a remote imperfect knowledg of it: Therefore,

Thirdly, I ſhall endeavour to open the innate Characters and ſpecial Properties of this Internal Spiritual voice of Chriſt, which muſt be heard, or there can be no opening the door of the Heart to receive him.

I. *Character.* And the firſt Character is this, It is a *ſecret* and a *ſtill* voice; whereby ſomewhat is as it were whiſpered into the Ear of the Soul, making a particular application of what is ſpoken externally to the Ear, much like that of *Nathan* to *David, Thou art the Man.* This ſtill voice ſounds throout the whole Soul, yet none hear it but the Soul concerned in it; it is ſaid, 1 *Sam.* 9. 15. *The Lord told* Samuel *in his Ear, the night before,* &c. that is, he whiſpered the ſecret into the Prophet's mind: ſo the Spirit of Chriſt whiſpers a word into the Ear of a ſinner, which makes his Heart to tremble, after this manner, *This is thy very ſtate and condition; this is thy ſin, which is now opened by the Goſpel in thine Ears.* This is a voice without ſound or noiſe to any others, but very intelligible to the Soul unto whom it is ſpoken. You read in 1 *Kings* 19. 11, 12. when *Elijah* ſtood upon the *Mount* before the Lord, there came *a great and ſtrong wind which rent the Mountains, and brake in pieces the Rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a ſtill ſmall voice: And it was ſo, when* Elijah *heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle,* &c. So is is here. Dreadful things are thundred againſt men by the voice of the Law, the Terrors of the Lord are made known, Hell and Damnation are ſet before the Eyes of Sinners; but until the Lord come in the ſtill voice of his Spirit, and apply thoſe things to the Conſcience, the Sinner never covers his face with ſhame and confuſion, nor goes aſide to mourn and lament his miſery. This voice of God ſounds to the very Center of the Soul. As for the outward voice of the Goſpel alone, it ſignifies little; *in hearing men hear not*, Mat. 13. 13. They hear the voice of man, but not the voice of God: they hear the ſound, but feel not the power of the Word. What is ſpoken externally, dies in the Ear that hears it: But this ſtill voice of the Spirit by ſecret paſſages makes its way to the Heart, and none knows what God ſpeaks but the Soul to whom he ſpeaks. That is the firſt Character.

II. *Character*. The Internal Spiritual voice of Chriſt is a *perſonal* and particular voice, ſpeaking diſtinctly and particularly to the caſe and ſtate of the Soul, as if it were by name. Miniſters do and muſt ſpeak in general; they draw the Bow of the Goſpel at a venture, not knowing to whom God will direct the Arrow; but the Spirit guides it to the Mark. He applies general Truths unto particular Perſons, ſo as the Soul to whom he directs it, is fully convinced and ſatisfied the Lord intends and means it, in ſuch a convictive and threatning Expreſſion. O ſaith the Soul, hath the Lord ſingled me out in ſpecial? this is my very ſtate and caſe. You read *John* 10. 5. that Chriſt *calleth his Sheep by name*. How doth he call them by name? but by ſpeaking directly and particularly to their Condition and Caſe, as if he called them by their particular Names. He doth not now in an extraordinary way, as of old, call *Samuel, Samuel*; or *Saul, Saul*; but he ſends a Beam of convincing light into the Conſcience, plainly diſcovering this or that to be our ſin, danger, or duty; and ſo as to the effect, it is all one as if God named him: And truly, till it comes to this, the Word hath no ſaving operation upon the Soul. A man may hear ten thouſand general Truths, aſſent to them, and never be the better for them. How ſtill and quiet was *David*'s Conſcience, till *Nathan* ſtruck the nail upon the Head, by a home perſonal application, and then his Conſcience ſtartled? Thus God ſingles out one man or woman from among a thouſand in the Congregation, ſpeaks to the Heart, rips up the ſecure Conſcience; the reſt hear the ſame words, but feel not the ſame efficacy. And truly, 'tis a choice mercy when God ſhall pleaſe thus to ſingle out one Perſon from among many after this manner to ſpeak to his Heart. As Chriſt ſaid in *Luke* 4. 25, 26. *Many widows were in* Iſrael *in the days of* Elias, *&c. but to none of them was* Elias *ſent ſave unto* Sarepta *a City of* Sydon, *unto a woman that was a widow:* So here, Multitudes ſate with you under the ſame Prayer or Sermon, but unto none of them at that time was the Spirit ſent, to make a particular convictive application thereof, but unto thee. In this the peculiar goodneſs of God ſhines out, and ſhould for ever be admired in the eyes of that Soul.

III. *Character.* This Spiritual Internal voice of Chriſt is *diſtinguiſhable* by the Soul that hears it from all other voices, *John* 10. 4. *The Sheep know his voice.* As in the ſtile of the Scriptures, there is a Weight and Majeſty which diſtinguiſhes it from all human compoſures; ſo in this voice of Chriſt, there is a Majeſty, a peculiar Efficacy, a divine and awful Authority, by which the Soul diſtinguiſhes it from all human voices. It was ſaid of Chriſt in the days of his fleſh, *John* 7. 46. *Never man ſpake like this man.* The ſame may we ſay of his ſpiritual voice, the Soul never heard ſuch a voice before; it ſeals the truth upon the Heart ſo firmly, that no objections are left againſt it. It was not ſo when we heard the voice of man. And there are two things in this inward voice of Chriſt, which apparently difference it from all human voices. (1.) A marvellous Light comes into the Soul with it, which diſcovers all the ſecrets of the Heart. God ſhines into the Heart the ſame time he ſpeaks unto it, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. and now the ſecrets of the Heart are manifeſt, and God is acknowledged to be in that Word of Truth, 1 *Cor.* 14. 25. (2.) A marvellous Power accompanieth this voice, to make a deep and firm impreſſion of what is ſpoken upon the Soul: and this Power is an innate Character of the voice of God, whereby the Soul receives it as his, with much aſſurance, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 5. *Our Goſpel came not to you in Word only, but alſo in Power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much Aſſurance.* They could not be more certain of any thing in the World, than they were of this, That is was the Lord that ſpake to them in that Word. 'Tis true, at the firſt inſtant the Soul may be amazed, and at a loſs, as *Peter* when he was delivered out of priſon, *Acts* 12. 11. thought at firſt he had ſeen a Viſion; but when he was come to himſelf, *Now*, ſaid he, *I know of a ſurety that the Lord hath ſent his Angel*, &c. Thus it is with the Soul, it is amazed, and doubts what manner of Call or Power this is; ſure it is, it never heard ſuch a voice, nor ever felt any thing like this before: But the matter is quickly cleared up when the Soul hath reflected duly upon it, and finds (as it quickly doth) ſuch a wonderful change of the frame and temper of the Heart following upon it. I now ſpeak not of thoſe into whom Grace is diſtilled in the way of godly Education in their tender years, but of adult Perſons, and eſpecially ſuch as have been groſſer Sinners.

IV. *Character.* This Spiritual Internal voice of Chriſt is a *ſurprizing* voice, altogether unexpected by the Soul that hears it; *I am found of them that ſought me not*, Iſa. 65. 1. Little do we foreſee the deſigns God hath upon us in bringing us to ſuch a Place, and under ſuch a Sermon, at ſuch or ſuch a time; even as little as *Saul* thought of a Kingdom when he was ſeeking his Father's Aſſes. 'Tis much with us as it was with the Apoſtles when Chriſt called them; little did *Matthew* think when he ſat at the Receipt of Cuſtoms, or *Saul* think when poſting unto *Damaſcus* upon the Devil's errand, that Chriſt and Salvation had then been ſo near them. Some have come to ſcoff and deride the Meſſengers and Truths of God; others to gratifie their curioſity; and many in a cuſtomary courſe, not knowing where elſe, with peace to themſelves or reputation with others, to ſpend that hour: But God's thoughts were not theirs; the time of mercy was now come, and whatever ſinful or low ends brought them thither, the Lord's deſign was then and there to manifeſt himſelf to them. It is with ſuch Souls in ſome reſpect, as it was with the Spouſe, *Cant.* 6. 12. to whoſe expreſſion I may here allude, *Or ever I was aware, my Soul made me as the Chariots of* Amminadab. I went to the Congregation for Company, I was ſitting under the Word with a careleſs wandring Heart, as at other times; when lo, above all the thoughts of my Heart, an Arrow of Conviction was ſuddenly ſhot into my Conſcience, which ſo ſtartled, wounded, and diſquieted it, as it is now beyond the power of any but Chriſt himſelf to ſettle and ſatisfie it.

V. *Character*. This Spiritual Internal voice of Chriſt is *energetical*, great and mighty in power, piercing the Heart, cleaving as it were the very reins; full of efficacy to the Soul that hears it. The power of God comes along with this voice of God. You read *Heb.* 4. 12. *The Word of God is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged Sword; piercing even to the dividing aſunder of the Soul and Spirit, of the Joynts and Marrow.* Now this efficacy is not inherent in the Word it ſelf, it works not thus as a natural Agent, then all would feel this power that come within the ſound of it. No, this comes from the Spirit of Chriſt, ſpeaking in it to the Sinners Conſcience; when it is the adminiſtration of the Spirit, then it becomes thus efficacious. You read in *Pſal.* 29. from *v.* 3 *to* 10. of the wonderful efficacy of God's Providential voice: *The voice of the Lord is powerful; The voice of the Lord is full of majeſty; it breaks the Cedars, divides the flames of fire, ſhakes the wilderneſs, maketh the Hynds to calve.* This the providential voice of God in the winds, thunders and lightnings, can do; but alas, what's this to the efficacy of his Spiritual voice? What is the breaking of the Cedars of *Lebanon* to the breaking of the Heart of a Sinner? What is the ſhaking of the Trees in the Wilderneſs, to the fears of wrath to come, which ſhake the Souls of convinced Sinners, and make their very Hearts to tremble? *Acts* 16. 30. What is the dividing of the flames of fire, to the dividing of a Soul from its beloved Luſts? *The weapons of our warfare* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *are mighty through God, to the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it ſelf againſt the knowledg of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt,* 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. Here be the glorious effects of this Voice, which plainly diſcover from whom it comes. The voice of God is no leſs to be admired in its magnificent effects, in the new Creation, than in the firſt Creation, with which the Apoſtle compares it, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. *God that commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our Hearts.* It was marvelous to ſee, at the word of Chriſt, *Lazarus*, that was dead in his Grave, to come forth bound in his Grave-cloths; and no leſs to ſee a Soul dead in ſin, bound in the bonds of corruption, at a word of Chriſt to ariſe, and come forth with Spiritual Life: *John* 5. 25. *The dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear it ſhall live.*

VI. *Character*. This Spiritual voice of Chriſt is ſo *convictive* to the Conſcience of a Sinner, that it puts a final end to all ſhifts and evaſions: Whilſt Man only ſpake, the Soul had a thouſand ſhifts to evade and put off what was ſpoken; but now all diſputes and debates are at an end; no more Subterfuges and cunning Evaſions now. The Spirit, when he cometh, *he ſhall convince the World of ſin*, John 16. 8. The word ſignifies to convince by demonſtration; and that is, to ſhew a thing to be impoſſible to be otherwiſe than we repreſent it to be. Formerly when the Terrors of God were threatned againſt ſin, the ſhuffling Heart was wont to ſay, This concerns me no more than others; if it go ill with me, it will go ill with thouſands as well as me. 'Tis true, this is my evil, and who is without them? I have ſome evils in me, but yet I have ſome good too. But no ſooner doth the Spirit ſpeak conviction to the Conſcience, but all theſe Pleas are out of doors. It may be the ſtate of the Sinner's Soul was doubtful to him before, but it is not ſo now. It had ſome fears of Hell, but ballanced with ſome vain hopes of Heaven. But now the debate is ended, the great Queſtion determined, Whatever I am, or have, whatever Duties I have done, and whatſoever ſins I have avoided, I ſee I am not regenerated, I am in my natural Chriſtleſs ſtate, and except I be changed I muſt be damned. This was the effect of Chriſt's convictive voice unto *Paul*, Rom. 7. 9. *I was alive without the Law once; but when the Commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.* He had read the Law many a time, and had the literal knowledg of it: but under theſe things his vain hopes lived and flouriſh'd, until the Spiritual ſenſe of the Law came home to his Heart by the teaching voice of the Spirit, and then his vain hopes gave up the Ghoſt, and his ſin and guilt ſtared in the face of his Conſcience.

VII. *Character*. The voice of Chriſt whereof we now ſpeak is generally and ordinarily conveyed to the Souls of Men thro the *Word preached*, which is the *choſen Organ* or Inſtrument of its Conveyance. We cannot abſolutely and univerſally affirm that Chriſt always ſpeaks to men this way, but certainly this is his ſtanding and ordinary courſe; 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 5. *Our Goſpel came not to you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt.* Our Goſpel, becauſe preached and miniſtred by us; but had that been all, it had come to you in word only, as it doth to many thouſand others in the World, who hear and feel nothing in it more than what is human: but unto you it came in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt; that is, our Words were the *Vehicle* or *Organ* thro which the vital power of the Spirit was conveyed into your Souls. Providences have their voices, as well as the Word; and ſometimes the voice of Chriſt hath accompanied the voice of Providence, to the Converſion of Mens Souls; but this is more rare and unuſual: The eſtabliſhed and ordinary way of Chriſt's ſpeaking to the Hearts of Sinners is by the Word, and eſpecially the Word preached, which upon that very account and conſideration, as it is the Organ of conveying the voice and power of Chriſt to the Soul, is therefore called *the power of God to Salvation*, Rom. 1. 16. This Inſtrument the Lord generally uſes and honours for the conveyance of Spiritual Life into the Souls of men, tho it be deſpiſed and contemned in the World. *The preaching of the Croſs is to them that periſh fooliſhneſs, but unto us which are ſaved it is the power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 18. *i. e.* the choſen Inſtrument by which the ſaving power of God communicates it ſelf to the Souls of men: And although God may exert his ſaving power through Providences, yet we ſeldom or never find he doth ſo where the Word may be had, but is deſpiſed and neglected. And truly herein God conſults our peace and ſatisfaction; for ſuppoſe he ſhould make uſe of another *medium*, as a voice from Heaven, *&c.* and after Calling (which is an uſual caſe) the called Soul ſhould queſtion all, and ſay, How do I know but all this may be a Deluſion? may not Satan impoſe upon poor Mortals, and this voice from Heaven be a counterfeit voice? my eternal Eſtate depends upon it, and I had need to be ſure it was the very voice of God himſelf. In ſuch a caſe as this it would be hard to give ſuch clear diſtinguiſhing Characters as had heard and anſwered the voice of Chriſt, *That* might be to the ſatisfaction of the Soul, and clearly difference the one from the other. But now when God makes the Word his Inſtrument in this matter, it yields abundantly more ſatisfaction, *we have a more ſure Word of Propheſie*, ſurer than a voice from Heaven, 2 *Pet.* 1. 19. And tho *Paul* was converted by a voice from Heaven, yet the Lord ſends him to *Ananias* to preach the Goſpel to him, *Acts* 9. 17. The Lord will honour his Word. Providences may make way, and prepare the heart, but the Word is the Inſtrument by which the Lord puts forth his power ordinarily to ſalvation.

VIII. *Character*. The voice of Chriſt leaves *abiding effects and laſting impreſſions* upon the Soul that hears it. The words of Men are ſcattered into the wind, but the effects of Chriſt's voice are durable and laſting things; *Pſal.* 119. 93. *I will never forget thy Word, for by it thou haſt quickened me.* How many hundred Sermons have we heard, and all thoſe excellent Truths vaniſhed away as a Dream? O, but if ever thou heardeſt Chriſt ſpeaking to thy Heart in any Sermon, or Prayer; to be ſure that will ſtick by thee for ever: his words are ſealed upon the Soul for ever, they are written in the heart, *Jer.* 31. 33. What *Job* wiſhed concerning his words, that is really perform'd in the words of Chriſt, *they are written as in the Rock for ever.* We have ſlippery Memories, but the weakeſt Memory will and muſt retain the words of Chriſt, ſpoken to the heart by his Spirit, for they are ſealed upon it. *Job* 33. 16. *He ſealeth their inſtructions*; and this ſecures them. Thus you have the innate Characters of Chriſt's Voice.

Fourthly, I ſhall next ſpeak to the perſonal Objects unto whom Chriſt ordinarily directs this his internal, efficacious, and ſaving Voice or Call. And although it be true that the Spirit of Chriſt is a free Agent, acting with the greateſt liberty, and calleth whom he will, according to that, *John* 3. 8. *The wind bloweth where it liſteth:* And it is true *de facto*, That Chriſt hath made ſome of all ſorts and ranks of men to hear his voice; yet if we conſider the way he commonly takes, we ſhall find that it is very rare and ſeldom that Chriſt directs this ſaving voice or call of his to the great and wiſe of this world: 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. *You ſee your Calling, Brethren, how that not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.* He ſaith not *any*, but not *many*. Some Chriſt doth call; *Leſt* (as one notes) *the World ſhould think that Chriſtians were deceived thro their ſimplicity and weakneſs.* One rich *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*; one honourable *Nicodemus*, but not many. Men of the greateſt fame and renown in the world have been the greateſt and fierceſt Enemies againſt Chriſt. *Galen* the chief Phyſician, *Porphyry* the chief *Ariſtotelian*, *Plotinus* the chief *Platoniſt*, *Lybanus* and *Lucian* the chief *Orators*, were all the profeſſed Enemies of Chriſt. Two things make a man great in the eye of the world; The external endowments of Providence, heaping up Riches and Honours upon the outward man; and internal gifts and endowments of the Mind, adorning the inward man, as ſtrong Reaſon, ſharpneſs of Wit, &c. When both theſe meet (as many times they do) in one and the ſame perſon, they make him great in the eye of the world, and uſually in his own eyes too; yea, too great to ſtoop to the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, and the humbling ſelf-denying terms thereof. Theſe the Lord uſually paſſes by, and directs his voice to the poor; the poor receive the Goſpel: *God hath choſen the poor of this World, rich in faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom*, James 2. 5. And this choice of God Chriſt bleſſeth him for, *Mat.* 11. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes; even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeemeth good in thy ſight.* And indeed the Wiſdom of God deſerves our admiration in this diſpenſation: For,

(1.) Hereby the freeneſs of his Grace is vindicated. None can now pretend that any earthly excellency commends any man to God, or that the favour of Heaven is engaged by the ſame motives that the reſpects of this world are: For now you ſee the truth of that Scripture, *Job* 34. 19. before your eyes, *He accepteth not the perſons of Princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of his hands.* Earthly Riches and Honours, as empty things as they are, yet are too much idoliz'd by men: What would they be, could they procure our favour and acceptance with the Lord? (2.) By ſuch a choice as this the Lord plainly ſhews us, That Religion needs not worldly props to ſupport it. As at firſt it was ſpread by the power of God in the world by poor contemptible Men, ſo it is ſtill upheld without human policy or riches. The Church is called *the Congregation of the poor*, *Pſal.* 74. 20. The Lord will have us know that he is able to maintain and carry on his counſels in the world without the wealth of rich men, the authority of great men, or the policies of wiſe men; he needs them not. (3.) By this choice he pours contempt upon thoſe things which are moſt admired among men: So he tells us, 1 *Cor.* 1. 27. *God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.* And certainly, ſhame and confuſion of face will cover the great ones of this world, in the world to come; when they ſhall ſee thoſe poor Chriſtians, whom they contemned and ſcorned upon earth, as not worthy to come into their preſence, to be ſo infinitely preferred before them in the favour of God. In a word, this efficacious ſpiritual voice of Chriſt is directed but to a few, even of the many that ſit within the ſound and call of the Goſpel, *Matth.* 22. 14. *Many are called, but few are choſen.* Chriſt's flock is a little flock. There be many *Birds of prey*, to one *Bird of paradiſe:* Many common *Pebles*, to one *Saphir* or *Diamond.* 'Tis not for us to diſpute the Reaſon, but to adore the Sovereignty of God in this matter. And of thoſe few whom he calleth, the greateſt part are of the lower rank and order of men. The glitter and dazle of this world blinds the eyes of the greateſt. Extremity of pinching wants diverts the minds of the very loweſt; but betwixt theſe two extremes there is a third ſort of perſons whom the Lord moſt uſually calls.

Fifthly, If it be queried why the voice and call of Chriſt ſhould be directed to this perſon rather than to that? Certainly it is not from any dignity or excellency outward, or inward, that Chriſt ſees in one above another; for all are ſhut up under the ſame common ſin and miſery of the fall; and therefore the Apoſtle told the *Epheſians*, who had *they were by nature children of wrath even as others,* Eph. 2. 3. If it were not ſo, Man would have ſomething to glory in before God; but Chriſt reſolves this whole diſpenſation into its proper cauſe, the good pleaſure of the Divine will, *Mat.* 11. 26. *Even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.* This good pleaſure of the Will of God ſometimes orders thoſe to hear the voice of his Son, that ſeem to ſtand at a far greater diſtance and improbability to hear it than others do. 'Tis ſaid of the *Epheſians*, that they were afar off, *Eph.* 2. 13. yet they heard the voice of Chriſt; when that diſcreet Scribe, *Mark* 12. 34. who was not far from the Kingdom of God, and *Agrippa, Acts* 26. 28. who almoſt or within a very little was perſwaded to be a Chriſtian, never heard it; therefore it is ſaid, *Matth.* 8. 11, 12. *Many ſhall come from the Eaſt and Weſt, and ſhall ſit down with* Abraham, *and* Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the children of the Kingdom ſhall be caſt out into outer darkneſs.* O marvelous diſpenſation! Many a poor Soul under the greateſt diſadvantages, a poor Servant that hath but little time and multitudes of encumbrances, yet ſuch a one is often called effectually by this voice of Chriſt; when thoſe that enjoy multitudes of opportunities, and have abundance of time lying upon their hands, which they know not what to do with; who have the choiceſt Books at command, yet hear nothing, feel nothing amidſt all theſe advantages to any purpoſe; all this is wholly to be reſolved into the good pleaſure of the Will of God.

Sixthly, In the next place, let us view the effects of this voice of Chriſt upon the Souls of Men, and we ſhall find divers remarkable effects wrought upon the Heart by it.

I. *Effect.* And the firſt Effect of the voice of Chriſt is *Conviction* upon the Conſcience; Conviction both of ſin and miſery. *John* 16. 9. *The Spirit when he cometh, ſhall convince the World of ſin.* This is a voice of terror, it ſtrikes dead the vain hopes of a ſinner, *Rom.* 7. 9. Now the Soul that was before ſecure and quiet, becomes the ſeat of trouble and anxiety. 'Tis true, there was a general Conviction of ſin before, they knew that all are ſinners; that they denied not: but alas, this general Conviction is quite another thing to what the Soul feels now; it can ſhift and wave the matter no longer. This voice of Chriſt *ſhews them their iniquities, and how they have exceeded,* as the expreſſion is, *Job* 36. 8, 9. exceeded in number, and exceeded in heinouſneſs of aggravation. A general Conviction of ſin affects a Man no more than the ſight of a painted Lion upon a Sign-poſt; but when a particular Conviction is ſet on upon the Conſcience by this ſpecial inward voice of Chriſt, ſin is now like a living Lion meeting a Man in the way, and roaring dreadfully upon him. This is the firſt Effect of Chriſt's voice, and is introductive unto the

II. *Effect.* Which is *Humiliation,* and contrition of Heart for ſin; thoſe threats of Scripture againſt ſin and ſinners, which were wont to be ſlighted, are now trembled at; thoſe *Jews,* Acts 2. 37. to whoſe Hearts Chriſt ſpake in *Peter's* Sermon, as ſoon as ever they heard his voice, ſounding Conviction in their Conſciences, they were preſently *pricked at the Heart;* no Sword, or Poniard can make ſuch a wound, and put a poor creature into ſuch pain as a ſight of ſin will do; therefore *Zach.* 12. 10. they are ſaid to mourn for Chriſt as for an only Son. Now this is the glorious prerogative of Jeſus Chriſt, to be able to reach and wound the Heart with a word: The voice of Man cannot do it; but the Spirit of a Man lies naked and open both to be wounded and healed by a word from the Mouth of Chriſt. No ſooner hath a poor ſinner heard the awful voice of Conviction ſpoken to his Conſcience by the Lord Jeſus, but he feels himſelf ſick at Heart; home he goes from that Sermon, by which Chriſt ſpake effectual Conviction to him, crying, O ſick, ſick; my Soul is diſtreſſed becauſe of ſin. There is indeed a great difference in the depth and degrees of this contrition and humiliation; it ſoaks deeper into ſome Hearts than others, and holds them longer under it; but certain it is, whoever hath heard the convincing voice of Chriſt, he feels ſo much ſorrow for ſin as for ever ſeparates him from the love of it.

III. *Effect.* This voice of Chriſt rouzes and awakens the careleſs and ſluggiſh mind to the greateſt ſolicitude and thoughtfulneſs after deliverance, and eſcape from the danger that hangs over it. *Acts* 16. 30. *Trembling and aſtoniſhed, he cried out, Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?* All the powers of the Soul run into ſolicitude and care about deliverance. You ſhall generally obſerve in convinced and humbled ſinners, three evident ſigns of extraordinary ſolicitude about Salvation. (1.) There is a ſtrong intention of their minds and thoughts, they ſtand night and day like a Bow at the full bent; their thoughts are ſtill poring upon this matter, their ſleep departs, for their ſin and danger is ever before them. (2.) It appears by their ſearching inquiſitiveneſs about the way of eſcape; the queſtion they carry with them from company to company, where they meet with any whom they judg able to reſolve or direct them, is this; What courſe ſhall I take? What ſhall I do? Is there any hope for ſuch a one as I? Did you ever know a Soul in my condition? (3.) It appears by the little notice they take at this time of their outward troubles and afflictions; which it may be are ſtrong and ſharp enough to overwhelm them at another time; but now they take little notice of them. Sin lies ſo heavy, that it makes heavy afflictions lie light.

IV. *Effect.* A fourth Effect of the voice of Chriſt, is encouragement and hope, putting the Soul upon the uſe of means in order to the attainment of Chriſt and Salvation; for it is an inviting as well as a convicting voice: and this is a remarkable difference betwixt the voice of Chriſt and the voice of Satan, with reſpect to ſin. Satan labours to cut off all hope, and ſtrike the Soul dead under deſpair of mercy; as well knowing that if he can cut off hope, all emotions and endeavours of the Soul after Chriſt are effectually ſtopt, and at a dead ſtand: but how much convincing terrors ſoever there are in the voice of Chriſt, there is always ſomething left behind it upon the Heart to breed and ſupport hope. And truly the Soul amidſt theſe ſad circumſtances hath great need of ſome encouragement; accordingly the Lord uſually after ſharp convictions, ſets on upon the Soul ſuch a word as that, *John* 6. 37. *Him that cometh to me I will in no wiſe caſt out; for I* *came down from Heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that ſent me.* Wherein Chriſt offers the moſt rational ſatisfaction, and greateſt encouragement imaginable, that a poor convinced ſinner, if he be made willing, ſhall certainly find a hearty welcom and acceptation with Chriſt. For mark how he argues it on purpoſe for the ſatiſfaction of ſuch Souls; *I came not down from Heaven to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me.* The force of the encouragement lies here, *I and my Father are one*; one in Will, and one in Deſign; our Wills never did, nor poſſibly can jar and claſh one with another; that would be utterly repugnant to the perfect unity that is betwixt us. *Now,* ſaith he, *I came down from Heaven not only to do my own Will* (which muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed to be intently ſet, and ſtrongly enclined to receive and ſave all convinced and willing ſinners, this being the very end of my Incarnation and Death) *but alſo to do the Will of my Father*; who hath ſent me to bind up the broken-hearted, and anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, *Iſa.* 61. 1. and therefore no ſuch Soul can rationally doubt of a welcom reception with me. And becauſe the fears and jealouſies of a convinced Conſcience are great and many, and the Devil ſets in with them to aggravate them beyond the hopes of mercy; therefore it is uſual with the Lord, at ſuch a time as this, to direct the convinced and trembling ſinner to ſuch a Scripture as that, *Heb.* 7. 25. *Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him,* &c. making the fulneſs of Chriſt's ſaving power to ſhine with a chearful beam into the dark and diſtreſſed Soul of a ſinner, from ſuch a word as that.

V. *Effect.* A fifth effect or conſequent of Chriſt's powerful voice, is an *attractive efficacy*, or *ſweet allicion* of the Soul to Chriſt, by that power and efficacy which it communicates to the Soul, *John* 6. 44, 45. *No Man can come to me except the Father, which hath ſent me, draw him. Every Man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* Mark it, this voice ſpeedily puts the Soul into motion after Chriſt; coming follows hearing: When once the Soul hath heard the voice of God, away it comes from all the engagements in the World; all bonds and ties betwixt the Soul and ſin break aſunder, and give way; nothing can hold it from Chriſt. There is a ſtrange reſtleſneſs in the Spirit of Man, nothing but Chriſt can center and quiet it.

VI. *Effect.* And then laſtly, The laſt Effect of Chriſt's voice or call *is ſweet reſt and conſolation to the inner Man.* When once the Soul is come home to Chriſt by the efficacy of this heavenly call or voice, it enters into peace, *Heb.* 4. 3. *We which have believed do enter into reſt*; not only *ſhall*, but *do* enter into reſt. As the firſt Effect of Chriſt's voice was terror and great trouble to the Soul, ſo the laſt Effect is peace; it puts the Soul into the moſt excellent poſition in the World, for comfort and joy; it never ſtood upon ſuch ground before; for this vocation ſtands betwixt predeſtination, and glorification, *Rom.* 8. 30. *Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called; and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified; and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.* See here into what a bleſſed Mount of viſion the voice of Chriſt calleth the Souls of ſinners? where let the Soul look backward or forward, from eternity to eternity, there is nothing but a viſion of peace before its Eyes. This call of God points it backward to God's eternal choice, which by this very call it is now manifeſt he made of that Soul before the World was; and it alſo points forward, to that eternal glory unto which God is leading it. Theſe are the Effects of this Almighty voice of Chriſt, and theſe the ſpecial inſtructions ſealed by it upon the Hearts of Men.

But now, this voice of Chriſt is not heard at all times, but in ſome ſpecial ſeaſon or hour, as Chriſt calls it, *John* 5. 25. *The hour cometh when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God.* And elſewhere, by the Apoſtle, it is called *the accepted Time, the day of Salvation,* 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. And the conjunction of the Spirit of Chriſt with the Word, Ordinances, or Providences of God; but eſpecially the Word, makes this bleſſed hour. The Word alone, tho never ſo excellently preacht, conduces no more to the Conviction and Salvation of a ſinner, than the Waters of *Betheſda* did, when the Angel came not down to trouble them, *John* 5. 4. But when the Lord pours out his Spirit with the Word, according to that promiſe, *Prov.* 1. 23. *I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and make known my Words unto you*; then Chriſt ſpeaks to the Heart; this great conjunction of the Word and Spirit makes that bleſſed nick, and ſeaſon of Salvation. The time of love, the time of life. Now the voice of Chriſt is heard with effect; the Ordinances impregnated with convincing and converting efficacy. There was an abundant effuſion of the Spirit in the firſt Age of Chriſtianity, and then the voice of Chriſt was heard by multitudes of Souls at once: There hath ſince been a reſtraint of the Spirit, comparatively ſpeaking; whereas three thouſand Souls were then converted at one Sermon, poſſibly three thouſand Sermons have ſince been preached, and not one Soul effectually called. This hath made the Church like a Wilderneſs, a Land of drowth; and ſo 'tis like to remain, *until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderneſs be a fruitful field*; according to that promiſe, *Iſa.* 32. 15. And ſuch a time we expect, Lord haſten it; when the waters of the Ordinances ſhall be healed, *and every thing that liveth, which moveth whitherſoever the River ſhall come, ſhall live. And fiſhers ſhall ſtand upon it from* Engedi *even unto* Eneglaim, *they ſhall be a place to ſpread forth nets, their fiſh ſhall be according to their kinds, as the fiſh of the great Sea, exceeding many,* Ezek. 47. 9, 10. Then Miniſters ſhall no longer fiſh with Angles, catching now one, then another; but ſhall ſpread forth their nets, and incloſe whole ſhoals, multitudes of Converts. In the mean time there are ſome ſignal periods, and happy ſeaſons, wherein Chriſt uttereth his Almighty voice in the Word; but that ſeaſon is utterly unforeknown to Man; we cannot ſay when it will come, but are to wait for it, as the Man did at the pool of *Betheſda.* Miniſters muſt preach in hope, wait in hope, if at any time God will give the people repentance, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. We are often miſtaken in our conjectures; when we have made the beſt preparations, and find a more than ordinary enlargedneſs of Spirit, we are apt to conclude certainly this is the bleſſed hour wherein Chriſt will ſpeak to the Heart as we do to the Ear; but we oft-times find our ſelves miſtaken, yet we muſt wait in hope, and ſo muſt our people. Such a happy time may come, and when it doth, it will be a day for ever to be remembred; becauſe then the firſt actual application of Chriſt will be made to your Souls; without which all that the Father had done in Election, and the Son in his meritorious Redemption, had been of no benefit or advantage to your Souls. And therefore you ſhall find that this work of the Spirit ſtands betwixt both thoſe works, and makes them both effectual to our Salvation, 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. This is that bleſſed hour upon which your eternal bleſſedneſs depends; Eternity will be taken up in bleſſing God for this hour; it will be celebrated for ever in your praiſes in the World to come. O what an influence hath this hour into all eternity! The hearing of this voice of Chriſt effectually opens the Cabinet-counſels of Heaven, and brings to light the eternal Counſels of God concerning you: 1 Theſ. 1. 4, 5. *Knowing brethren*, beloved, *your election of God: for our Goſpel came not unto you in word only, but alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt.* This gives greater aſſurance of the eternal love of God to a Mans Soul, than the ſweeteſt ſmile of Providence, or any oraculous Voice from Heaven can do. This is the time of life, the day of your ſpiritual Reſurrection, *John* 5. 25. A greater and more glorious Reſurrection by far than that of your Bodies at the laſt day; ſo much greater as the value of your Souls is above your Bodies. As alſo, becauſe the bleſſedneſs of your Corporeal Reſurrection depends upon this your Spiritual Reſurrection by the voice of Chriſt. Dreadful will the voice of Chriſt be at the Reſurrection of your Bodies, except you firſt hear this vital voice of Chriſt quickning your Souls on Earth with ſpiritual life. To conclude, this is the great *Æra* or head of account from which you are to reckon and date all your ſpiritual ſanctified mercies: for as the Lord ſaid unto the Jews, *Hag.* 2. 19. *From henceforth will I bleſs you*; ſo ſaith the Lord to you, From this hour wherein you have heard and obeyed the voice of Chriſt, will I bleſs you for ever with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly places in him.

### I. *Uſe of Information.*

This Point preſents us with abundant matter of Lamentation and mourning over the greateſt part of thoſe that ſit under the ſound of the Goſpel: but yet as Chriſt ſpeaks of the Jews, *John* 5. 37. *who have not heard the voice of God at any time*; the miniſterial voice of Chriſt they hear daily; but this efficacious internal voice, which makes the miniſterial voice the Word of Life and Power, they have not heard. The Goſpel, to the moſt of our hearers, is but an empty ſound: this is a ſad ſymptom, 2 Cor. 4. 3. *If our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt; in whom the God of this World hath blinded the minds of them that believe not*,&c. This hiding of the Goſpel is not oppoſed to the external miniſtration of it, nor yet to the underſtanding of the true ſenſe and meaning of the truths delivered by it; but only to that *internal efficacy* which is here called the hearing of Chriſt's voice. Our People are generally well ſatisfied when they have heard a Sermon, much more if they can remember ſomething of it; tho the Lord hath not ſpoken one truth they have heard, home to their Hearts. Now this is a ſad caſe, and God grant it be not that very judgment threatned, *Iſa.* 6. 9. *Hear ye indeed, but underſtand not; and ſee ye indeed, but perceive not.* So that hearing the mere voice of Man, without feeling the power of God, is all one as if we heard not. Reflect ſadly upon this, you that ſit as unconcerned under the Word as the Seats you ſit upon. God ſpeaketh once, yea twice, but Man perceiveth it not. Well, the eternal Decrees and Counſels of God are now executing upon the Souls of Men under the Goſpel. As many as are ordained to eternal Life, ſhall believe and feel the power of God's truths upon their Hearts, *Acts* 13. 48. And methinks it ſhould be of a ſtartling conſideration, when you ſhall ſee others ſtruck to the Heart, caſt into fears and tremblings, by the ſame Word that doth not in the leaſt touch your Hearts. It may be you think this is but fancy and melancholy; that very thought is an artifice of Satan to blind your Eyes. I am ſure Chriſt makes another uſe of it, when he told the ſecure and ſelf-righteous Jews, *Matth.* 21. 32. John *came unto you in the way of righteouſneſs, and ye believed him not; but the Publicans and Harlots believed him: and ye when ye had ſeen it, repented not afterward that ye might believe him.* q. d. What ſhift did you make to quiet your Conſciences, when you ſaw other poor Sinners ſo humbled, and brought to Faith under *John's* Miniſtry? 'Tis ſtrange there ſhould be no reflections in your Conſciences upon your own ſtate and condition; but thus it muſt be, one ſhall be taken and another left; to ſome it ſhall be the ſavour of life unto life, and to others the ſavour of death unto death. O who can look over ſo great a part of a Congregation, without melting bowels of compaſſion? conſidering that unto this day the Lord hath not given them Eyes to ſee, nor Ears to hear: They have heard multitudes of Sermons; they have heard alſo what effects they have had upon other Mens Hearts, but none upon theirs. O that ſuch poor Souls would cry to the Lord Jeſus, in ſuch Language as that, *Cant.* 8. 13. *The companions hearken to thy voice, cauſe me to hear it.* Lord let me not ſit under the Word any longer, deaf to the voice of thy Spirit in it. Open and unſtop the Ears of my Soul, that I may hear thy voice, and feel thy power; otherwiſe the external miniſterial voice will be ineffectual to my Salvation. 'Twill be but a Rattle to ſtill and quiet my Conſcience for a little while, and a dreadful aggravation of my miſery in the iſſue.

### II. *Uſe for Information.*

*Secondly*, The Point before us preſents five other Truths with equal clearneſs to our Eyes.

I. *Inference.* In the firſt place hence it follows, That we have this day before our Eyes a great Seal and Confirmation of the truth of the Scriptures. No miracles can ſeal it firmer than the events of it do, which are viſible to all that will obſerve them. What you read in the Word, you may ſee every day fulfill'd before your Eyes; you read, 2 *Cor.* 2. 15, 16. *We are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt, in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh. To the one we are the ſavour of death unto death, and to the other the ſavour of life unto life.* And again, *Acts* 28.24. it is obſerved, that when *Paul* in his lodgings had expounded and teſtified the Kingdom of God to the people, and perſwading them to believe, from morning till evening; it is obſerved, I ſay, that *ſome believed the things that were ſpoken, and ſome believed not.* Here you ſee the different, yea contrary events of the preaching of the Goſpel, according to the Scripture-account of it; it quickens ſome, and kills others; it brings ſome to Faith, and leaves others ſtill fixed in unbelief. Compare this account with what is daily before your Eyes; do you not ſee Souls differently influenced to contrary effects under the ſame word? one melting and tender, another hardned and wholly unconcerned? Tell me, you that are apt to aſcribe all to Nature, how comes it to paſs that men exerciſing Reaſon alike, men that have the ſame inbred fears and hopes of things eternal, who have the ſame paſſions and affections, and are in the ſelf-ſame condition and ſtate with others; yet one Mans Heart ſhall be wounded and go away trembling from under the ſelf-ſame word, which affects the other no more than if it had been preached among the Tombs to the dead that lie there? Say not, ſome have more courage than others, or clearer underſtandings; for it is moſt certain the Word hath convinced as rational and courageous perſons as thoſe upon whom it has had no ſuch effect. I doubt not but the Jaylor that was caſt into ſuch tremblings and aſtoniſhment, *Acts* 16. 30. was as ſtout and rugged a perſon as any to whom *Paul* uſually preached; his very office beſpake him ſuch a Man. Wonder not what it is that makes Men fright at ſuch a ſound, which you hear as well as they, but it affects you not: The Lord ſpeaks in that voice to their Hearts, but not to yours; and ſo it muſt be according to the account the Scripture gives us of the contrary events of the Goſpel upon them that hear it; which is, I ſay, a fair and firm Seal of the truth of the Scriptures, and highly worth the due obſervation of all Men.

II. *Infer.* What dignity hath God ſtampt on Goſpel Ordinances, in making them the organs and medium through and by which Chriſt ſpeaks life to dead Souls? This greatly exalts the dignity of the Goſpel, and deſervedly endears it to all our Souls. I deny not but God can convey Spiritual Life immediately without them; but tho he hath not tied up himſelf, yet he hath tied us up to a diligent and conſtant attendance upon them, and that with the deepeſt reſpect and reverence to them, *Luke* 10. 16. *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.* Behold, how the ſin is graduated, and aggravated to the height of ſinfulneſs. The contempt of the Goſpel runs much higher than Men are aware of. We think it no great matter to neglect and contemn a Meſſenger of Jeſus Chriſt; but that contempt flies in the very face and authority of Chriſt, who gave them their Commiſſions; yea, in the very face of God the Father, who gave Chriſt his Commiſſion. Chriſt ſpeaks in and by his Miniſters, they are as his mouth, *Jer.* 15. 19. Moreover, the ſin ſtrikes at our own Souls, and we injure them as well as Chriſt: for the Word preached is his appointed Inſtrument to convey ſpiritual Life, the beſt of Bleſſings, to our Souls. Upon which account it is called *the Word of life*, *Phil.* 2. 16. and *the power of God to ſalvation*, Rom. 1. 16. We then militate againſt our Life and Salvation when we deſpiſe and neglect the Ordinances of God. 'Tis good for men to lie under them, and continually wait on them; who knows when the Spirit of God will breath life to your Souls through them? What if yet you have found no ſuch benefit from them? the very next opportunity may be the time of life, the appointed ſeaſon of your Salvation. Bring your carnal Relations to them, as they did their ſick and diſeaſed Friends in the days when Chriſt was on Earth, laying them in the way he was to paſs. Chriſt will honour his Ordinances; ſee that you don't deſpiſe them. I think no Age was ever deeper drencht in the guilt of this ſin than the preſent Age is.

III. *Infer.* What a fearful Judgment is the removing the Goſpel from a Nation, ſeeing it is in and by the Goſpel Chriſt ſpeaketh life to the Souls of men!

The Spirit of God and the Word of God uſually come and go together: when therefore theſe are gone, no more Converſions are to be expected; dreadful is the caſe of that people, *Prov.* 29. 18. *Where no Viſion is, the people periſh.* Thoſe are direful Menaces, *Iſa.* 8. 16. *Bind up the Law, ſeal up the Teſtimony among my Diſciples.* And *Rev.* 2. 5. *I will remove thy Candleſtick out of its place.* Better the Sun were taken out of the Heavens, than the Goſpel out of the Church. O *England!* provoke not thy God to execute upon thee the Judgment here threatned. Think not God hath made ſuch a Settlement of the Goſpel, that it ſhall never be removed however you uſe it. Your Advocate in Heaven hath obtained it for you for a time upon trial; if you bring forth fruit, well, you and the Generations to come ſhall be happy in it; if not, this bleſſed Tree which hath brought forth ſo many Mercies to you and yours, muſt and will be cut down, *Luke* 13. 8. yea, and even now *is the ax laid at the root of the Tree*, Mat. 3. 10. 'Tis an alluſion to a *Carpenter* that throws down the Ax, and ſaws at the root of the Tree he intends cut down. The only ground of hope which remains with us this day, is that there are ſome Buds appearing, ſome Fruits putting forth; and if there be a bleſſing in the Bud, the Lord will ſpare it, according to *Iſa.* 65. 8. But theſe hopes are balanced with many ſad ſymptoms, which may make us tremble to think what God is about to do with ſuch a ſinful Nation.

IV. *Infer.* Thoſe that have heard Chriſt's voice and call in the Goſpel, have no reaſon to be diſcouraged from going to Chriſt in the way of Faith. Chriſt's Call is a ſufficient warrant to believe. Many poor Souls are ſtagger'd in their work of Faith, by the fear of preſumption; an ugly Objection which they know not how to clear themſelves of: But certainly, this above all Conſiderations in the world enervates this Objection of Preſumption. Then men preſume when they act without a Call or Warrant; but if Chriſt have ſpoken to your hearts by the voice of his Spirit, you have the beſt warrant in the world to go to him. What tho you know not the Iſſue? yet your Obedience is due to his Call. *By faith* Abraham, *when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an Inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went,* Heb. 11. 8. So muſt you. It is not neceſſary to your going to Chriſt, that you muſt be aſcertained before hand what the Event and Iſſue thereof ſhall be: Your believing is an act of Obedience to the voice of Chriſt that calls you. When therefore Satan ſhall object, What, ſuch a wretched Soul as thou go to Chriſt! canſt thou imagine to find entertainment with him whom thou haſt ſo abuſed and deeply wronged? Thy anſwer ſhould be ready: 'Tis true, I have been a vile wretch, and deeply wronged the Lord Jeſus; but Chriſt hath ſpoken to my heart, *he hath called me*, and therefore it can be no preſumption in me to go at his Call; but contrariwiſe it would be flat Rebellion againſt his Sovereign Command to refuſe to believe, and come unto him; yea, it would be a greater ſin than any of my former ſins have been. Beſides, had the Lord Jeſus no intention of mercy (as thou maliciouſly inſinuateſt) towards my Soul, he would never have ſpoken to my heart by conviction and perſwaſion, as he hath done.

V. *Infer.* If no Soul can open to Chriſt until it hear his powerful ſpiritual Voice, *then the change made upon men by Converſion is wholly ſupernatural.*

The riſe of Faith is from this power of Chriſt, not from the nature of Man, *John* 1. 13. Proud Nature arrogates this power and honour to it ſelf, but without any ground; for tho ſome things may be done by men in their natural ſtate, which have a remote tendency to converſion and ſpiritual life, yet it can never open to Chriſt ſavingly without a power communicated from himſelf. There is a total impotence in Nature to produce ſuch an effect as this. The Scripture ſpeaks it roundly; telling us, *The natural man cannot* (of himſelf) *know the things that are of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *Cannot believe*; for Faith is not of our ſelves, it is the gift of God, *John* 6.44. *Cannot obey*, Rom.8.7. *The carnal Mind is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* Cannot *ſpeak a good word*, Mat. 12. 34. cannot *think a good thought*, 2 Cor. 3. 5. What a poor impotent thing then is the natural man, who can neither believe nor obey, ſpeak a good word, nor think a good thought by any natural power of his own?

Say not 'tis againſt Reaſon for God to require men to do what they cannot, and then damn them for not doing it. For (1.) tho Man hath loſt his ability to obey, yet God hath not loſt his right to command: for at that rate any Man might ſhake off the yoke of God's Sovereignty by diſabling himſelf through his own ſin, for the duties of Obedience. (2.) Though man hath not a ſufficient power, yet there is in him an intolerable pride, which puffs him up with a conceit that he hath what he hath not, and can do what he cannot. The Command is therefore of great uſe to check this pride, and convince man of his impotency, *Rev.* 3. 17. (3.) Every man can do more than he doth towards his own Converſion. And therefore it is good for Men to be urged by the Commands to all thoſe Duties, in the uſe and obſervance whereof Chriſt ordinarily comes into the Soul by a ſupernatural power.

### II. *Uſe for Exhortation.*

This Point gives a loud Call to all that are within the ſound of the Goſpel, eſpecially to ſuch as begin to feel ſome power accompanying the Word to their hearts, diligently to hearken to the voice of Chriſt, and obey his firſt Call without further delay: *Rev.* 2. 7. *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.* 'Tis a dreadful and dangerous thing to turn away the Ear from him that ſpeaks from Heaven: *Heb.*12. 25. *See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh; for if they eſcaped not that refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much more ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaks from Heaven.* See that ye refuſe not; the Caution implies the Matter to be very weighty, and a neglect or refuſal in this matter to be highly dangerous. Turn not away your Ear, be not guilty of the leaſt averſation, ſlight, or neglect in ſo great and important a Concern. And truly this Caution is no more than needs; for Satan is never more buſie with the Souls of men, than when Chriſt gives them their firſt Call to himſelf.

O what a thick ſucceſſion of Diſcouragements do impetuouſly aſſault the Soul at this time! Art thou young? then he inſinuates that it is too ſoon for thee to mind the ſerious things of Religion. This will extinguiſh all thy pleaſure in a dull melancholy; thou mayſt have time enough hereafter to mind theſe matters. This Temptation *Auguſtine* confeſſeth kept him off many years from Chriſt. But certainly, if thou art old enough to be damned, thou art not too young to mind Chriſt and Salvation. There are Graves juſt of thy length, and abundance of young *Sprigs*, as well as old *Logs*, burning in Hell-flames. Beſides, all thoſe godly young ones which turned to the Lord betime, as *Joſiah*, *Abijah*, *Timothy*, and many more, will be your Judges, and condemn you in the great day. Never any repented that they opened to Chriſt too ſoon: Thouſands have repented that they kept him out ſo long. Art thou old? then he ſcares thee with the manifold ſins of thy youth, and rolls them as blocks in thy way to Chriſt. And whether young or old, he will be ſure to preſent the Sufferings, Reproaches, and Perſecutions of Godlineſs to diſcourage thee from hearkning to the voice of Chriſt. But what are the Sufferings of Chriſt here, to thoſe Sufferings from Chriſt hereafter? what are the pains of Mortification, to the pains of Damnation? Beſides, all the Promiſes of Chriſt, Promiſes of ſtrength, comfort, ſucceſs, *&c.* go along with the command of Chriſt to believe, and ſhall ſurely be performed to the obedient Soul. See therefore that thou refuſe not his voice.

### III. *Uſe for Trial.*

But you will ſay, All that hear this ſpiritual voice of Chriſt are ſaid to live, *John* 5.25. Now I am much in the dark, whether ever this vital voice of Chriſt hath ſounded unto my Soul. Alas, I feel little, if any thing, of the ſpiritual life in my Soul. I am dead and dark.

*Queſt.* *By what ſigns doth the Life of Chriſt diſcover it ſelf in the Souls of Men?*

*Anſw.* I anſwer, There are divers Signs of ſpiritual life, and bleſſed is the Soul that finds them.

1. There is a ſpiritual ſenſe and feeling flowing from, and accompanying the ſpiritual Life. I ſpeak not only of the ſenſe and feeling of comfort, for many a Soul that is in Chriſt, feels little of that; but certainly there is a ſenſe and feeling of the burdenſomneſs of ſin, *Rom.* 7. 24. And 'tis well that we can feel that; for there are Multitudes in the world that are paſt feeling, *Iſa.* 6. 9, 10. 'Tis a ſign Chriſt hath ſpoken to thy heart, if ſorrows for ſin begin to load it.

2. Spiritual *Motions* towards Chriſt are a ſign of ſpiritual Life; at leaſt that God is about that quickening work of Faith upon thy Soul: *John* 6. 45. *Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* The effectual voice of God ſets the Soul in motion towards Chriſt; the Will is moving after him; the Deſires are panting for him. The voice of God makes the Soul that hears it, reſtleſs. As for others, their Wills are fix'd, there is no moving of them, *John* 5.40. Now conſider how it is with thee, Reader: Art thou one that art weighing and pondering the terms of the Goſpel, ſtrugling through diſcouragements and temptations to come to Chriſt upon his own terms, lifting up thy heart to him for power to believe, crying with the

Spouſe, *Draw me, I will run after thee?* This is a comfortable ſign Chriſt hath ſpoken to thy heart.

3. A Spirit of Prayer is an Evidence of ſpiritual Life, as the effect of Chriſt's voice to thy Soul. As ſoon as ever Chriſt had ſpoken effectually unto *Paul*'s heart, the firſt effect that appeared in him as a ſign of ſpiritual life, was Prayer-breath, *Acts* 9. 11. *Behold, he prayeth.* God hath no ſtill-born Children. Meaſure thy ſelf by this Rule: Time was when thou couldſt ſay a Prayer, and waſt very well ſatisfied with it, whether thou hadſt any Communion with God in it, or no; but is it ſo ſtill? Is there not a holy reſtleſneſs of ſpirit after God ſince the time that his Word came home to thy heart? Surely thou canſt remember when it was not with thee as it is now.

4. There is a ſpiritual Reliſh, a divine Guſt reſulting from the ſpiritual life, which is alſo evidential of it; *Omnis vita guſtu ducitur.* If God have ſpoken life to thy Soul, there will be in it an agreeable pleaſure and delight in ſpiritual things, *Pſal.* 63. 5. *My Soul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs*, &c. Now thy thoughts can feed with pleaſure upon ſpiritual things, which they nauſeated before.

5. Spiritual *Averſations*, as well as ſpiritual *Inclinations*, ſpeak a ſpiritual life. Every Creature hath an averſation to that which is noxious and deſtructive to it. Now there is nothing ſo deſtructive and dangerous to the ſpiritual life as ſin; that's the deadly poiſon which the renewed Soul dreads, *Pſal.* 19. 13. *Keep back thy ſervant alſo from preſumptuous ſins.* It cries out as a man that finds himſelf upon the brink of a Pit, or edg of a Precipice; *Keep back thy Servant.* Such averſations to ſin, and tremblings under temptations tending thereunto, are a comfortable Sign Chriſt hath ſpoken life to thy Soul.

Laſtly, Heavenly Tendencies and *Propenſions* after God are an excellent ſign thy Soul hath heard his voice, and been quickned with ſpiritual life by it. Sanctification is a Well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life, *John* 4. 24. If thou haſt ſeen the beauty, felt the power, and heard the voice of Chriſt, thy Soul, like an uncentred Body, will be ſtill propending, gravitating, and inclining Chriſt-ward. When thou haſt once heard his effectual Call, *Matth.* 11. 28. *Come unto me*, thy Soul will be continually echoing with the Spouſe, *Rev.* 22. 17. *Come Lord Jeſus. The Spirit and the Bride ſay Come, and let him that heareth, ſay Come.* A ſweeter Sign of thy hearing Chriſt's voice can hardly be found in the Soul of man, than reſtleſs longing to be with Chriſt in a ſtate of perfect freedom from ſin, and full fruition of the beloved and bleſſed Jeſus.

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# SERMON IX.

## Revel. III. 20.

—— *If any Man hear my voice* [ *and open the door* ]

THE powerful Voice of Chriſt is the Key that opens the door of the Soul to receive him. The opening of the Heart to receive Chriſt is the main deſign aimed at in all the external and internal adminiſtrations of the Goſpel and Spirit.

The Goſpel hath two great Deſigns and Intentions. One is, To open the heart of God to men, and to ſhew them the everlaſting Counſels of Grace and Peace which were hid in God from Ages and Generations paſt; that all men may now ſee what God hath been deſigning and contriving for their happineſs in Chriſt before the world was; *Epheſ.* 3. 9. *To make all men ſee what is the fellowſhip of the Myſtery which from the beginning of the World hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt, to the intent that now unto the Principalities and Powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wiſdom of God.* The next Intention and Aim of the Goſpel is to ſet open the heart of man to receive Jeſus Chriſt, without which all the glorious diſcoveries of the eternal Counſels and gracious Contrivances of God for and about us, would ſignifie nothing to our real advantage. Chriſt's ſtanding, knocking, and ſpeaking by his Spirit (of which we have before treated) receive their Succeſs, and attain their End, when the heart opens it ſelf by Faith to receive him, and not till then. Hence note,

Doct. 9. *That the opening of the heart to receive Chriſt by Faith, is the great deſign and aim of the Goſpel.*

This is the Mark to which all the Arrows in the Goſpel-Quiver are levelled; the Center unto which thoſe bleſſed Lines are drawn. *John* 20. 31. *Theſe things are written that you might believe, and believing might have life through his Name.* All thoſe precious Truths that are written in the Scriptures are to bring you to Faith. The great aim of the Spirit in his Illuminations, Convictions, Humiliations, *&c.* are the very ſame thing, *John* 6. 29. *This is the work of God, that you believe.* 'Tis not only *Opus Deo dignum*, a work worthy of ſuch an Author, but it is that on which God's eye is fixed in his workings upon us; the end and aim of his work.

Great Perſons have great Deſigns. This is the glorious object of the great God, and every Perſon in the Godhead is engaged and concerned in it. (1.) The Father hath his hand in this work, and ſuch a hand as without it no heart could ever open or move in the leaſt towards Chriſt: Joh. 6. 44. *No man can come unto me* (ſaith Chriſt) *except my Father, which hath ſent me, draw him.* None but he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, can raiſe up a dead heart unto ſaving Faith in him. (2.) The Son's hand is in this work, he is not only the *Object* but the *Author* of our Faith, 1 *John* 5. 20.

20. *We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God, and eternal life.* (3.) And then for the *Spirit*, he comes from Heaven deſignedly and expreſly to convince Sinners of their need of Chriſt, and beget Faith in them, *John* 16. 9. So that this appears to be the great deſign of Heaven, the drift and level both of the Word and Works of God. Touching this deſign of the Goſpel I ſhall here ſpeak, indeavouring to open this great and glorious project of Heaven in the enſuing Properties of it; which are,

1. *The Greatneſs of it.*
2. *The Difficulty of it.*
3. *The Inſtruments imployed in it.*
4. *The Scope and Aim of it.* And,

Firſt, Of the *Greatneſs* of this deſign of God; we little underſtand what a marvellous thing is done in the Earth, when the heart of a Sinner is brought to cloſe with Chriſt by Faith. It would tranſport us with admiration, did we throughly conſider it. Well may the *Apoſtle* place it in the firſt rank of all the glorious and wonderful works of God, as he doth 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. *Great is the myſtery of Godlineſs, God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World.* Obſerve with what works of wonder Faith is here ranked and aſſociated. It is an aſtoniſhing work of God that ever God ſhould be manifeſted in fleſh, that he that thunders in the Clouds ſhould be heard crying in a Cradle; that he who is over all God bleſſed for ever, ſhould become a man. It is aſtoniſhing that when he was taken down dead from the Croſs, laid in the Sepulcher, and the Stone ſealed upon it; he ſhould riſe on the third day from the dead by his own power: That ever the Goſpel ſhould be preached to ſuch a miſerable and forlorn people as the *Gentiles* were, the ſcorn and contempt of the *Jews*. And no leſs marvelous is it to ſee the hearts of ſuch poor Creatures, glued ſo faſt to Idolatry, ſo perfectly dead in ſin, to open to Chriſt upon ſuch ſelf-denying terms, as to let go all they had in the world for a bleſſed Inheritance which they never ſaw. And were not this a marvelous work of God indeed, there would never be ſuch joy and triumph in Heaven among the holy Angels, as there is upon the opening of every Sinners heart to Chriſt, *Luke* 15. 7. the whole City of God is moved with it. Heaven rings again with the joyful tidings; as ſoon as ever the Will begins to bow and open to Chriſt, the news is quickly in Heaven, and all the Angels of God rejoice at the tidings. As when a young *Prince* is born, the *Conduits* run with Wine, there is Joy in every *City* throughout the Kingdom: So alſo there is in Heaven when Chriſt hath gotten a new habitation in the Soul of any Sinner upon Earth. Moreover, the greatneſs of this deſign appears from the great Rewards promiſed by the Lord to every Servant of his who hath but the leaſt hand to help it on. God would never reward the Inſtruments ſo richly, if the ſucceſs of the work were not of great value in his eyes. The Miniſters of Chriſt may be ill rewarded by men, perſecuted and reproached for their labour; but God will bountifully repay their pains and faithfulneſs: *Dan.* 12. 3. *They that turn many unto righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine as the Stars, and as the brightneſs of the firmament for ever and ever.* All thoſe things beſpeak it a very great and important deſign, upon which the heart of God is much ſet.

Secondly, And then in the next place, as it is an exceeding great and important deſign and work of God, ſo it is a very *hard and difficult work* in it ſelf; a work whoſe difficulties ſurmount the ability of *Angels.* It is certainly a work carried on by the mighty power of God, through the greateſt oppoſitions imaginable. And therefore it is noted, *Rev.* 3. 7. that it is the peculiar Prerogative of Jeſus Chriſt, who only hath the Key of the houſe of *David*, to open the heart of a Sinner by Faith. Men think it is an eaſie thing to believe; but if you conſult the Scriptures, you will quickly be informed how groſly you miſtake the nature of this work. In *Col.* 2. 12. the believing Soul is ſaid to *riſe with Chriſt, through the faith of the operation of God, who raiſed him from the dead.* In the Reſurrection of Chriſt, there was a glorious operation of the power of God indeed; you know it aſtoniſhed the World to hear of it. The very ſame Power that wrought that, muſt alſo be put forth to work this, or elſe it would never be wrought. So again, *Eph.* 2. 8. *By Grace are ye ſaved through faith, and that not of your ſelves, it is the gift of God*; not of your ſelves. You are no more able to believe in Chriſt, than you were to raiſe him from the dead: No more able to come one ſtep towards him by Faith in your own power, than *Lazarus* was able to unbind himſelf in the Grave, and come forth. Yea, in *Eph.* 1. 18, 19, 20. the work of believing is aſcribed unto the exceeding Greatneſs of the power of God. Nothing but Power can do it; no other power but the Almighty power of God can do it: It exceeds the power of Miniſters, yea of Angels. Three things will evince the difficulty of this work, *viz.*

1. *The Nature of it.*
2. *The Subject of it.*
3. *The Enemies of it.*

1. The Nature of the work of Faith, which is wholly ſupernatural; it is no leſs than gaining over the hearty and full conſent of the Will to take Jeſus Chriſt with his yoke of Obedience, *Matth.* 11. 29. and with his Croſs of Sufferings, *Matth.* 16. 24. And how far theſe will carry a man into outward dangers, loſſes, torments, and ſufferings, who can tell? and all this upon the account of an unſeen Happineſs and Glory; deareſt Luſts and Corruptions muſt be mortified, ſweeteſt Pleaſures and Profits in the World abandoned and forſaken, all Reproaches, Loſſes, Pains and Penalties the Devil and the World can lay upon us for Chriſt's ſake, muſt be embraced and welcomed. And can it be ſuppoſed that any power beneath the Almighty Power of the Lord, any voice except the efficacious voice of Chriſt, can prevail with the Will to give its firm explicite conſent to ſuch difficult and ſelf-denying terms as theſe?

2. Conſider the *Subject* wrought upon, *viz.* the dead, hard, obſtinate heart of a blind perverſe ſinner, a heart harder by Nature than the nether Milſtone. It is as eaſie to melt the moſt obdurate Rock into a ſweet Syrup, as it is to melt the heart of a Sinner into penitential ſorrows for ſin. What! to bring a dead heart to life! To make that man bitterly bewail the ſins that were his pleaſure and delight, more than ever he bewailed the death of the neareſt and deareſt Relation in the world! To make a proud heart renounce its

own ſelf-righteouſneſs, which it ſo dotes upon, and take all ſhame and reproach to it ſelf upon the account of ſin! This is wonderful. You would think it a ſtrange thing to ſee the courſe of the Tide ſtopt with the breath of a man; but O what a marvellous thing is here, that at the preaching of the Goſpel by a poor worm, the Lord ſhould turn the Tide of the Will, and thus work about the Soul to a ready compliance with his moſt ſelf-denying terms and propoſals!

3. And that which farther encreaſeth the difficulty of believing is the fierce and obſtinate oppoſition made by the Enemies of Faith. All the powers of Hell and Earth, Devils and Men without us, are confederate and in league with the Corruptions within us, to reſiſt and hinder this work of believing. Never is the Devil more buſie than when Chriſt and the Soul are treating about Union. O the Diſcouragements, Objections and Difficulties that are rolled into the way of Faith! One while it is the higheſt Preſumption; another while it is impoſſible and utterly too late: Sometimes blaſphemous injections like fiery Darts are ſhot reeking hot out of Hell into the Soul; otherwhile the invincible difficulties of Religion are objected, all Loſſes, Torments, *&c.* oppoſed unto this work: The Tempter caſts himſelf into a thouſand ſhapes to hinder the Souls paſſage out of Nature unto Chriſt; ſometimes objecting the greatneſs of ſin, and ſometimes the lapſe and loſs of the proper ſeaſon and opportunity of mercy, together with the want of due *qualifications* to come to Chriſt. Thus, and many other ways, he endeavours to rap off the fingers of Faith from taking hold of Chriſt. And as every Devil in Hell oppoſes this work, ſo every Carnal intereſt we have in the world is an Enemy to Faith. We have Enemies enough within us, as well as without us, both conſpiring together to obſtruct this work: All things increaſe the difficulty of believing.

Thirdly, We are next to ſpeak of the Inſtruments imployed in this great deſign; and theſe are

1. Principal, or
2. Subordinate.

1. The *Principal Inſtrument* in whoſe efficacy the Heart is opened, is *the Spirit of God*, without whom it is impoſſible the deſign ſhould ever proſper; neither Ordinances, Providences, or Miniſters can ſucceſsfully manage it without him. If the Lord will make uſe of any Man for the Converſion and Salvation of anothers Soul, he may rejoice in it; but withal muſt ſay as *Peter* to the Jews, *Acts* 3. 12. *Why look ye ſo earneſtly on us, as though by our own power or holineſs we had made this man to walk?* So may the ableſt Miniſter in the World ſay, when God bleſſes his labours to the converſion of any Soul; Look not upon me, as though by the ſtrength of my reaſon, or power of my gifts, I had opened thy Soul to Chriſt; this is the work of God's Spirit, in whoſe hand I I am an inſtrument, 1 *Cor.* 3. 7. *He that plants is nothing, and he that waters is nothing.* Nothing in himſelf; the very firſt ſtroak of conviction, which is introductive to the whole work of converſion, is juſtly aſcribed to the Spirit; *Joh.* 16. 9. *The Spirit when he cometh ſhall convince the world of ſin.* He is the Lord of all ſanctifying and gracious influences; Ordinances are but as the ſails of a Ship, Miniſters as the Seamen that manage thoſe ſails; the Anchor may be weighed, the ſails ſpread, but when all is done, there is no ſailing till a gale come. We preach, and pray, and you hear; but there is no motion Chriſtward, until the Spirit of God (compared to the wind, *John* 3. 8.) blow upon them; till he illuminate the Underſtanding with divine light, and bow the Will by an Almighty power, there can be no ſpiritual motion Heaven-ward. Now the Spirit of the Lord is a free agent, not tied to means, time or inſtruments: but as at a certain time an Angel came down upon the waters of *Betheſda*, and put a healing virtue into them; ſo it is here: Therefore never come to any Goſpel-Ordinance, without an Eye to the Spirit, on whom all their bleſſing and efficacy depends. O lift up your Hearts for his bleſſing upon the means, as ever you expect ſaving benefits from them.

2. The Subordinate inſtrumental means by which this bleſſed deſign is effectually managed in the World, is the Goſpel-miniſtry. 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. *Who then is* Paul, *and who is* Apollos, *but Miniſters by whom ye believed?* This is the ordinary ſtated method of begetting Faith; and though God hath not tied himſelf to this or that Miniſter, time, or place, yet he hath tied us to a diligent and conſtant attendance upon them: *Rom.* 10. 14. *How then ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how ſhall they hear without a preacher?* I confeſs it ſeems a very unlikely means, a weak and fooliſh method, according to the dictate of corrupt humane wiſdom; yet by the fooliſhneſs of preaching it pleaſes God to ſave them that believe, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. That which the wiſdom of Man derides, God makes effectual unto Salvation. And O how many are there that will have cauſe to bleſs God to all eternity for gifting and ſending ſuch Miniſters among them, whoſe Doctrin the Lord bleſſed unto the converſion of their Souls!

Fourthly, In the next place, let us conſider the ſcope and intention of this great deſign, wherein theſe inſtruments are employed: There are no great deſigns in the World but aim at ſome end to be accompliſhed by them. Now there are two things in the eye and intention of this deſign, which are worthy of it.

1. The *exaltation of his own Grace*, and the riches of his Goodneſs before Angels and Men to all eternity. The Name of God is never made ſo glorious in this World, as it is by bringing over the Hearts of Men and Women to believe. God reaps more glory from the faith of a poor creature that comes to Chriſt empty and weary, than he doth from the other works of his Hands: He hath not the like glory from the Sun, Moon, and Stars, as from ſuch poor creatures, whoſe Hearts open to Jeſus Chriſt under the Goſpel-call. Thus they are fitted to manifeſt the glory of his Grace, *Eph.* 1. 5, 6. *To the praiſe of the glory of his Grace*, &c. God will have his rich and glorious Grace praiſed and admired by Angels and Men for evermore; and every converted Soul is as it were a monument erected unto the praiſe of his Grace. Heaven will ring with praiſes for ever, that the great God would humble himſelf to come into the Heart of a vile ſinner, and dwell and walk therein, as the expreſſion is, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. O this is admirable, that the high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, will take up his dwelling place in a poor contrite ſinner, that trembles at his Word, *Iſa.* 57. 15.

2. The eternal Salvation and Bleſſedneſs of the Soul ſo opened to Chriſt, is alſo the deſign and aim of this work of opening the Heart. *Luke* 19. 9. When the Soul of *Zacheus* was opened by faith, *This day*, ſaith Chriſt, *is ſalvation come to thy houſe.* You do not only believe to the glory of God, but to the Salvation of your own Souls, *Heb.* 10. 39. The opening of our Hearts to Chriſt now, is in order to the opening of Heaven to us hereafter. This is both the *finis operis & operantis*, the end of the work, and intention of the worker. 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. *It pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, to ſave them that do believe.* It preſently puts them into a ſtate of Salvation, though they be not yet actually and compleatly ſaved. There is a neceſſary connection betwixt Converſion and Salvation; though betwixt Converſion and compleat Salvation there may be many groaning hours, ſick and ſad days and nights; but full deliverance from ſin and miſery is ſecured to the Soul in the work of Faith, *Col.* 1. 27. *Chriſt in you is the hope of glory.*

Thus you ſee this great and glorious deſign projected and managed; and that this is the very ſcope, aim, and intention of the whole Goſpel, even the opening the Hearts of ſinners unto Chriſt by faith, will evidently appear by conſidering the ſeveral parts of the Goſpel which have a direct aſpect upon this deſign, and the declared end of the Spirit who is ſent forth to make it effectual to this very end and purpoſe.

1. To this the *Commands* of the Goſpel look; it lies full in the Eye of the preceptive part of the Goſpel, 1 *Joh.* 3. 23. *And this is his commandment, that we ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* And it is a very great encouragement (if rightly conſidered) that Faith is conſtituted a duty by a plain Goſpel-precept; for this cuts off that vain pretence and plea of preſumption; What, ſuch a vile wretch as thou (ſaith Satan) preſume to believe in Chriſt! But this cuts off the plea, Here's a *command* from the higheſt Sovereignty, the contempt whereof Men ſhall anſwer at their utmoſt peril.

2. This alſo is the declared end and ſcope of the Goſpel-*promiſes and threatnings*, whereby the Souls of ſinners are aſſaulted on both ſides. As for *Promiſes*, how are all the ſacred pages of the *Bible* adorned with them, as the Firmament with radiant Stars! Amongſt which that in the Text ſeems to excel in glory, *If any Man open to me, I will come in to him.* Like unto which is that *John* 6. 35, 37. *I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me ſhall never hunger, and he that believeth on me ſhall never thirſt; him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* Such rich and excellent encouragements to faith had never been put into the *promiſes*, but for faiths ſake. And then for Goſpel *threatnings*, though they have a dreadful *ſound*, yet they have a gracious deſign; what a terrible thunder-clap is that, *John* 3. 36. *He that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* To which another Threatning echoes with a like terrible voice, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth not ſhall be damned.* There be dreadful things, you ſee, threatned in the Goſpel againſt unbelievers; but what is the intention of thoſe threatnings, but to ſcare Men out of their unbelief, and carnal ſecurity, unto Chriſt? And thus both the Promiſes and the Threatnings, though of far different natures, conſpire and meet in the ſelf-ſame deſign, even to open the Heart to Chriſt by faith.

3. For the ſake of this deſign all Goſpel-*Ordinances* and *Officers* are inſtituted and appointed, maintained and continued in the World unto this day: Why did Chriſt at his Triumphant Aſcenſion ſhed forth ſuch variety of gifts upon Men, but that God might dwell among them? *Pſal.* 68. 18. *Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led captivity captive; thou haſt received gifts for Men; yea, for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* The whole frame of Goſpel-ordinances is declaredly ſet up for this purpoſe, to bring Men to Chriſt, and build them up in Chriſt, *Eph.* 4. 12.

4. All the Scripture-records of converted ſinners, whoſe Hearts God hath in any age opened, were made for this very purpoſe, to encourage other Souls by their examples to believe in, or open unto Chriſt as they did. For this purpoſe that famous and memorable converſion of *Paul* was graciouſly recorded, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. *Howbeit, for this cauſe I obtained mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, for a pattern to them that ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting.* Never was any Mans Heart bolted and made faſt with ſtronger prejudices againſt Chriſt, than this Mans was; yet the Spirit of the Lord opened it: O how flexible was his will! *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* This gives great encouragement to other ſinners to come in to Chriſt as he did; and therefore when Men ſhall ſee other ſinners receiving Chriſt, and themſelves continue ſtill obſtinate, and unbelieving, thoſe very examples which God hath ſet before their Eyes put a dreadful aggravation upon their unbelief; as you may ſee, *Matth.* 21. 32. *John came unto you in the way of righteouſneſs, and ye believed him not; but the Publicans and Harlots believed him; and ye when ye had ſeen it, repented not afterward, that you might believe him. q. d.* Though you ſaw *Publicans*, reputed the worſt of Men, and *Harlots*, the worſt of Women, convinced, humbled and brought unto faith; yet theſe ſights no way affected your Souls; you never had one ſuch reflection as this, Lord have not I as much need to fly from the wrath to come, and mind the Salvation of my own Soul as theſe? Will it not be a dreadful aggravation of my miſery, that ſuch as theſe ſhould obtain Chriſt and Heaven, and I be ſhut out?

5. To conclude: The opening of the Heart to Chriſt is the very end and errand of the *Spirit of God*, upon whoſe concurrence and bleſſing the ſucceſs of all Ordinances depends; upon this deſign he is ſent expreſly from Heaven, to open the underſtanding and conſciences of ſinners by conviction, *John* 16. 9. For it is not in the power of the Word alone to produce this effect; thouſands of excellent Sermons may be preacht, and not one Heart opened by conviction. He is expreſly ſent to this end and purpoſe. What remains, is the Application of this Point.

### I. *Uſe of Information.*

*Infer.* 1. If the opening of the Heart to Chriſt, be the great and direct intention and end of the Goſpel, *How are they deceived that bleſs themſelves in the attainment of ſome leſſer end and inttentions of the Goſpel, whilſt the great end (the effectual perſwaſion of the Will to Chriſt) is not at all effected upon them!* There are ſome collateral ſtroaks, ſome by-effects, as I may call them, which the Goſpel hath upon Men. It would pity a wiſe conſiderate Man to ſee how poor Souls hug themſelves with a conceited happineſs in theſe leſſer things, whilſt they ſtill ſtick faſt in the ſtate of unregeneracy. I would feign undeceive ſuch miſtaken wretches, who bow down under the power of ſelf-deceit, and that in ſo great and important a Point, in which their eternal Salvation is concerned. There be two things which are exceeding apt to deceive Men in this matter, *viz.*

1. Partial convictions on the Underſtanding.
2. Tranſient motions upon the Affections.

In theſe two things multitudes deceive themſelves, as if the whole deſign of the Goſpel were accompliſhed upon them therein. (1.) Partial Convictions upon the Underſtanding; light and knowledg breaking into the mind, producing orthodoxy of Judgment; this ſeems to be the effectual opening of the Underſtanding to Chriſt, though alas, to this day they never ſaw ſin in its vileneſs, much leſs their own ſpecial ſin; nor Chriſt in his ſutableneſs and neceſſity. People that live under the Goſpel, can hardly avoid the improvement of their Underſtandings by the light that ſhines upon them: Knowledg grows, Parts thrive; theſe inable them to diſcourſe and defend the Points of Religion excellently. Yea, it may be from the ſtrength of theſe Gifts, they can pray with commendable variety and largeneſs of expreſſion: theſe things beget applauſe from Men, and confidence in your ſelves, whilſt all the while no ſaving influences are ſhed down to quicken, change, and ſpiritualize the Heart. (2.) There are tranſient motions and touches of the Goſpel upon the affections, which give ſome Men their melting pangs and moods, now and then under the Word, though it never ſettles into a ſpiritual frame, an habitual heavenlineſs of temper; of ſuch the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *Heb.* 6. 5. And this is the more dangerous, becauſe they now ſeem to have attained all that is eſſential to Religion, or neceſſary to Salvation. For when unto the light of their underſtandings, there ſhall be added melting affections; a Man now ſeems to be compleat in all that the Goſpel requires to the being and conſtitution of a Chriſtian, as a great Divine ſpeaks: for thus poor Souls are apt to reaſon; If I had only light in my mind, and never found any meltings of my affections, I might ſuſpect my ſelf juſtly to be a hypocrite: but there are times when my *affections*, as well as my *underſtanding* ſeem to feel the power of the Goſpel. And yet theſe things may be where the Heart never effectually opens to Chriſt; all this may be but a morning dew, an early cloud that vaniſhes away, as is plain in *John*'s hearers, *John* 5. 35. and in *Paul*'s hearers, *Gal.* 1. 14, 15. For except the convictions upon the underſtanding be particular, and effectual, and the motions upon the affections ſetled to a heavenly habit and temper; the Man is but where he was before, as to the real ſtate and condition of his Soul. Were thy underſtanding ſo convinced of the evil nature and dreadful conſequences of ſin, and thy Affections and Will thereupon ſo effectually determined to chooſe and embrace the Lord Jeſus upon a conſiderate and through examination of his own Terms and Articles propounded in the Goſpel; then thou mighteſt conclude the great deſign of it were accompliſhed upon thy Soul: but to reſt in general *convictions*, and tranſient *affections* without this, is but to mock and deceive thy own Soul. Alas, this comes not home to the main end of the Goſpel.

*Mr.* A. Burgeſs *in his* Spiritual Refining.

*Infer.* 2. Learn from hence the prodigious ſtubbornneſs and hardneſs of the Heartss of Men living daily under the Goſpel, which ſtill reſiſt it, though it bear upon them in part of it.

You have heard how all its *commands*, *promiſes*, *threatnings* and *examples*, bear directly and jointly upon the Hearts of ſinners, to get open the Will to Chriſt. And yet how few are there comparatively that obey and anſwer this great deſign of it! All theſe are like Heavens great *Artillery* planted againſt the unbelief and ſtubbornneſs of the Hearts of Men, to batter down their carnal reaſonings, overthrow their vain hopes, and open a fair paſſage for Chriſt into their Soul. 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. 5. *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts it ſelf againſt the knowledg of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.* If a Mount be raiſed, and many *Cannon* planted thereon, and all play'd againſt the wall of a *Fort*, thouſands of ſhots made, and yet no breach, not one ſtone moved out of its place; you will ſay that's a ſtrong Wall indeed. Beloved, God hath, as I may ſay, raiſed a Mount in the Goſpel, planted the great Ordnance of Heaven upon it, diſcharged many dreadful vollies of threatnings; nay he hath, as it were, come under the walls of the unbelieving Soul, with terms of grace and mercy, and yet no opening; O prodigious obſtinacy! *We have piped unto you, but ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, but ye have not lamented*, Mat. 11. 17. Neither the ſweet Airs of Goſpel-Grace, nor the dreadful thunders of the Law make any impreſſion upon you. O what an obdurate Rock is the Heart by nature! Certainly every Chriſtian may ſee enough in others, and find enough in himſelf, without the help of other Books, to confute the *Arminian* Doctrin, which ſo extols and flatters the Nature of man. It is as poſſible to make an impreſſion with your finger upon a wall of braſs, as for the beſt Sermon in the world in its own ſtrength, to make an effectual ſaving impreſſion upon a ſinners Will.

*Infer.* 3. Is it the great deſign of the Goſpel to open the hearts of men to Chriſt? *then wonder not that it meets with ſuch ſtrong and fierce oppoſition from Satan wherever it is ſincerely and powerfully preached.* As for general and formal preaching, which comes not to the quick, the *Devil* is not ſo much concerned about it; he knows it will do him no great damage; nay, it faſtens and ſecures his intereſt in the Souls of men. But wherever the Goſpel comes with ſpirit and power, laying the Ax to the Root, ſhewing men the vanity of their ungrounded hopes, preſſing the neceſſity of Regeneration and Faith, this preaching quickly gives an alarm to Hell, and raiſes all manner of oppoſition againſt it. *What is it to preach the Goſpel*, ſaid *Luther*, *but to derive the rage and fury of the whole world upon us?* Satan is the God of this world, all men by Nature are his born Subjects: No Prince on earth is more jealous of the revolt of his Subjects than he; and it's time for him to beſtir himſelf when the Goſpel comes to dethrone him, as it doth in the faithful preaching of it, *John.* 12. 31. *Now is the Judgment of this world, now ſhall the Prince of this world be caſt out.* Now he falls as Lightning from Heaven, *Luke* 10. 18. Now Sinners are made ſenſible of the cruel tyranny and bondage of Satan's Government, and of the glorious liberty offered to them by Jeſus Chriſt. Satan ſuſpecting the Iſſue of theſe things, beſtirs himſelf to purpoſe. O what ſhowers of Calumnies, and ſtorms of Perſecution doth he pour upon the Names and Perſons of Chriſt's faithful Ambaſſadors! Certainly he owes Chriſt's Miniſters a ſpite, and they ſhall know and feel it, if ever he get them within the compaſs of his Chain. But let this diſcourage none imployed in this glorious deſign; the Lord is with them to protect their perſons, and reward their diligence.

*Infer.* 4. If the opening of the heart be the main deſign of the Goſpel, *then Chriſt and Faith ought to be the principal Subjects that Miniſters ſhould inſiſt on among their people.*

There are many other uſeful Doctrins, which may and ought to be opened and preſt in their time and place. Moral duties, *&c.* have their excellencies; but *Chriſt* and *Faith* are the great things we are to preach. Let men be once brought to Chriſt, and the reſt will follow; but to begin and end with *Morality* will never make men Goſpel Chriſtians. Grace teaches *Morality*, *Titus* 2. 11. but *Morality* without Grace ſaves no man. I doubt not but it has been a grand Artifice of the *Devil* to confound *Grace* with *Morality*, and make men believe that nothing more is requir'd unto mens ſalvation but a *civil ſober converſation* in the world, and ſo lay by the principal part of the Goſpel, which opens and preſſes the neceſſity of Regeneration, Repentance, and Faith in the Blood of Chriſt. Such preaching as this anſwers not the end and deſign of Chriſt in the converſion of Souls; ſuch toothleſs preaching diſturbs not the Conſciences of men; the Lord help all his *Ambaſſadors* to mind the Example and Charge of their *Redeemer*, and laying aſide all carnal intereſt, to apply themſelves faithfully unto the Souls and Conſciences of their hearers, *not as men-pleaſers, but as the ſervants of Chriſt.*

### II. *Uſe of Conviction.*

In the next place, This Doctrin is of excellent uſe to convince men of the dreadful damning nature of the ſin of Unbelief: A ſin which defeats and fruſtrates the main deſign of the bleſſed Goſpel of Chriſt on the Unbelievers Soul.

This is the ſin that keeps the heart faſt ſhut againſt him. As Faith is the *radical Grace*, ſo Unbelief is the *radical Sin*. What ſhall I ſay of it? it is the *Traitors Gate* through which thoſe Souls paſs that are to periſh for ever. The Goſpel can do you no good, the Blood of Chriſt can yield you no ſaving benefit, whilſt your Souls remain under the dominion and power of this ſin. When we conſider the mighty Arguments of the Goſpel, we may wonder that all that hear them are not immediately perſwaded to Chriſt by them. And on the other ſide, when we conſider the mighty power of Unbelief, how ſtrongly it holds the Soul in bondage to ſin; we may admire that any Soul is brought over to Chriſt by the Goſpel. It was not without cauſe that the *Apoſtle* puts Faith in Chriſt among the great Myſteries and Wonders of the Goſpel, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. Now the intrinſick evil and fearful conſequences of this ſin of Unbelief will appear in theſe following particulars.

1. Unbelief fixes the guilt of all other ſins on the perſon of the Unbeliever; it binds them all faſt upon his Soul, *John* 8. 24. *For if ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins.* Die in thy ſins man! it were better for thee to die in a Ditch. What more terrible can God threaten, or man feel? This is the ſin that makes *the death of Chriſt of none effect to us*, Gal. 5. 4. There is indeed a ſovereign virtue in the Blood of Chriſt to pardon ſin, but thy Soul cannot have the benefit of it while it remains under the dominion of this ſin. As it was ſaid of the miraculous works of Chriſt, *He could do no mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief*, Matth. 13. 58. ſo none of his ſpiritual works, no ordinances can do thy Soul good till the Lord break the power of this ſin: *Hebr.* 4. 2. *The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.* If a man were dangerouſly ſick, or wounded, the richeſt *Cordial* or moſt ſovereign *Plaiſters* in the world can never recover him, unleſs received and applied. Unbelief ſpills the moſt ſovereign Cordials of the Goſpel, as Water upon the ground. The greateſt ſins that ever thou committedſt might be pardoned, did not this ſin lie in the way; were this gone, all the reſt were gone too; but whilſt Unbelief remains, they alſo remain upon thee.

2. Of all the ſins that are upon the Souls of men, this is the moſt difficult ſin to be removed and cured: Other ſins lie more open to conviction, but this hath the moſt ſpecious pretences to countenance and defend it. Men commit this ſin out of a fear of ſin. They will not *believe*, leſt they ſhould *preſume*: They dare not believe becauſe they are not *qualified*. The ſtrength of other ſins meets in this ſin of Unbelief: it is the ſtrongeſt Port wherein Satan truſteth. Take an Adulterer, or a profane Swearer, and you have a fair open way to convince him of his ſin: ſhew him the Command he hath violated, and he hath nothing to ſay in his own defence; but the Unbeliever hath a thouſand plauſible defences.

3. This is the great damning ſin of the world. I do not ſay but all other ſins deſerve damnation, (for *the wages of ſin is death*) but this is the ſin in the virtue whereof other ſins damn and ruin the Soul. *This is the Condemnation*, John 3. 19. And as it is a damning ſin, ſo it is a ſin which damns with aggravated damnation, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 8. O then let us mourn over, and tremble at this dreadful ſin, which oppoſes and ſo often fruſtrates the great deſign and main end of the whole Goſpel.

### III. *Uſe for Exhortation.*

Is it the main ſcope of the Goſpel to bring men to Chriſt by Faith? *then be perſwaded heartily to comply with this great deſign of the Father, Son, and Spirit, Miniſters, Ordinances, and Providences, in opening your hearts to receive Chriſt this day by Faith unfeigned.*

And O that I could ſutably preſs this great Point, which falls in ſo directly with the main ſtream and ſcope of the whole Goſpel: And O that whilſt I am preſſing it, you would lift up a hearty cry to Heaven, *Lord give me faith whatever elſe thou deny me; open my heart to Chriſt under the Goſpel-Calls.* I do not only preſs you to a general and common aſſent to the Truths of the Goſpel, *that Chriſt is come in the fleſh, and laid down his life for ſinners*; but unto *a hearty Evangelical conſent to receive him upon Goſpel-terms*; *to cloſe with him in all his Offices, ſubjecting heart and*

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*life unto his Authority, living entirely upon him for righteouſneſs, and to him by holineſs.* The value of ſuch a Faith as this, is above all eſtimation. For (1.) this is the Grace which God hath dignified, and crowned with Glory and Honour above all its fellow-Graces. Its ſingular Praiſes and Encomiums are in all the Scriptures. This is called *precious faith*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. *Soul-enriching faith*, *James* 2. 5. That's a miſerable poor Soul indeed that is deſtitute of it, whatever the Largeſſes of Providence have been to him. And he is truly rich, to whom God hath given Faith, whatever he hath denied him of the comforts of this life. This Chriſt calls the work of God, *John* 6. 29. *This is the work of God, that you believe.* Why ſo are all other things that your eyes behold, they are the works of God; the Earth, the Sea, the Sun, Moon and Stars, they are his handy-work. True, they are ſo; but this is *the work*, the moſt eminent, glorious, and admirable work of God, *ſine pari*, excelling all his other works which your eyes behold. And (2.) that which exalts and dignifies it, not only above all the works of God's hands, but even above its fellow-Graces, the works of his Spirit, is that high Office unto which it is appointed in the juſtification of a Sinner. God hath ſingled out this Grace from among all the other Graces, to be the inſtrument of receiving and applying the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for the juſtification of a guilty Soul, *Rom.* 5. 1. You are never ſaid to be juſtified by Love, Hope or Deſire, but by Faith. 'Tis true, all other Graces are ſuppoſed in the perſon juſtified, but none apprehends and applies the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for juſtification, but this only. And the juſtifying act of faith being a receiving act, the Glory of God is therein ſecured; *therefore it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace.* (3.) The Grace of Faith, which I am recommending to you this day, is not only the inſtrument of your Juſtification, but it is alſo the bond of your union with Chriſt: *Eph.* 3. 17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by Faith.* 'Tis the uniting Grace, the Marriage-Knot, 'tis that which gives intereſt in, and title to the Perſon and benefits of Chriſt; the great thing upon which the eyes of all the awakened world are intently and ſolicitouſly fixed. Whatever apprehenſions you have of an intereſt in Chriſt, and whatever his benefits be worth in your eyes; neither himſelf, nor them can ever be obtained without Faith. O Brethren, there is a day coming, when they that now ſlight and neglect this intereſt and concern of their Souls, would gladly part with ten thouſand worlds for a good title to Chriſt, could it be purchaſed therewith: But it is Faith, and nothing without Faith, that intitles you to Chriſt, and to his benefits. (4.) That which ſhould yet more endear this Grace of Faith to you is this, that it is the *hand* which receives your pardon from the hand of Chriſt, the Meſſenger that brings a ſealed Pardon to a trembling Sinner. *Acts* 10. 43. *And by him all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes.* Cleared of all thoſe ſins from which the Law could never clear them, nor any Repentance, Reſtitution, or Obedience of their own without Faith. O what a welcom Meſſenger is Faith, and what joyful tidings doth it bring! you would ſay ſo, if ever you had felt the efficacy of the Law upon your Conſciences; if ever you had lain, as ſome ſinners have, with a ~~cold ſweating~~ horror upon your panting boſoms, under the apprehenſions of the wrath of God. This fruit of Faith is rather to be admired than expreſt, *Pſal.* 32. 1. (5.) Faith is not only the Meſſenger that brings you a Pardon from Heaven, but it is, as I may ſay, that heavenly *Herald* that publiſhes Peace in the Soul of a Sinner. O *Peace*, how ſweet a word art thou! how welcom to a poor condemned Sinner! *Beautiful upon the Mountains are the feet of them that publiſh peace.* Now 'tis faith that brings this bleſſed News, and publiſhes it in the Soul, without which all the publiſhers of peace without us, can adminiſter but little ſupport, *Rom.* 5. 1. Faith brings the Soul out of the Storms and Tempeſts with which it was toſſed, into a ſweet Reſt and Calm, *Hebr.* 4. 3. *We which have believed do enter into Reſt.* Is the quiet Harbour welcom to poor weather-beaten Seamen after they have paſt furious ſtorms and many fears upon the raging Sea? O how welcom then muſt Peace be to that Soul that hath been toſſed upon the tempeſtuous Ocean of its own fears and terrours, blown up and incenſed by the terrible blaſts of the Law and Conſcience? It was a comfortable ſight to *Noah* and his Family to ſee an *Olive-leaf* in the mouth of the *Dove*, by which they knew the waters were abated. But O, what is it to hear ſuch a voice as this from the mouth of Faith! *Fury is not in me*, ſaith the Lord; his anger is turned away, and he comforteth thee. Fear not thou poor tempeſtuous Soul, the God of Peace is thy God. (6.) Faith doth not only bring the tempeſtuous Soul into a Calm, but it is the Grace alſo which opens to the Soul a door of acceſs into the gracious preſence of God; without it there is no coming to him acceptably, *Hebr.* 11. 6. *He that cometh unto God muſt believe.* This liberty and acceſs to God is indeed the purchaſe of the Blood of Chriſt; he procur'd it at a great Sum: But Faith is the Grace that brings the Soul actually into the preſence of God, and there helps it to open and eaſe its griefs, and with liberty of Speech to diſcover all its grievances, fears, and burdens to the Lord. And truly, this world were not worth the living in, without ſuch a bleſſed vent to our troubles as this is. The Believer only hath gotten the key that opens the door of acceſs unto God; if he have any ſins, wants, burdens, afflictions, temptations, *&c.* here he can eaſe them. Ah Chriſtian, the time may come when thy heart may be filled with ſorrows to the brim, and there may not be found a perſon of thy acquaintance in all the world, to whom thou canſt turn to eaſe thy ſorrows, or give vent to thy troubles. Now bleſſed be God for Faith. O the eaſe one act of Faith gives a troubled Soul, which is like Bottles full of new Wine, and muſt either vent or break! Well may it be ſaid, *The Juſt ſhall live by Faith*; how can we imagine we ſhould live without it? Certainly our Afflictions and Temptations would ſwallow us up, were it not for the ſweet aſſiduous reliefs that come in by Faith. (7.) And yet farther to enflame your deſires after Faith, this is the Grace that gives you the Soul-reviving ſights of the inviſible world, without which this world would be a dungeon to us, *Heb.* 11. 1. 'Tis not only the ſubſtance of things hoped for, but the evidence of things not ſeen. O 'tis a precious Eye; how tranſporting are thoſe viſions of Faith! 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Whom having not ſeen we love, whom tho now we ſee him not, yet believing we rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* We that preach of

Heaven to you, cannot ſhew you the glorious Perſon of Chriſt there, nor the Thrones, Crowns, and Palms that are above; but Faith can make theſe things viſible. That's an Eye that can penetrate the Clouds, and ſhew you him that is inviſible, *Heb.* 11. 27. (8.) The Grace of faith, which I am recommending to you this day, is inſtrumentally the livelihood of your Souls in this World, *Hab.* 2. 4. *The juſt ſhall live by his faith.* When God gives a Soul faith, he gives it him for a livelihood, and expects he ſhould keep houſe upon it, while he is in this World; and God reckons he hath made plentiful proviſion for your Souls, when he hath given them faith, and furniſhed out ſuch variety of precious promiſes for your faith to feed upon. *Abraham, Moſes, David,* and all the Saints kept houſe upon no other proviſion but what Faith brought in; and at what a high and excellent rate did they live? Here Man eateth Angels food. 'Tis a ſtore-houſe of *Proviſion,* [redacted] : *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed,* Pſal. 27. 13. A believer lives the higheſt life of all Men upon earth; and as the believers Soul is daily fed by faith, ſo all the other graces in his Soul are maintained and daily ſupported by the proviſions faith brings them in. The other graces (as one ſaith) like the young birds in the neſt, live upon that proviſion this Grace of faith gathers for them, and puts into their mouths. Take away faith, and you quickly ſtarve the Soul of a Chriſtian; will not all this engage your deſires after faith? Why then (9.) conſider this is the Grace whereby we die ſafely, as well as live comfortably; as you cannot live comfortably without it in this World, ſo neither can you die ſafely or comfortably without it when you go out of this World: *Heb.* 11. 13. *Theſe all died in faith, not having received the promiſes; but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſwaded of them, and embraced them.* Mark here, how theſe excellent perſons died; they all died embracing the promiſes in the arms of their faith. An alluſion to two dear friends, [redacted]r at their parting. O precious promiſes, ſaith the dying believer; of what unſpeakable uſe and benefit have you been to me all the days of my pilgrimage! You are they to whom I was wont to turn in all my troubles and diſtreſſes; but I am now going into the life of immediate Viſion: farewel bleſſed Promiſes, Scriptures, Ordinances and Communion of imperfect Saints; I ſhall walk no more by faith, but by ſight. (10.) In a word, and that a great word too; this is the Grace that ſaves you, *Eph.* 2. 8. *By grace are you ſaved, through faith.* Your ſalvation is the fruit of free grace; but Grace it ſelf will not ſave you in any other method, but that of believing. The grace of God runs down through the channel of faith; Faith is the grace that eſpouſes your Soul to Chriſt here, and accompanies it every ſtep of the way until it come to its full enjoyment in Heaven, and then is ſwallowed up in viſion. It *embarques* you with Chriſt, and *pilots* you through the dangerous Seas, till you drop Anchor in the Haven of everlaſting reſt and ſafety; where you receive the end of your faith, the ſalvation of your Souls. O then in conſideration of the incomparable worth, and abſolute neceſſity of this precious grace, make it your great ſtudy, make it your conſtant cry to Heaven night and day; Lord give me a believing Heart, an opening Heart to Jeſus Chriſt. If you fail of this, you come ſhort of the great end and deſign of the whole Goſpel, which is to bring you to Faith, and by faith to Heaven.

# SERMON X.

## Revel. III. 20.

—— *If any Man hear my voice, and open the door,* [*I will come in to him, and ſup with him.*]

IN the former Sermons we have conſidered Chriſt's ſuit for a ſinners Heart; we now come to the powerful Arguments and Motives uſed by him to obtain his ſuit, which are two:

1. Union, *I will come in to him, and ſup with him.*
2. Communion, *and he with me.*

Theſe are ſtrong and mighty arguments, and encouragements, able one would think to open any Heart in the World to Chriſt; and yet conſidering how faſt the Hearts of Men are glued to their luſts, fixed and riveted in their ſins until the Spirit come upon them with powerful convictions; and when under conviction, what mighty diſcouragements they labour under from their former ſinfulneſs and preſent unworthineſs: all this is little enough to bring them to faith; nay, in it ſelf utterly inſufficient without the Almighty Power ſecond and ſet them home with effect on the Heart; for it is not mere *moral ſuaſion* will do the work. 'Tis true, Chriſt will not make a forcible entrance into the Soul, he will come in by the conſent of the Will; but the Will conſents not, till it feel the power of God upon it, *Pſal.* 110. 3. Almighty Power opens the Heart, and determins the Will, but ſtill in a way congruous to the nature of the Will, *Hoſ.* 11. 4. *I drew them with the cords of a man, with the bands of love.* When under the influence of this power the Soul opens unto Chriſt, he will come in, take that Soul for his everlaſting habitation; refreſh and feaſt it with the ſweeteſt conſolations and privileges, purchaſed by his Blood: whence the Tenth Obſervation is,

**Doct. 10.** *That Chriſt will certainly come into the Soul that opens to him; and will not come empty* *ty handed, but will bring rich entertainment with him. I will come in to him, and ſup with him.*

When the *Prodigal* (the *Emblem* of a convert) returned to his Father, *Luke* 15. 22. his Father not only received, but adorned and feaſted him. In opening this Point, I ſhall ſhew,

Firſt, *What Chriſt's coming in to the Soul intends.*

Secondly, *How it appears Chriſt will come into the opening Soul.*

Thirdly, *What that rich entertainment is he brings with him.*

Fourthly, *Why he thus entertains the Soul that receives him and opens to him.*

Firſt, *What Chriſt's coming into the Soul intends*; and in general I muſt ſay, this is a great myſtery, which will not be fully underſtood till we come to Heaven, *John* 14. 20. *At that day you ſhall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.* Then the *eſſential union* of Chriſt and his Father, and the *myſtical union* between believers and Chriſt will be more clearly underſtood, than we are capable to underſtand them in this imperfect ſtate: yet for preſent ſo much is diſcovered as may juſtly aſtoniſh poor ſinners at the marvellous condeſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus to them. More particularly, this expreſſion, *I will come in to him*, imports no leſs than his uniting ſuch a Soul to himſelf; for he comes in with a deſign to dwell in that Soul by faith, *Eph.* 3. 17. to make ſuch a man a myſtical member of his body, fleſh and bones, *Eph.* 5. 30. which is the higheſt honour the Soul of Man is capable of. Indeed this coming of Chriſt into the Soul of a ſinner doth not make him one *perſon* with Chriſt, that is the ſingular honour to which our Nature is advanced by the *Hypoſtatical union*; but this makes a perſon myſtically one with Chriſt, and tho it be beneath the *Hypoſtical Union*, yet it is more than a mere *Federal Union*. Chriſt's coming into the Soul ſignifies more than his coming into Covenant with it, for it is the taking of ſuch a perſon into a myſtical Union with himſelf by the imparting of his Spirit unto him. As the vital ſap of the ſtock coming into the graft, makes it one with the ſtock, *John* 15. 5. ſo the coming of Chriſt's Spirit into the Soul makes it a member of his myſtical body; and this is a glorious ſupernatural work of God, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. moſt honorable, moſt comfortable, and for ever ſure and indiſſoluble; as I have elſewhere more fully ſhewed.

*Method of Grace*, P. 25.

Secondly, I ſhall evidence the truth and certainty of this moſt comfortable point, that Chriſt will come in, and that with ſingular refreſhments and comforts, to every Soul that hears his voice, and opens to him. No preſent unworthineſs, or former rebellions ſhall bar out Chriſt, or obſtruct his entrance into ſuch a Soul. Whatever thou haſt been, or done; all that notwithſtanding, Chriſt will come into thee, and dwell with thee, and make thy Soul an habitation for himſelf thro the Spirit, *Eph.* 2. 22. I ſay, let thy Heart but open to him, and he will both fill and feaſt thee, with *a non obſtante*, as to all thy former miſcarriages.

I know it is the common diſcouragement that multitudes of convinced humbled ſinners lie under, who ſeeing ſo much vileneſs in their natures, and practices, cannot be perſwaded that ever the Lord Jeſus will caſt an Eye of favour on them, much leſs take up his abode in them. What, dwell in ſuch a Heart as mine, which hath been an habitation of Devils, a ſink, a puddle of ſin from my beginning! This is hard to be believed; but ſinner, thou haſt the word of a King from Heaven for it, a word whoſe credit was never crackt or ſtained from the firſt moment it was ſpoken, that whatever thy former or preſent vileneſs or unworthineſs hath been, or is, he will not be ſhy of ſuch a Soul as thou art, if thou be but willing to open to him; thy great unworthineſs ſhall be no bar to his union with thee: *If any man open, I will come in to him, &c.* For,

1. If perſonal unworthineſs were ſufficient to bar Chriſt out of thy Soul, it would equally bar him out of all the Souls in the World; for all are unworthy as well as thy ſelf. Wherever Chriſt finds ſinfulneſs, he finds unworthineſs; and to be ſure he finds this wherever he comes. Chriſt never expected to find worthineſs in thee, but it highly pleaſes him to find thee under a becoming ſenſe of thy perſonal unworthineſs, *Jer.* 3. 13. *Only acknowledg thine iniquity, that thou haſt transgreſt againſt the Lord thy God*, &c. The returning Prodigal acknowledged to his Father, *I am not worthy to be called thy Son*, Luke 15. 18, 19. But this did not bar his acceſs to, or hinder his acceptance by his Father. All that come to God to be juſtified, muſt ſee and confeſs their own vileneſs, and come to him as one that juſtifieth the ungodly, *Rom.* 4. 5.

2. Thy former vileneſs and preſent unworthineſs can be no bar to Chriſt's entrance, becauſe it can be no *ſurprize* to him. He knew thou waſt an unworthy Soul when he made the firſt overture of grace and reconciliation to thee; and if thy unworthineſs hindred not the beginning of his treaty with thee, it ſhall not hinder the cloſing and finiſhing act thereof in his union with thee. *I knew that thou waſt a tranſgreſſor from the womb*, Iſa. 48. 8.

3. Chriſt never yet came into any Soul where Satan had not the poſſeſſion before him. Every Soul in which Chriſt now dwels, was once in Satans power and poſſeſſion. *Acts* 26. 18. *To turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God.* So Luke 11. 21, 22. *When a ſtrong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a ſtronger than he ſhall come upon him, and overcome him; he taketh from him all his armour wherein he truſted, and divideth his ſpoil.*

4. Thy preſent vileneſs and unworthineſs can be no bar to Chriſt's entrance into thy Soul, becauſe Chriſt never yet objected to any man his *unworthineſs*, but his *unwillingneſs* to come unto him, *John* 5. 40. *You will not come unto me, that you might have life.* And again, *Matth.* 23. 37. *How oft would I have gathered thy Children, and ye would not?* Indeed, you find ſomething like a repulſe from Chriſt to that poor *Cananiteſs*, *Mat.* 15. 24, 26. *Lord help me*, ſaid that poor diſtreſſed Soul; *but he anſwered and ſaid, It is not meet to take the childrens bread, and caſt it to dogs.* However harſhly and diſcouragingly theſe words ſound, yet certainly it was none of Chriſt's intent to damp and diſcourage her faith, but to draw it forth to a more excellent and intenſe degree; which effect it obtained, *verſ.* 27.

5. Neither would Chriſt have made the tenders of mercy ſo large and indefinite, had he intended to have ſhut out any Soul upon the ſingle account

of perſonal unworthineſs, provided it be but willing to come unto him. Caſt thine Eye, poor diſcouraged Soul, upon Chriſt's invitations and proclamations of Grace and Mercy in the Goſpel, and ſee if thou canſt find any thing beſide unwillingneſs, as a bar betwixt thee and mercy; hearken to that voice of mercy, *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price,* (*i. e.*) without perſonal deſert, or worthineſs. So again, *Rev.* 22. 17. *The Spirit and the Bride ſay come, and let him that is athirſt come; and whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* Here you ſee perſonal vileneſs and unworthineſs is no obſtacle in the way of Chriſt. Once more, ſee *John* 7. 37. *In the laſt day, that great day of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cried, ſaying, If any man thirſt, let him come to me and drink.* Thus you ſee what Chriſt's coming into the Soul is, and what evidences there are, that when once the Soul is made truly willing, Chriſt will certainly come in to it; and no former vileneſs or preſent unworthineſs ſhall be a bar to obſtruct his entrance.

Thirdly, In the next place I ſhall ſhew you, That when Chriſt comes into the Soul he will not come empty handed. 'Tis Chriſt's *marriage-day*, and he will make it a good day, a feſtival day; bringing ſuch comforts along with him, as the Soul never taſted before; he ſpreads as it were a Table, furniſhes it with the delicates of Heaven: *I will ſup with him*, ſaith the Text. What thoſe Spiritual mercies are which Chriſt brings along with him to the opening willing Soul, come next in order to be ſpoken to. And,

1. When Chriſt comes into the Soul of a ſinner, he brings a *Pardon* with him, a full, a free, and a final pardon of all the ſins that ever that Soul committed. This is a feaſt of it ſelf, good cheer indeed: Chriſt thought it to be ſo when he told the poor Palſy man, *Mat.* 9. 2. *Son be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee.* He doth not ſay, Be of good cheer, thy Palſy is cured, thy body recovered from the grave; but *be of good cheer, thy ſins are pardoned.* O how ſweetly may the pardoned Soul feed upon this! And this is not any peculiar mercy, deſigned for ſome ſpecial favorites, but what is common to all believers, *Acts* 13. 43. *By him all that believe, are juſtified from all things.* Chriſt and Pardon come together; and without a pardon no other mercy would reliſh; no feaſt, no muſick, no money, or honour, have any ſavour or comfort with them to a condemned man; but the comfort of a pardon reaches to the very Heart, *Iſa.* 40. 1, 2. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, ſaith the Lord; ſpeak comfortably to* Jeruſalem, or as in the Hebrew, *ſpeak to the heart of* Jeruſalem. But what are the ingredients of that cordial that will comfort *Jeruſalems* Heart? Why, *Say unto her that her iniquities are pardoned*; that carries along with it the Spirit of all conſolation.

And there are three things in the pardon of ſin that make it the ſweeteſt mercy that ever the Soul taſted; comfort which is impoſſible to be communicated to another, with the ſame ſenſe that the pardoned Soul hath of it, *Rev.* 2. 17.

(1.) That which makes the pardon of ſin raviſhingly ſweet, is the *trouble* that went before it. The labourings and reſtleſs toſſings of the troubled Soul, which were antecedent to this pardon, make the eaſe and peace that follows by it incomparably ſweet. As the bitterneſs of Hell was taſted in the ſorrows of ſin, ſo the ſweetneſs of Heaven is taſted in the pardon of it.

(2.) The nature of the mercy it ſelf is incomparably ſweet; for it is a mercy of the firſt rank; Pardon is ſuch a mercy as admits no comfort to come before it, nor any juſt cauſe of diſcouragement can follow after it. If God hath not ſpoken pardon to the Soul, it can have no ſetled ground for joy, *Ezek.* 33. 10. And if he have, there can be no juſt ground for dejection, whatever the troubles be that lie upon it. *Iſa.* 33. 24. *The inhabitants ſhall not ſay, I am ſick: the people that dwell therein ſhall be forgiven their iniquities.*

(3.) The third thing that makes this mercy delicious, and raviſhingly ſweet to the Soul, are the properties of it, which are four. (1.) God writes upon thy pardon *Frank*; 'tis a free mercy, which coſt thee nothing, *Rom.* 3. 24. *Being juſtified freely by his grace. Thou haſt bought me no ſweet Cane with money, yet I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſion for my own names ſake.* (2.) God writes upon thy pardon *full*, as well as *free*; the pardon extends to all the ſins that ever thou committedſt, *Acts* 13. 43. *By him all that believe, are juſtified from all things.* The ſins of thy nature, and practice; the ſins of thy youth, and age; great ſins, and leſſer ſins, are all comprehended within thy pardon. Thou art acquitted not from one, but from all! Certainly, the joy of Heaven muſt come down in the mercy of remiſſion. O what a feaſt of fat things with marrow, is this ſingle mercy, a pardon free without price, full without exception! And then (3.) it's *final*, without revocation; the pardoned Soul never more comes into condemnation: *Thine iniquities ar removed from thee as far as the Eaſt is from the Weſt.* As thoſe two oppoſite points of Heaven can never meet, ſo the pardoned Soul and its pardoned Sins can never more meet unto condemnation, *Pſal.* 103. 12. (4.) God writes upon the pardon another word, as ſweet as any of the reſt, and that is *ſure.* 'Tis a ſtanding mercy never to be recall'd, vacated or annulled, *Rom.* 8. 33, 34, 35. The challenge is ſent to Hell and Earth, Men and Devils; *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? 'Tis God that juſtifies, who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died,* &c. Who can arreſt when the Creditor diſchargeth? Who can ſue the bond, when the debt is paid? *'Tis Chriſt that died.* The Table is ſpread, and the firſt mercy ſerved in, is the pardon of ſin. *Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.* Now the labouring Conſcience that rolled and toſſed upon the waves of a thouſand fears, may drop Anchor, and ride quiet in the pacific Sea of a pardoned State. What joy muſt ſtream through the Conſcience, when the ſweetneſs of that Scripture, *Rom.* 8. 1. ſhall be preſſed into thy cup of Conſolation! The pardoned Soul may ſpeak and think of Death and Judgment without conſternation; yea, may look upon it *as a time of refreſhing from the preſence of the Lord,* Acts 3. 19. This is heavenly Manna, the ſweetneſs of it ſwallows up all expreſſion, all conceptions; no words, no thoughts can comprehend the riches of this mercy.

2. And yet this is not all, behold another mercy in conſequence unto this, brought in to refreſh and cheer the conſenting Soul, and that is

peace with God. Pardon and Peace go together, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God.* Peace is a word of a vaſt comprehenſion; Peace in the language of the Old Teſtament, comprehends all Temporal good things, 1 *Sam.* 25. 6. And Peace in the New Teſtament, comprehends all Spiritual mercies, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 16. the bleſſings of Heaven and Earth are wrapt up in this word. The Soul that opens to Chriſt hath peace of reconciliation in Heaven, the enmity that was betwixt God and that Soul is taken away through the blood of Chriſt, *Iſa.* 12. 1, 2. *O Lord, I will praiſe thee; tho thou waſt angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comforteſt me.* This muſt be an invaluable mercy, for the purchaſe of it coſt the blood of Chriſt, *Iſa.* 53. 5. *The chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him.* He made peace by the Blood of his Croſs, *Col.* 1. 20. and this peace of reconciliation is ſettled by Chriſt upon a firm foundation. His Blood gives it a more firm and ſteady baſis and foundation than that of the Hills and Mountains, *Iſa.* 54. 10. And that which makes it ſo firm and ſure, is the *Advocateſhip* of Jeſus Chriſt in Heaven, 1 *John* 2. 1, 2. *If any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father.* There is alſo peace in the believers Conſcience, peace as it were by *Proclamation* from Heaven; and this is built upon the peace of *Reconciliation.* We cannot have the ſenſe of peace, till we are brought into a ſtate of peace; the latter is the reſult of the former. And this is a ſpecial part of that ſupper Chriſt provides to entertain the Soul that receives it. How ſweet this is, is better felt than ſpoken. A dreadful ſound was lately in the Ears of the Law-condemned ſinner; but now his Heart is the ſeat of peace. And this Peace is, (1.) the Soul's guard againſt all inward and outward terrors, *Phil.* 4. 7. *The peace of God ſhall keep* φρȣρήσει, or as the word is, *guard your hearts and minds.* The Perſons of Princes are ſecured by guards of armed and valiant Men, who watch while they ſleep. Thus *Solomon* had his Royal guard, becauſe of fear in the night, *Cant.* 3. 7, 8. This peace of God, Chriſtian, is thy life-guard, and ſecures thee better than *Solomons* threeſcore valiant men that were about him. Time was when thou waſt afraid to ſleep, for fear thou ſhouldſt awake in Hell: Now thou mayſt ſay with *David, I will both lay me down and ſleep, for thou Lord makeſt me to dwell in ſafety.* Now, come life, come death; the Soul is ſafe, the Peace of God is its Royal guard. (2.) This Peace is *eaſe* as well *ſafety* to the Soul; 'tis hearts-eaſe: no ſooner doth God ſpeak peace to the Conſcience, but the Soul finds it ſelf at eaſe and reſt, *Heb.* 4. 3. *We which have believed, do enter into reſt.* It is with ſuch a Soul as it was with the *Dove Noah* ſent out of the *Ark*; that poor creature wandred in the Air, as long as her wings could carry her; had her ſtrength fail'd, there was nothing but the waters to receive her. O how ſweet was reſt in the Ark? (3.) This peace is news from Heaven, and the ſweeteſt tidings that ever bleſt the ſinners Ear, next unto Chriſt; *Heb.* 12. 24. *The blood of Chriſt ſpeaketh better things than that of* Abel. And you are come to this blood of ſprinkling, the ſame day and hour that Chriſt is come into your Souls. This is the voice of that blood, *Thou haſt ſinned, I have ſatisfied; Thou haſt kindled the wrath of God, and I have quencht it.* The Angels of Heaven cannot feed higher; their joys are not more delicious than thoſe prepared for believers are, whereof this is a foretaſt: whatever circumſtances of trouble a Man be in, this effectually relieves him. *Paul* and *Silas* were in ſad circumſtances, ſhut up in the inner priſon, their feet made faſt in the ſtocks, their cruel keeper at the door, their execution deſigned in a few days: God did but ſet this diſh upon the Table before the priſoners, and they could not forbear to ſing at the feaſt, *Acts* 16. 25. *At midnight they ſang*, &c.

3. After theſe two Royal diſhes, *Pardon*, and *Peace*, a third will come in, *viz. Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*; this is ſomewhat beyond peace, 'tis the very quinteſſence and ſpirit of all Conſolation. The Kingdom of God is ſaid to conſiſt in it, *Rom.* 14. 17. 'tis ſomewhat near to the joy of the glorified, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. 'tis Heaven upon Earth. All believers do not immediately attain it, but one time or other God uſually gives them a taſte of it; and when he doth, it is as it were a ſhort Salvation. O who can tell what that is which the Apoſtle calls, *The ſhedding abroad of the love of God into the Heart, by the Holy Ghoſt, which is given to us!* Rom. 5. 5. It is a Joy which wants an Epithet to expreſs the ſweetneſs of it, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* It hath the very ſcent and taſte of Heaven in it, and there is but a gradual difference betwixt it and the joy of Heaven. This joy of the Holy Ghoſt is a ſpiritual cheerineſs, ſtreaming through the Soul of a believer upon the Spirit's teſtimony, which clears his intereſt in Chriſt, and Glory. No ſooner doth the Spirit ſhed forth the love of God into the believers Heart, but it ſtreams and overflows with joy. Joy is no more under that Souls command: and this will evidently appear, if you conſider the matter of it; it ariſes from the light of God's countenance, *Pſal.* 4. 6, 7. the heavenly glory, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Whom having not ſeen we love*, &c. The Soul is tranſported with joy, raviſhed with the glory and excellency of Chriſt. Didſt thou ever ſee this Chriſt whom thy Soul is ſo raviſhed with? No, I have not ſeen him; yet my Soul is tranſported with ſo much love to him; *Whom having not ſeen, we love.* But if thou never ſaweſt him, how comes thy Soul to be ſo delighted and raviſhed with him? why, tho I never ſaw him by the Eye of ſenſe, yet I do ſee him by the Eye of faith; and by that ſight my Soul is flooded with ſpiritual joy. *Believing we rejoice.* But what manner of joy is that which you taſte? why, no Tongue can expreſs that, *for it is joy unſpeakable.* But how are Chriſt and Heaven turned into ſuch raviſhing joys to the Soul? why, the Spirit of the Lord gives the believing Soul not only a Light to diſcern the tranſcendent excellency of theſe ſpiritual objects; but a ſight of his intereſt in them alſo: This is my Chriſt, and this the glory prepared for me. Without intereſt, Heaven it ſelf cannot be turned into joy. *My Soul rejoiceth in God my Saviour, Luke* 1. 47. We read, *Luke* 13. 28. of ſome that ſhall have a ſight of *Abraham, Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God; and yet a ſight without joy; a dreadful ſight to them, for want of a joint intereſt with them in that glory. They ſhall ſee, and yet wail and weep, and gnaſh their teeth: But an intereſt ſealed gives joy unſpeakable. Now as to the excellency of this joy, it will be found to be the pleaſant light of the Soul; Light and Joy are *ſynonimous* terms in Scripture, *Pſal.* 97. 11. 'Tis as the cheerful light of the

Morning after a ſad and diſmal Night. You that have ſat in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, you that have ſat mourning in the dark without one glimpſe of a promiſe, you that have convers'd with nothing but diſmal thoughts of Hell and Wrath; O I ſhall be caſt away for ever! What will you ſay when after all this darkneſs, the Day-ſtar ſhall ariſe in your hearts, the joy of Heaven ſhall beam upon your Souls? Will not this be a glorious reward for all your ſelf-denyal for Chriſt, and fully recompenſe for the frowns of carnal relations for giving entertainment to Chriſt? This joy of the Lord, if there were no other Heaven, is an abundant recompenſe. This joy of the Lord ſhall be your ſtrength, *Neh.* 8. 10. Let God but give a man or woman a little of this Joy into his heart, and he ſhall preſently feel himſelf ſtrengthened by it, either to do or to ſuffer the will of God. Now he can pray with enlargement, hear with comfort, meditate with delight; and if God call him to ſuffer, this Joy ſhall ſtrengthen him to bear it. This was it that made the *Martyrs* go ſinging to the ſtake. This therefore tranſcends all the joys of this lower world: There are ſinful pleaſures men find in the fulfilling their luſts: There are ſenſitive joys that men find in the good creatures of God, filling their hearts with food and gladneſs: There are alſo deluſive joys, falſe comforts that *Hypocrites* find in their ungrounded hopes of Heaven. The joys of the Senſualiſt are *brutiſh*, the joys of the Hypocrite are enſnaring and vaniſhing; but the joys of the Holy Ghoſt are ſolid, ſweet, and leading to the fulneſs of everlaſting joy. This is the third heavenly Dainty you may expect to feed on, if you open your hearts to receive Chriſt by Faith, elſe you have all the conſolation that ever you muſt expect.

4. We read in Scripture of the *Sealings of the Spirit*, a choice and bleſſed Privilege of Believers conſequent upon believing: *Eph.* 1. 13. *In whom after that ye believed, ye were ſealed*, &c. This then may be expected by every Soul that opens to Chriſt, how rich ſoever the comforts of it be. The Spirit indeed ſeals not before Faith, for then he ſhould ſet his Seal to a Blank; but he uſually ſeals after believing, and that as the Spirit of promiſe. Note here, the *Agent* or Perſon ſealing, *the Spirit*, he knows the counſels, thoughts, and purpoſes of God, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10, 11. He alſo is authorized to this work; and being the Spirit of truth, he cannot deceive us. There is a twofold Seal ſpoken of in Scripture; one referring to God's eternal foreknowledg and choice of men, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *Nevertheleſs, the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth who are his*; *i. e.* the Lord perfectly knows every Soul that belongs to him thro the world. But now what comfort is this to a poor Believer, that God knows who are his? Therefore there is another ſealing referring to the *Spirit*, as his act upon Believers, to make them know that they are his. The firſt is general, *The Lord knoweth who are is*: But this is particular, *The Lord knoweth thee to be his.* This is joyful news indeed: the former makes it ſure in it ſelf, the latter makes it ſure to us. Now this is a moſt glorious privilege, a work of the Spirit, which hath a moſt raviſhing delicious ſweetneſs in it; and that which makes it ſo, is,

(1.) The weightineſs of the matter ſealed to, which is no leſs than Chriſt, and the eternal Inheritance purchaſed by his Blood. This Seal ſecures our Title to Chriſt, and to the eternal Glory: We are *ſealed to the day of redemption.* The ſealed Believer can ſay, Chriſt, how great, how glorious ſoever he be, is my Chriſt; the Covenant of Grace, and all the invaluable promiſes contained in it are mine.

(2.) The *reſt* and *quietneſs* which follows it, makes it an invaluable mercy; this brings the anxious ſolicitous Mind and Conſcience to reſt and peace. O what a mercy is it to have all thoſe knots untied, thoſe objections anſwer'd, thoſe fears baniſhed, under which the doubting Soul ſo long laboured, and which kept it ſo many nights waking and reſtleſs! God only knows at what rate ſome poor Creatures live under the ſcarings of their own Conſciences, and frequent fears of Hell: And what an inconceivable mercy would it be to them to be delivered at once from their dangers and fears, which hold them under a Spirit of Bondage? Open to Chriſt, and thou art in the way to ſuch a deliverance: *Come unto me and I will give you reſt*, ſaith Chriſt, *Matth.* 11. 28, 29.

(3.) This ſealing of the Spirit, which follows upon believing, will *eſtabliſh the Soul in Chriſt*, confirm it and ſettle it in the ways of God, which is an unſpeakable privilege: 2 *Cor.* 1. 22. *Now he which eſtabliſheth us with you in Chriſt is God, who alſo hath ſealed us.* Mark how eſtabliſhment follows ſealing. New temptations may come, great perſecutions and ſore afflictions may come; but how well is that Soul provided for them all, that hath the ſealings of the Spirit unto the day of redemption? Yea, though the Soul that was ſealed ſhould for the preſent be under new darkneſs, new temptations and fears; yet former ſealing will give eſtabliſhment and relief, when the thoughts run back to the ſealing day, and a man remembers how clear God once made his title to Chriſt. Well then, open to Chriſt, if ever you expect to be ſealed to ſalvation. If you continue to deſpiſe and reject the tenders of Chriſt in the Goſpel, whilſt others that embrace him are *ſealed to redemption*; your unbelief and final rejection of Chriſt will ſeal you up to the *day of damnation.*

5. And laſtly, we read likewiſe in the Scriptures of the *Earneſt of the Spirit.* This is three times mentioned in the Scriptures. *Eph.* 1. 14. *Which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion.* 2 Cor. 1. 22. where it is joyned with the former privilege of ſealing, *Who hath alſo ſealed us, and given the earneſt of the Spirit in our Hearts.* And again, 2 *Cor.* 5. 5. *He that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing is God, who alſo hath given unto us the earneſt of the Spirit.* The word is ἀῤῥαβὼν, originally a *Syriak* word: The *Greeks* are ſuppoſed to get it from the *Phœnician Merchants*, with whom they traded; and it notes a part paid in hand to confirm a bargain for the whole. There are two things in an *Earneſt.* (1.) It is part of the ſum or inheritance: If it were a contract for a ſum of mony, then it was a ſmall part of a greater parcel; if for an Inheritante, then the earneſt is a taking a part of the Inheritance, as a twig or turf, part of the whole. Now the Spirit of God chooſes this word on purpoſe to ſignifie two great things to his People by it.

(1.) That thoſe comforts communicated by the Spirit to Believers are of the ſame kind with the Joys of Heaven, though in a far inferiour degree: 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. called there *Joy unſpeakable and full of* *glory*; and *Rom.* 8. 23. called there, *The firſt-fruits of the Spirit.* The Firſt-Fruits and the Crop or Harveſt are one in kind. Surely there is ſomething of Heaven as well as Hell taſted by men in this world; Hell is begun here in the terrors of ſome mens Conſciences, and Heaven alſo is begun here in the abſolution, peace and comfort of other mens Conſciences.

(2.) As an Earneſt is part of the ſum or inheritance, ſo the uſe and end of it is confirmation and ſecurity; as much as to ſay, Take this in part till the whole be paid; yea, take it for thy ſecurity that the whole ſhall be paid. Believers have a double pledg or earneſt for Heaven; one in the perſon of Chriſt, who is entred into that glory for them, *John* 14. 2, 3. the other in the joys and comforts of the Spirit, which they feel and taſte in themſelves. Theſe are two great ſecurities; and the deſign of God in giving us theſe earneſts and foretaſts of Heaven, are not only to ſettle our minds, but to whet our induſtry, that we may long the more earneſtly, and labour the more diligently for the full poſſeſſion. The Lord ſees how apt we are to flag in the purſuit of Heavenly Glory; and therefore gives his People a taſte, an earneſt of it, to excite their diligence in the purſuits of it. God deals with his People in this caſe, as with *Iſrael*; they had been forty years in the Wilderneſs, many ſore temptations they had there encountred; at laſt they were come upon the very borders of *Canaan*, but then their hearts began to faint; there were *Anakims*, *Giants* in the Land, poor *Iſrael* feared they ſhould not ſtand before them: but *Joſhua* ſends Spies into the Land, who returning, bring the firſt-fruits of *Canaan* to them, whereby they ſaw what a goodly Country it was; and then the fear of the *Anakims* began to vaniſh, and a ſpirit of Courage to revive in the People. Thus it is even with the *Borderers* on Heaven; tho we be near that bleſſed Land of promiſe, yet our hearts are apt to faint upon a proſpect of thoſe great ſufferings without us, and thoſe conflicts with corruptions we feel within us: But one taſte of the firſt-fruits of Heaven, like thoſe grapes of *Eſhcol*, revive our Spirits, rouze our Zeal, and quicken our purſuits of Bleſſedneſs. For theſe reaſons God will not have all of Heaven reſerved till we come thither. And now tell me, you that have taſted theſe firſt-fruits of the Spirit, (1.) Is there not ſomething in faith of that *glorified Eye*, by which the pure in heart do ſee God in Heaven? *Matth.* 5. 8. O that eye of Faith! that precious eye! which comes as near to the glorified eye, as any thing in this imperfect ſtate can come: 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Whom having not ſeen ye love, in whom though now ye ſee him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* (2.) Is there not ſomething of that glorified *Love* to be felt in an inferiour degree by the Saints in this world? What elſe can we make of that tranſport of the Spouſe, *Cant.* 2. 5. *Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am ſick of love?* 'Tis true, our love to God in Heaven is much more fervent, pure, and conſtant; yet theſe high-raiſed acts of ſpiritual love have a taſt and reliſh of it. (3.) Is there not ſomething here of that *heavenly delight* wherewith the Glorified delight in God? As the viſions of God are begun on earth, ſo the heavenly delights are begun here alſo. Some drops of that delight are let fall here, *Pſal.* 94. 19. *In the multitude of the thoughts I had within me, thy comforts delight my Soul.* *David*'s heart, 'tis like, had been full of ſorrow and trouble; a ſea of gall and wormwood had overflowed his Soul: God lets fall but a drop or two of heavenly delight, and all is turned into ſweetneſs and comfort. (4.) Is there not ſomething here of that transformation of the Soul into the image of God, which is compleat in Heaven, and a ſpecial part of the Glory thereof? 'Tis ſaid in 1 *John* 3. 2. *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* This is Heaven, this is Glory, to have the Soul moulded into full conformity with God; ſomething thereof is experienced in this world: O that we had more! 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* (5.) Is there not ſomething felt here of the raviſhing ſweetneſs of God's preſence in Ordinances and Duties, which is a faint ſhadow at leaſt of the joys of his glorious preſence in Heaven? There is certainly a felt preſence of God, a ſenſible nearneſs unto God at ſome times, and in ſome duties of Religion, wherein his Name is as an ointment poured forth, *Cant.* 1. 3. ſomething that is felt beyond and above all the comforts of this world. (6.) In a word, the joys of Heaven are unſpeakable Joys; no words can make known to others what they are. When *Paul* was caught up into *Paradiſe*, he heard unſpeakable words, 2 *Cor.* 12. 4. And are there not times even in this life, wherein the Saints do feel that which no words can expreſs? 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Rev.* 2. 17.

Now if ſuch earneſts of the Spirit do follow after believing; if opening the Soul to Chriſt do bring it into theſe Suburbs of Heaven; who then would not receive Chriſt into his Soul, and ſuch an Heaven upon Earth with him? And thus I have ſhewed you what ſome of thoſe heavenly rarities are with which Chriſt entertains Believers upon Earth, the fulneſs and perfection whereof is reſerved for Heaven, and hereby ſecured to the opening or believing Soul: which was the third thing to be diſcovered.

Fourthly, Next we ſhall enquire into the reaſons, why Chriſt thus entertains, feaſts and refreſhes the Soul that receives him. And,

*Reaſ.* 1. This he doth to expreſs the great joy and ſatisfaction his Soul hath in the Faith and Obedience of poor Sinners. We read, *Iſa.* 53. 11. of the hard travel of Chriſt's Soul, and the great ſatisfaction he hath in the fruit and iſſue thereof: *He ſhall ſee of the travel of his Soul, and ſhall be ſatisfied.* O what pleaſure and ſatisfaction doth it give him to behold the eternal counſels of God, and ſore travels of his Soul brought to ſuch a Birth! there is no pleaſure like it to the Soul of Chriſt in this World. As it is abundant ſatisfaction to a Man, to behold the accompliſhment of a deſign upon which he hath laid out many thoughts, and much coſt, at laſt happily finiſhed: Or as it is to a Woman that has had a hard labor, a ſore travel for a Child, to behold the fruit of her Womb, to embrace and ſmile upon that Child ſhe travel'd for: So and much more than ſo it is to Chriſt: and therefore as the Father of the Prodigal manifeſted the joy of his Heart for the return of his Son (who was to him as dead and loſt) by a feaſt and muſick, ſo doth Chriſt here anſwerably manifeſt the content and ſatisfaction of his Soul, by entertaining the Believer with theſe Royal dainties of Heaven: 'tis the Soul's welcom home to Chriſt.

*Reaſ.* 2. This Chriſt doth to relieve and refreſh poor diſtreſſed Souls, who have endured ſo many fears and ſorrows from the time of their firſt Conviction until this day of their union with Chriſt by Faith. The way of Faith is a very humbling way; there's much cutting work in antecedent Convictions and Humiliations, ſad nights and ſick days with many poor Souls; and theſe things bring them very low: They ſee the Law broken by ſin, wrath hanging over them in the threatnings, the bitter taſt thereof they have in their Conſciences; they have dwelt with fears and horrors a long time, and they need ſuccour and ſupport, which the Lord Jeſus is now reſolved to give them, leſt the Spirit fail before him, *Iſa.* 57. 16. He delights to comfort them that are caſt down, 2 *Cor.* 7. 6. Chriſt is of a compaſſionate nature, he is as ready as able to ſuccour them that are tempted, *Heb.* 2. 18. That Word which we render *Succour*, ſignifies to run in by way of help, at the cry of one that is in diſtreſs. Many emphatical cries have gone up to Heaven from the diſtreſſed ſin-ſick Soul; theſe the compaſſionate Jeſus hears, and now comes in ſeaſonably to ſuccour and refreſh it: He hath rich Cordials for fainting Hours; the Soul hath had a bitter *Break-faſt*, and therefore Chriſt will give it a comfortable *Supper*, *I will come in to him, and ſup with him.*

*Reaſ.* 3. Thoſe that open their Hearts to Chriſt muſt expect to meet great troubles, ſufferings and temptations in that new courſe whereinto they are entred: Their way to Heaven lies thro much tribulation; all our troubles are not over when we are got into Chriſt; nay, then commonly our greateſt outward troubles begin, *Heb.* 10. 32. *After ye believed, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.* Carnal relations now ſcoff, frown and caſt off; the World hates them, and marks them out for Perſecution. Now that poor Chriſtians may not utterly be diſcouraged, when they meet with thoſe troubles in the way of their duty; Chriſt will chear and hearten them by theſe ſpiritual refreſhments: This is a ſtock laid in for a rainy day: Chriſt himſelf had a voice from Heaven, *Mat.* 17. 5. *This is my beloved Son*, a little before his great combat; much more do his poor people need ſuch conſolations to ſupport and encourage them. The wiſe God foreſees, and by this proviſion forelays the troubles they are to meet with: An hour of *Sealing* fortifies the Soul for an hour of *Suffering*. It hath been the obſervation of ſome Chriſtians, when they have felt more than ordinary comforts of the Spirit, that ſome great trial hath been near them; and the event hath confirmed it. Whatever comforts Chriſt gives his People at their firſt entrance into his Service, they will have need enough of them all before they finiſh their courſe. To theſe firſt ſealings they will need often to run back, and have frequent recourſe to them, and all little enough to ſupport them in after-trials.

*Reaſ.* 4. Chriſt comes in to the opening Soul with ſuch divine Cordials and Refreſhmens, to defeat and countermine the Plot of *Satan*, who hath ſo often, and ſo lately been diſcouraging them, by repreſenting the ways of Chriſt as ſad melancholy ways; telling them they ſhall never laugh more, never be merry more, after they have embraced and eſpouſed the ways of holineſs: *Spiritus Calvinianus eſt Spiritus melancholicus.* Well, their own experiences ſhall now confute it, for they now taſte that pleaſure in Chriſt, in Faith, and Obedience, which they never taſted in the ways of ſin; thus that ſcandalous *Libel* of the Devil is experimentally confuted. They find they were never truly merry till now, *Luke* 15. 24. All true Mirth commences from our cloſing with Chriſt; *and they began to be merry.*

Now theſe ſpiritual refreſhments are by Chriſt here called *a Supper*, becauſe the Supper among the *Jews* was their beſt meal, *Luke* 14. 17. and becauſe it is the laſt meal. This is not only the beſt meal that ever a Believer made, but upon theſe ſpiritual Comforts (tho much more refined and perfect) they are to feed for ever in Heaven. O Chriſtian, well mayſt thou be contented with thine outward lot of Providence, however it ſhall fall in this World with reſpect to thy outward man; Will a King from Heaven come and ſup with thee? Doth he feed thy Soul with pardon, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, ſeal an earneſt of future glory? then thou liveſt at a higher and nobler rate than any of thy carnal neighbours do. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt*, Eph. 1. 3. The ſame perſon that thus bleſſes God with a Heart over-flowing with joy and comfort, endured as many perſecutions, felt as many wants and ſtraits as any man. What if Providence do but meanly clothe your Bodies, ſo that you cannot ruffle it out in that ſplendor and gallantry others do? yet mayſt thou ſay with the Church, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my Soul ſhall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of Salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteouſneſs, as a bridegroom decketh himſelf with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth her ſelf with Jewels*, Iſa. 61. 10. What if thou fare not ſo deliciouſly as the great ones of this World do? yet if Chriſt will give thee to eat of the *hidden Manna* which he promiſeth, *Rev.* 2. 17. art thou not better clothed and fed than any of the Grandees or Nobles of the World? This takes away all grounds of complaint. It may be you will ſay, O but we have Bodies, as well as Souls; if God had created us *Angels*, that we could live without material food, it were another caſe. I reply, Chriſt never thus intended to feaſt thy Soul, and ſtarve thy Body: he that feeds thy Soul with bread from Heaven, will take care for all neceſſary proviſions on Earth, *Iſa.* 41. 17. You have ſought and found the Kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs; fear not but all other things ſhall be added to you.

I. *Uſe for Information.*

The Point before us is full of Uſes; I ſhall begin with Information, in the following Inferences.

*Infer.* 1. Hence learn, *That it is a vile and groundleſs ſlander upon Religion, to ſay or inſinuate, that it deprives men of the comfort and joy of life.*

The Devil, in deſign to diſcourage men from the ways of God, puts a frightful mask upon the beautiful face of Religion, pretending there is no pleaſure or joy to be expected therein; but this is abundantly confuted and refelled in the Text, *I will come in to him, and ſup with him.* *Solomon* tells us, *Eccl.* 10. 19. *A feaſt is made for laughter.* I am ſure that Soul that ſits with Chriſt at ſuch a feaſt as has bin deſcribed above, has the beſt reaſon of any man in the World to be merry. Religion indeed denies us all ſinful pleaſure, but it abounds with all ſpiritual pleaſure. No rational ſolid mirth can come before Chriſt; the unſanctified rejoice in things of nought, and their joy will be ſoon ended; they are haſtning to that place where they will find that to be verified of the wages of ſin, which they now falſly impute to the wages of holineſs; they ſhall never rejoice more, never be merry more: But believers ſhall find that Scripture atteſted by their daily experience, *Prov.* 3. 17. *All ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace.* And that there are ſuch pleaſures in the ways of God as they never experienced in the ways of ſin; for is it a ſolid ground of comfort to a man to be out of debt, and all fears of arreſts, and is it not much greater to have our debts paid to God by Chriſt our Surety? *Mat.* 9. 2. *Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee.* Is it matter of joy to have a ſufficiency of all things for the ſupply of every want? he that is in Chriſt hath ſo, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. *All are yours, and ye are Chriſt's.* Is it a joyful Life to be a borderer upon Heaven, to confine upon Bleſſedneſs it ſelf? Then it is a joyful life to be in Chriſt, for they that are ſo, may rejoice in the hopes of Glory, *Rom.* 5. 2. Is it matter of all joy to have the *Comforter* himſelf, who is the Spirit of all Conſolation, taking up his reſidence in thy Heart, cheering, comforting, and refreſhing it with ſuch Cordials as are unknown things in all the unbelieving World? Then certainly the life of a Chriſtian, and the ways of holineſs, muſt be moſt pleaſant and comfortable; and therefore let none that are looking towards Chriſt be diſcouraged in their way, by the ſlanderous reproaches deſignedly caſt upon Religion for that end. Chriſt and Comfort dwell together.

*Infer.* 2. Hence in like manner it follows, *That Chriſtians uſually meet the greateſt difficulties at their firſt entrance into Religion.*

The firſt work of Religion is cutting work, wounding work, groaning and weeping work: thus Religion uſually begins, *Acts* 2. 37. *Acts* 16. 29. Now the Soul ſeems to be ſtruck dead in the giving up of all its former vain hopes, *Rom.* 7. 9. *When the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died*; but afterward comes pardon, peace, joy in the Holy Ghoſt. They that go forth weeping, bearing precious ſeed, now come back rejoicing, bringing their ſheaves with them, *Pſal.* 126. 6. Now that bleſſing takes place upon the Soul, *Mat.* 5. 4. *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted. Light is ſown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in Heart.* 'Tis quite contrary in the ways of ſin; all the pleaſures of ſin come firſt, the terrors and gripes of Conſcience come after. Sin comes with ſmiles in its face, but a ſting in its tail. Pleaſures lead the *van*, Hell and Deſtruction bring up the *rear:* Job 20. 12, 13, 14. *Tho wickedneſs be ſweet in his mouth, tho he hide it under his tongue; yet his meat in his bowels is turned into the gall of Aſps within him.* But here conviction and humiliation come firſt, theſe prepare the way for Chriſt; and after him comes reſt and peace. *Their ſorrow is turned into joy*, John 16. 20.

Object. *But is this always true? Do not the worſt things of Religion many times come laſt? How many Chriſtians go out of the World in a bloody winding ſheet?*

*Sol.* Whatever the after-ſufferings of Chriſtians may be, the worſt is paſt when they are once in Chriſt. Great and ſharp ſufferings they may endure, but the Lord ſweetens them with anſwerable conſolations, 2 *Cor.* 7. 4. *I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.* The loweſt ebbs are followed with the higheſt tides; the greateſt troubles need not give an interruption to their peace.

*Infer.* 3. Hence it follows, *that no man can be owner of any true comfort till he be in Chriſt.*

Comfort and Refreſhment in the natural order follow Faith; 'tis the vaineſt imagination in the World to expect ſolid Spiritual comfort before union with Chriſt; you may as well expect an harveſt before a ſeed-time. I do confeſs there are two ſorts of comforts found in the World without Chriſt. (1.) Men may have *ſenſitive* and *ſinful* comforts and delights without Chriſt; theſe are common in the unregenerate World, where you may daily ſee rich men taking comfort in their riches, voluptuous men in their pleaſures, *Jam.* 5. 5. *You have lived in pleaſures upon Earth.* But theſe are the pleaſures common to brutes, and beneath the noble immortal ſpirit of a Man. (2.) Hypocrites have their delights and comforts, in a falſe imaginary happineſs which they fancy to themſelves; but this is a vaniſhing ſhadow: thay take comfort from their groundleſs hopes of Heaven, whither they ſhall never come; 'tis a feaſt in a dream, *Iſa.* 44. 20. Thus they make a bridg of their own ſhadow, and are drowned in the waters. Such ſenſitive and falſe comforts and pleaſures Men may have; but no true ſolid ſpiritual joy takes place in any mans Heart before Chriſt come into it.

Infer. 4. *Gueſs from hence what Heaven is, if there be ſuch a feaſt to the Soul in the very foretaſts of it.*

If a reliſh, a taſte of Heaven in the earneſt thereof be ſo tranſporting and raviſhing, what then is the full fruition of God! If theſe be unutterable, what muſt that be! Give me leave to ſay, Whatever the comforts and joys of any believer in this World may be, yet Heaven will be a ſurprize to him when he comes thither. The joys of God's preſence are other manner of things than our preſent comforts are; tho theſe be of the ſame kind with them, yet in a far inferiour degree. There is a ſix-fold difference betwixt the Spiritual Comforts of believers on Earth, and the Joys that are above. They differ,

1. In Quantity.
2. In Conſtancy.
3. In Purity.
4. In Efficacy.
5. In the Society.
6. In the Durability of them.

1. They differ in *quantity*. *Here we know but in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away*, 1 Cor. 13. 9, 10. When the Scripture ſpeaks of the comforts communicated to Saints on Earth, it uſually expreſſes them in ſome diminutive terms or other, calling them firſt fruits, earneſts, and the like; and indeed it is neceſſary we ſhould receive them here with ſuch alloys, and in remiſs degrees, becauſe the imperfection and weakneſs of our preſent ſtate will not bear them in their plenitude and perfection. Here the joy of the Lord enters into us, but there we are ſaid *to enter into that joy*, Mat. 25. 21. 'Tis too great to enter into us, therefore we enter into, and are ſwallowed up in it.

2. They differ in *Conſtancy*; the beſt comforts upon Earth are found to be intermitting comforts; a Sun-blaſt and a Cloud; a good day and a bad. You know houſekeepers feed upon two ſorts of meat, daily-bread, and dainties; rarities come not every day to the Table. The daily-bread upon which believers live, is the recumbence, and affiance of faith; as for Aſſurance and Joy, thoſe come but now and then.

3. They differ in *Purity*, as well as *Conſtancy*; here we have the comforts of the Spirit, but we mingle ſin with them, and uſually the ſin of Spiritual pride, which ſpoils all. Yea, many times the Lord ſuffers Satan to mingle his temptations and injections with them, leſt we ſhould be exalted, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. But above, the comforts of the Saints are as the pure water of Life, clear as Criſtal, *Rev.* 22. 1.

4. They differ in *Efficacy* as well as in *Purity*. The higheſt comforts of the Spirit here are not perfectly transformative of our Souls into the image of God, as they are in Heaven: 1 *John* 3. 3. *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* Here, after we are comforted by him, we grieve the Comforter himſelf by ſin: neither do the comforts of the Spirit, in this ſtate, produce the fruits of obedience in their perfect maturity, as they do above; there is the ſame difference in point of efficacy as there is betwixt the influence of the Sun-beams in the winter months, and thoſe in *May*, and *June*.

5. There is a great difference in reſpect of *Society*. Here the believer, for the moſt part, eats his pleaſant morſels alone; one Chriſtian eats, and another hungers; but in Heaven they all feaſt and feed together at one Table, *Mat.* 8. 11. *They ſhall ſit down with* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *in the kingdom of God.* O what is it to rejoice in the fellowſhip of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apoſtles, where the joy of one is the joy of all!

6. They differ alſo in *Durability*; Sin here puts a ſtop to our comforts, but in Heaven as there is no comma, ſo there ſhall never be a full point, or period: Everlaſting joy ſhall be upon their heads: There's an eternal feaſt, no taking away the cloth, no riſing from that feaſt, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 16. 'Tis everlaſting conſolation: *We ſhall be ever with the Lord.*

## II. *Uſe.*

This point puts ſerious matter of Exhortation into my mouth. The Lord direct it to the Hearts of all, whether they be in Chriſt, or out of Chriſt.

Firſt, To thoſe that are out of Chriſt, and will not yet be perſwaded to open their Hearts and conſent to his terms. O what a ſpiritual infatuation is here! What, ſhut the door of thy Heart againſt Chriſt, and all the delights and comforts of this and the coming World! What madneſs is this! Hear me thou poor deluded ſinner, that wilt not be perſwaded to part with thy ſinful ſenſual delights in exchange for Chriſt, and the peace, comfort, and joy that follow him: I have a few things to ſpeak on Chriſt's behalf at this time; O that they might prevail, O that by them the Spirit of the Lord might perſwade thy Spirit, thou poor unregenerate creature! Let me offer four or five Conſiderations or Pleas on Chriſt's behalf, if haply they may prevail and make way for his entertainment in thy Soul. And.

*Plea* 1. Let me plead thine own *neceſſity* with thee; a mighty argument, which in other caſes uſeth to make its way through all oppoſitions, and makes all difficulties fly before it; thou art a poor, neceſſitous, pining, famiſhing Soul; however thy body be accommodated, thou haſt not one bit of ſpiritual bread for thy famiſhing Soul to live upon. Chriſt is the bread that cometh down from Heaven. The ſtarving *Prodigal*, *Luke* 15. *v.* 16, 17. is the lively Emblem of thy Soul; he fed upon husks, and thou feedeſt upon that which is not bread, *Iſa.* 55. 2. Thou art wretched and miſerable, poor, blind, and naked, *Rev.* 3. 17. Thy body hath often been fill'd and refreſht with the good creatures of God, but thy Soul never taſted one bit of ſpiritual bread ſince it came into thy body; it never ~~ſmackt~~ +received the ſweetneſs of a pardon, the deliciousneſs of a promiſe, the joy and comfort of Chriſt; the choiceſt food that ever thou taſtedſt, was ſuch as thy Soul cannot live upon.

*Plea* 2. Chriſt is at the door of thy Soul with plenty and variety of heavenly comforts, coſtly dainties purchaſed by his blood; if thou wilt but open to him, *Thou ſhalt be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of his houſe, and drink the rivers of pleaſure*, Pſal. 36. 7, 8. *He that believeth, as the Scripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water*, John 7. 38. meaning the graces and comforts of the Spirit.

*Plea* 3. If Chriſt be put off and refuſed now, you may never taſte of thoſe invaluable mercies for ever, *Luke* 14. 24. *For I ſay unto you, That none of thoſe men which were bidden ſhall taſte of my ſupper.* They were bidden, invited to this feaſt, and ſo are you; they refuſed to come, God grant you may not; for methinks this ſentence of Chriſt, *Thoſe men which were bidden ſhall not taſte of my ſupper*, is like the ſentence upon a malefactor that is to be hanged in chains, and whom the Law permits none to relieve. O 'twill be dreadful to ſee the Saints ſitting at the Royal feaſt in Heaven, and your ſelves ſhut out; as a company of ſtarving beggars ſtanding in the Streets, and about the doors where the Marriage-ſupper is kept; they ſee the lights, they behold the rich diſhes carried up, they hear the mirth and muſick of the gueſts, but not a bit comes to their ſhare.

*Plea* 4. The refuſal of Chriſt's invitation, as it is the greateſt of all ſins, ſo it will be avenged with the ſoreſt wrath and greateſt puniſhment; 'tis ſaid of thoſe gueſts that were bidden, *Matth.* 22. 5. that they made light of it, but it fell heavy upon them, *verſ.* 7. *He was wroth, and ſent forth his armies, and deſtroyed thoſe murderers, and burnt up their City.* Have a care of making light of Chriſt.

*Plea* 5. What light and vain things are all thoſe pleaſures of ſin, for the ſake whereof you deprive your Souls of the everlaſting comforts of Jeſus Chriſt? Deluded Soul, 'tis not the intent of Chriſt to rob thee of thy comfort, but to exchange thy ſinful for ſpiritual delights, to thy unſpeakable advantage. 'Tis true, you ſhall have no more pleaſure in ſin, but inſtead of that you ſhall have peace with God, joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and ſolid comfort for evermore. What are the ſenſitive or ſinful pleaſures of this World? You have the total ſum of them, in 1 *John* 2. 16, 17. *All that is in the World, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the World. And the world paſſeth away, and* *the luſts thereof; but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.*

Queſt. *But how may a poor unregenerate Soul be prevailed with to make ſuch a bleſſed exchange, to part with the pleaſures of ſin in exchange for the comforts of Jeſus Chriſt?*

*Anſw.* Beſide all that hath been offered before, let me briefly add theſe three following Directions and Counſels to ſuch a Soul.

1. Labour to ſee and feel thy need of Chriſt, and then thou wilt quickly be willing to give up all the pleaſures of ſin for the enjoyment of him. What makes men ſo tenacious of their luſts, ſo hard to be perſwaded to give up their ſinful pleaſures, but this, that they never felt the need of a Saviour! O ſinner, didſt thou but feel thy need of Chriſt, wert thou but a hungry and thirſty for him; thou wouldſt never ſtand upon ſuch trifles for the enjoyment of him. We read, in the famine of *Jeruſalem*, how they parted with their pleaſant things for bread to relieve their Souls; Jewels, Rings, Bracelets, things which coſt dear, and were highly valued at another time, now were willingly parted with for bread. Chriſt is more neceſſary to thee than thy neceſſary bread.

2. Conſider the ſpiritual and immortal nature of thine own Soul, which cannot live upon material things, and muſt over-live all temporary things. Now if thy Soul cannot live upon them, and muſt certainly over-live them; what a miſerable condition will it unavoidably fall into, when all theſe ſenſual and ſinful enjoyments are vaniſhed and gone, as thou knoweſt they ſhortly will be? 1 *Joh.* 2. 17. *Theſe things paſs away*; and then hath thy Soul nothing to live upon to all eternity.

3. Hearken to the reports and experiences of the Saints, who have tried both ſorts of pleaſures, which you never did: They have tried the pleaſures of ſin, and they have taſted the pleaſures of Chriſt, and ſo are beſt able to make a true judgment upon both; and they have accordingly determined, *That one glimpſe of the light of God's countenance, puts more gladneſs into their hearts, than in the time that their corn and their wine increaſed*, Pſal. 4. 7. Nay, the wiſeſt Chriſtians upon trial of both have rightly determined, *That the worſt things in Religion are infinitely to be preferr'd to the beſt things belonging to ſin*; the very ſufferings and afflictions of the people of God, have been pronounced better *than the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon*, Heb. 11. 25. Could you but ſee with their Eyes, and were you but capable of making a right judgment as they did, there needed not a word more to be ſaid to perſwade you to let go your moſt pleaſant and profitable luſts in exchange for Chriſt and his beneficial comfortable ſufferings.

Secondly, The point affords variety of Counſels and Exhortations to the Regenerate, who have opened their Wills to Chriſt, and are thereupon admitted into this comfortable ſtate.

It is found, in experience, a difficult thing for a Soul after converſion to bear and duly manage their own comforts, as it was to bear and rightly manage their troubles at converſion. My buſineſs here is to adviſe Souls, under their firſt comforts and ſealings of the Spirit, how to manage and improve their ſpiritual comforts that they may abide with them, and be growing things continually in their Souls.

*Advice* 1. And firſt, *See that you humbly admire and adore the condeſcending goodneſs of God to you, in all the comforts of the Spirit which refreſh you,*

O that ever God ſhould comfort ſuch a Soul as thine, that hath ſo often grieved him! That Chriſt ſhould be a joy to thee, who haſt been a ſorrow unto him! If you look into *Eph.* 1. 3. you will find the Spirit of the *Apoſtle* there fill'd with the ſenſe and admiration of this mercy, which breaks forth into this rapturous expreſſion, *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places* (or things) *in Chriſt*. Some there are that never enjoy an ordinary degree of earthly comforts, *Job* 30. 3, 4, 5. others enjoy abundance of earthly comforts, but no ſpiritual comforts, *Pſal.* 17. 14. Some there are for whom God intends everlaſting conſolations in the World to come, but are kept low as to ſpiritual comforts in this World, *Pſal.* 88. 15. O what cauſe have you to admire the bounty of God to you, for whom there is not only fulneſs of joys prepared in Heaven, but ſuch precious foretaſts and earneſts of it communicated in the way thither.

Advice 2. *Cleave faſt to Chriſt, and thoſe ſweet and comfortable duties of Religion, wherein you have found and taſted the beſt comforts that ever your Souls were acquainted with.*

This is one thing God aims at in the communication of theſe ſpiritual refreſhments, to glue your Souls faſt by them to the ways of holineſs. The Lord knows temptations will befal you, diſcouragements enough you ſhall be ſure to meet with; but theſe enjoyments of God, which you have met with in Prayer and Hearing, in Meditations, Sacraments, *&c.* ſhould engage your Hearts for ever to the ways of obedience. You never found that ſweetneſs in the ways of ſin, which you have found in repentance and faith. When a temptation comes baited with ſinful pleaſures, ſay as the *Olive-tree* and the *Vine* in *Jothams* parable, *Judg.* 9. 9, 10, 11. Shall I leave ſuch Soul-refreſhing comforts as theſe for the inſipid pleaſures of ſin? God forbid.

Advice 3. *Be communicative of the ſpiritual comforts you enjoy, for the benefit and refreſhment of others.*

The Lord never intended you ſhould engroſs the comforts of his Spirit to your ſelves, nor eat your pleaſant morſels alone. 2 *Cor.* 1. 4. *He comforts us, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our ſelves are comforted of God.* 'Tis true, Religion lays not all open, nor yet doth it conceal and hide all. There needs a great deal of wiſdom, humility and caution, to ſecure us from pride and vanity in Spirit, whilſt we communicate our comforts to others: as *Oſtentation*, ſo alſo *Impropriation* of our comforts are againſt Scripture law; he may be juſtly ſuſpected that opens all, and ſo may he too that conceals all. Spiritual comforts are not diminiſht, but improved by a wiſe and humble communication.

Advice 4. *Be much in renewing the acts and exerciſes of faith; be frequent in that work.*

Your firſt faith hath brought in your firſt comfort, your renewing and repeating thoſe precious acts of faith will bring you in greater ſtores of comfort than you yet enjoy. We are not to look upon faith as a ſingle, but a continued act, 1 *Pet.* 2. 4. *To whom coming as unto a living ſtone.* Thy

Soul, Chriſtian, is to be in a continual motion towards Chriſt; the more you believe, the more you will rejoice. You ſee the door through which comfort comes into your Souls. Joy is the daughter of faith, *Rom.* 15. 13. your preſent comfort is the firſt birth of faith; but there are many comforts more in the womb of faith, which will yet be born to your Souls if unbelief cauſe not a miſcarriage.

Advice 5. *Take heed you be not a grief to Chriſt who hath already brought ſo much comfort to you.*

'Twill be a ſad requital, if after he hath given you the joys of Heaven to drink, you ſhall give him that which is as Wormwood and Gall; the Lord write that caution upon thy Soul, Reader, *Eph.* 4. 30. *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are ſealed to the day of Redemption.* The argument of the *Apoſtle* in this place, ſtrongly infers *caution* from *comfort.* Chriſt hath been all joy, all peace, reſt and comfort to you; take heed you be not a grief and ſhame to him. The intermiſſions of thy duties, the falling and flatting of thy affections in duties, thy raſh adventures upon ſin, will be a grief to the Heart of Chriſt, who hath filled thy Heart with ſo much comfort; and if you grieve him, you cannot expect he ſhould comfort you. A little ſin may rob you of a great deal of comfort.

Advice 6. *Be not ſtagger'd or dejected, if the firſt comforts Chriſt gives you ſhould afterwards abate, or be taken away for a time.*

This is a very common thing in the experience of moſt Chriſtians. You muſt not think your firſt comforts are ſuch fixed ſetled things, that there is no hazard of loſing them. Alas, nothing is more volatile than the joys of a Chriſtian; you will be apt to loſe your firſt love, *Rev.* 2. 4. and if you loſe your firſt love, no wonder that you loſe your firſt comforts: yet if it ſhould ſo fall out, be not caſt down, and diſcouraged; Chriſt is not gone, tho comfort be gone; and tho comfort be gone, 'tis not gone for ever: renew thy repentance, faith and obedience, and try if God will not renew thy comfort. There is a former, and there is a latter ſpring of joy; God will make thy comforts ſpring again. Beſide, thy *Juſtification* is ſtedfaſt, tho thy *Conſolation* be not ſo. There are two things belong to a Chriſtian, one to his being, *viz. union* with Chriſt; another to his *well-being*, *viz. comfort from Chriſt:* The latter is uncertain and contingent, the former fixed and ſtedfaſt.

Advice 7. *Be filled with compaſſion to others who want thoſe comforts you enjoy, eſpecially ſuch as God hath knit to you in the bonds of natural relation.*

Art thou a Father or a Mother to whom God hath given thoſe comforts, and Soul-refreſhments that have been opened in this diſcourſe? And haſt thou no compaſſion for thy poor Children, who never yet taſted one drop of theſe ſpiritual conſolations? Certainly, it will do a Man little good, to be feaſted abroad, whilſt his Wife and Children are ſtarving at home; ſay to them, as *Paul* in another caſe, *Would to God you were all as I am, except theſe corruptions.* Religion breeds bowels of compaſſion. O tell them what ſweetneſs there is in the ways of godlineſs: Counſel, plead and pray, that thoſe that are yours may alſo be Chriſt's.

Advice 8. *As ever you expect the continuance or enlargement of your comforts, ſee that you walk circumſpectly.*

'Tis as much as all your comfort is worth to give way to a little careleſneſs; that's a remarkable expreſſion of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 85. 8. *I will hearken what God the Lord will ſpeak, for he will ſpeak peace to his People, and to his Saints; but let not them return again to folly.* Sin, in this Text, is fitly called by the name of *folly*, for indeed it is the greateſt folly and madneſs in the World to forfeit and deveſt our ſelves of ſuch ſweet peace and comfort by returning unto ſin, which hath coſt us ſo much ſorrow and trouble before. Are you willing to be in your former darkneſs and fears, tears and troubles, to exchange the pleaſant light you now enjoy, for the horrors you have formerly felt? This you muſt do if you return again to folly.

Advice 9. *Long for Heaven, where the fulneſs of thoſe joys is, whereof theſe you taſte are but the earneſts and firſt-fruits.*

One deſign of God in giving them, is to ſet us a longing after Heaven; to help our conceptions, and raiſe our affections: if theſe be ſo ſweet, what muſt they be? *Rom.* 8. 23. *We which have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit, even we our ſelves, groan within our ſelves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* We are not to ſit down ſatisfied, and ſay we have enough in theſe firſt-fruits; but they are given to ſet us a groaning after the fulneſs of thoſe enjoyments. This anſwers God's end in giving them.

*Advice* 10. Laſtly, *Improve every ſpiritual comfort you have from Chriſt, unto greater chearfulneſs in the paths of obedience to Chriſt.*

This is another end for which God communicates them, that our Souls being refreſhed by them, we might pluck up our feet the more nimbly in the paths of duty: *Pſal.* 119. 32. *Then will I run the ways of thy commandments, when thou ſhalt enlarge my heart.* Now God expects that you pray more frequently, meditate more delightfully, and perform every duty more cheerfully: And this is the way to perpetuate your comforts. How many Chriſtians go on droopingly in the ways of duty for want of thoſe encouragements you enjoy?

# SERMON XI.

## Revel. III. 20.

—— *I will ſup with him, and he with me.*

WE have heard the firſt encouragement or argument of Chriſt, to perſwade the Hearts of ſinners to open to him, *viz. That he will come in to them*, and that not empty handed; *He will alſo Sup with them:* and to make the encouragement compleat and full, he here adds, *And he with me.* This laſt clauſe ſets forth that ſpiritual Soul-refreſhing communion which is betwixt Chriſt and believers; begun in this World, compleated and perfected in the World to come. Hence our eleventh Obſervation is,

Doct. 11. *That there is a mutual, ſweet and intimate communion betwixt Jeſus Chriſt and Believers in this World.*

Communion with Chriſt is frequent in the lips of many Men, but a hidden myſtery to the Souls of moſt Men. This Atheiſtical age ſcoffs, and ridicules it, as Enthuſiaſm, and Fanaticiſm; but the Saints find that reality, and incomparable ſweetneſs in it, that they would not part with it for Ten thouſand Worlds. When the *Roman* Soldiers entred the *Temple* at *Jeruſalem*, and found no Image there, as they uſed to have in their own *Idolatrous* Temples; they gave out in a Jeer, that the Jews worſhipped the Clouds. Thus prophane *Atheiſts* ſcoff at the moſt ſolemn, awful and ſweeteſt part of internal Religion, as a mere fancy; but the thing is real, ſure, and ſenſible: if there be truth in any thing in the World, there is truth in this, That there are real intercourſes betwixt the viſible and inviſible World; betwixt Chriſt, and the Souls of believers, which we here call communion: 1 *John* 1. 3. *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Chriſt Jeſus.* 'Tis really and truly ſo, we impoſe not upon the World, we tell you no more than we have felt. The life of *Enoch* is call'd *his walking with God*, *Gen.* 5. 24. O ſweet and pleaſant walk! All pleaſures, all joys are in that walk with God. *Bleſſed are the people that hear the joyful ſound; they ſhall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance*, Pſal. 89. 15. The joyful ſound there ſpoken of, was the ſound of the trumpet, which called the people to the ſolemn Aſſemblies, where they walked in the light of God's countenance, the ſweet manifeſtations of his favour; and becauſe the World is ſo apt to ſuſpect the reality and certainty of this Doctrin, the Apoſtle again aſſerts it, *Phil.* 3. 20. *Truly our converſation is in Heaven.* We breath below, but we live above; we walk on Earth, but our converſation is in Heaven. To open this Point three things muſt come under conſideration.

1. What Communion with Chriſt is.
2. That there is ſuch a Communion betwixt him and Believers.
3. The Excellency of this communion.

Firſt, What Communion with Chriſt is in the general nature of it. To open this it muſt be conſidered that there is a twofold Communion.

1. A ſtate of Communion.
2. Actual Communion.

The firſt is fundamental to the ſecond; we can have no actual Communion with the Father, Son or Spirit, till we be firſt brought into a ſtate of Communion. This ſtate of Communion is in Scripture called κοινωνία, our fellowſhip or partnerſhip with Chriſt: Such a Fellowſhip as Merchants have in one and the ſame Ship and Cargo; where one hath more and another leſs, but however a joint tho unequal intereſt; one lives in one Kingdom, another in another Kingdom, but they are jointly intereſted in the ſame Goods. This compariſon muſt not be ſtretcht beyond its intention, which is to ſhew nothing but this, that Chriſt and Believers are co-partners, or co-heirs in the ſame inheritance: hence they are called, *Pſal.* 45. 7. his fellows; *God even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows:* and again, *Rom.* 8. 17. *If Children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt.* Chriſt ſtates his people, gives them a right and title not only to himſelf, but to thoſe good things purchaſed by him, yea, and the very Glory he now enjoys in Heaven, *John* 17. 22. *The glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them.*

'Tis true, there are ſome things in Chriſt which are peculiar to himſelf, and incommunicable to any creature, as his Eternity, Conſubſtantiality with his Father, *&c.* neither have we fellowſhip in his mediatorial Works; we have the fruits and benefits of them, but no partnerſhip with him in the glory and honour of them; that is peculiarly his own: and tho it be ſaid in the Scriptures, that believers *are righteous as he is righteous*, yet the meaning is not that they can juſtifie others, as Chriſt doth; no, they are juſtified by him, but cannot communicate righteouſneſs to others as Chriſt doth to them. But there are other things wherein there is a partnerſhip betwixt Chriſt and his people; among others, they partake with him in the Spirit of Sanctification on Earth, and Glory in Heaven: The ſame Spirit of holineſs which dwells in Chriſt without meaſure, is communicated by him to the Saints in meaſure, 1 *John* 4. 13. *He hath given us of his Spirit.* And as Chriſt communicates his Spirit to the Saints, ſo he communicates the glory of Heaven to them; not that they ſhall be as glorious in Heaven as Chriſt is; no, no, he will be known among the Saints in glory, as the Sun is known from the leſſer Stars. Thus briefly of the ſtate of Communion, which is called in Scripture *our being made nigh*, Eph. 2. 13. and indeed we muſt be made nigh, before we can actually draw nigh. We muſt be put into a ſtate of fellowſhip, before ever we can have actual communion with God.

2. Beſide this ſtate of Communion, there is alſo an actual Communion, which the Saints have in this World with the Father and Son in the duties of Religion. This is that I am here ingaged to open: This is our ſupping with Chriſt, and his with us; and for clearneſs ſake I ſhall open it both,

1. Negatively, What it is not.
2. Poſitively, What it is.

1. Negatively, What it is not; for I find perſons are hugely apt to miſtake in this matter, taking that for Communion with God which is not ſo: and here let it be noted,

(1.) That Communion with God doth not conſiſt in the bare performance of Religious duties. I do not ſay that Men may have Communion with God in this World without duties, 'tis a deluſion of Satan to think ſo; but this is what I ſay, that Communion with God conſiſteth not in the mere performance of Duties. Communion and Duties of Religion are two things ſeparable one from the other. Men may multiply Duties, and yet be ſtrangers to Communion with God in them; even humiliation and faſting days may be kept by Souls that are eſtranged from Communion with the Lord, *Zach.* 7. 5. *Speak unto all the people of the Land, and unto the Prieſts, ſaying, When ye faſted and mourned in the fifth, and ſeventh month; even theſe ſeventy years, did ye at all faſt unto me, even unto me? q. d.* Had your Souls pure intentions and reſpects in thoſe duties to my glory? Had you ſpecial Communion with me, or I with you in thoſe duties? Did you ever feel your Souls in theſe days wounded for ſin? Or did you not faſt out of cuſtom, and mourn for company? God may be near in Mens mouths, and at the ſame time far from their reins, *Jer.* 12. 2. Religious words may flow out of Mens lips, when not one drop of Religion touches their reins and hearts; that is, the ſecret inward powers of their Souls: you cannot therefore ſafely depend upon this, Chriſt rejects this plea, *Matth.* 7. 22. Get a better evidence of Communion with God than this, or you will certainly come ſhort of your expectation. *I know you not,* ſaith Chriſt; there was never any Spiritual acquaintance betwixt your Souls and me; I know you not in a way of approbation.

(2.) Neither do all ſtirrings and workings of the affections in duties, infallibly evidence and prove Communion betwixt Chriſt and that Soul; for it is poſſible, yea common, to have the affections raiſed in a natural way, and by external motives in the duties of Religion; this you ſee in that Example, *Ezek.* 33. 32. *And lo thou art unto them as a very lovely ſong, of one that hath a pleaſant voice, and can play well on an inſtrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.* The ſweet modulation of the Prophet's voice was like the skilful touch of a rare muſical Inſtrument, which in a natural way moved and excited their affections. Thus *John's* hearers rejoiced in his Miniſtry for a ſeaſon. I confeſs, this is very apt to caſt Souls into a miſtake of their condition. They diſtinguiſh not betwixt the influences that come upon their affections from without, from extrinſick things, and thoſe that are purely inward, divine, and ſpiritual. But then,

2. To ſhew you *poſitively* what Communion with God is. Here we muſt conſider two things,

1. What things it preſuppoſes in us.
2. Wherein the nature of it conſiſts.

1. There are divers things prerequired and preſuppoſed unto all actual Communion with God in Duties; and where theſe things are wanting, Men can have no Communion with God. You may have Communion with his People, and Communion with his Ordinances, but not Communion with God and Chriſt in them. And theſe prerequiſites are three.

(1.) *Union with Chriſt* is fundamentally neceſſary to all Communion with him. All Communion is founded in Union; and where there is no Union, there can be no Communion. *You know* (ſaith an excellent Perſon) *the member receives nothing from the head, unleſs it be united to it; nor the branch from the root. All is yours, and ye are Chriſt's,* 1 Cor. 3. 23. *Here's a vaſt poſſeſſion, but all founded upon Union: as all Communion is founded upon Union, ſo all Union terminates in Communion; and the cloſer the Union, the fuller is the Communion.*

*Dr.* Jacomb *on* Rom. 8. p. 69.

Before our Union with Chriſt, we are ſtrangers unto God, *Eph.* 2. 13. *We live without God in the World*; 'tis in Chriſt that we are made nigh; 'tis in the beloved we are made accepted. Whilſt we are in the ſtate of alienation from Chriſt, we have no more to do with the communications of joy and peace, with the ſeals and earneſts of the Spirit, than a *Native Indian* hath with the privileges of *London*. *If any man open to me,* ſaith Chriſt, *I will come in to him, and ſup with him, and he with me.*

(2.) Communion with God preſuppoſes the habits of Grace implanted in the Soul by ſanctification; a ſound and ſincere change of Heart. No ſanctification, no communion; 1 *John* 1. 6. *If we ſay we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth.* The Apoſtle gives the lie to ſuch bold pretenders. *The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him, unto all that call upon him in truth:* That latter clauſe reſtrains all ſpiritual communion unto upright Souls. *For an Hypocrite ſhall not come before him,* Job 13. 16.

(3.) Communion with God doth not only ſuppoſe Grace implanted, but alſo implanted grace excited, grace in act: For a Man may have the habits of faith, love and delight in him, and yet be without actual Communion with God; for by this Grace is awakened and put into act. A believer when he is aſleep, and acts no grace, is in a ſtate of Communion with God; but if he will have actual communion, his faith, love, and delight muſt be awakened; they muſt not lie aſleep in the habit. *Thou ſaidſt, ſeek my face; my heart ſaid unto thee, thy face Lord will I ſeek,* Pſal. 27. 8. It was in order to actual communion with Chriſt that the Church ſo earneſtly begs freſh influences of the Spirit to excite her graces into act, *Cant.* 4. 16. *Awake O North-wind, and come thou South, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits.* And tho believers are not ſo to wait for the influences of the Spirit, as in the mean time to neglect all proper outward means of exciting their own graces, engaging their Hearts to approach to God, *Jer.* 30. 21. yet certainly it is the work of God's Spirit, and without him we can do nothing to any purpoſe. The Seamen may trim the Sails, weigh the Anchor, put all into a ſailing poſture; but till a gale come from Heaven there is little or no motion. The ſame Spirit that plants the habits, is he alſo that excites the acts of grace. Theſe three things therefore are pre-requiſites unto all communion with God.

2. Next let us conſider wherein this Heavenly privilege of communion with God conſiſts; and more generally it will be found to lie in a ſpiritual correſpondency betwixt Chriſt and the Soul. God lets forth influences upon our Souls, and we by the aſſiſtance of his Spirit make returns again unto God. Communion is a mutual action; ſo in the Text, *I will ſup with him, and he with me.* We cry to God, and God anſwers that cry, by the incomes of Spiritual grace upon the Soul; *Pſal.* 138. 3. *In the day that I cried thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthnedſt me with ſtrength in my Soul.* More particularly, there are many ways or methods wherein Men have this Spiritual correſpondence or communion with God, *viz.*

1. In the contemplation of his Attributes.
2. In the exerciſes of Grace in Religious duties.
3. In his various Providences. In all theſe the Saints have communion with him.

1. There is a ſweet and ſenſible communion betwixt God and his people *in the contemplation of the divine Attributes*, and the impreſſions God makes by them upon our Souls whilſt we meditate on them. As for inſtance,

(1.) Sometimes the Lord diſcovers and manifeſts to the Souls of his people his *immenſe Greatneſs*; the manifeſtation of which Attribute makes an awful humbling impreſſion upon the Soul, makes them ſeem as nothing to themſelves. Thus when *Abraham*, that great believer, conſidered the greatneſs of that God with whom he had to do; that ſight of God ſeems to reduce him to his firſt principles, to crumble him as it were into duſt and aſhes again, *Gen.* 18. 27. *I that am but duſt and aſhes have taken upon me to ſpeak unto God.* He now looks upon himſelf as a heap of vileneſs and unworthineſs: ſo *David*, Pſal. 8. 12. *When I conſider thy Heavens, the work of thy hands, the Moon and the Stars which thou haſt made*, (from whence he inferr'd the greatneſs of the Creator) *Lord what is Man, that thou art mindful of him? q.d.* When I conſider what a great God the Creator of the World is, I am juſtly aſtoniſhed that ever he ſhould ſet his Heart upon ſo vile a thing as Man. When men compare themſelves among themſelves, and meaſure themſelves by themſelves, their Spirits are apt to ſwell with pride; but would they look up to God, as theſe holy men did, they would admire his condeſcenſion. And this is Communion with God in the meditation of his immenſe Greatneſs.

(2.) The repreſentations and meditations of the *Purity and Holineſs of God*, working ſhame and deep abaſement in the Soul, for the pollutions and ſinful filthineſs that is in it. This is communion with God, and an excellent way of fellowſhip with him. Thus when a repreſentation of God in his Holineſs was made unto the Prophet, *Iſa.* 6. 3, 4, 5. there were the *Seraphims*, covering their faces with their wings, and crying one to another, ſaying, *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty; the Earth is full of his glory.* The effect this produced, or the return made by the Prophet to this manifeſtation of God in his holineſs, was a deep abaſement of Soul for his unſutableneſs to ſo holy a God: *verſ.* 5. *Then ſaid I, Wo is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a man of unclean lips*, &c. And this is real communion with God in his holineſs. Thus *Job* who had ſtifly defended his own integrity againſt men, yet when God enters the liſts with him, and he ſaw what a great and holy God he had to do with, cried out, *Job* 40. 4, 5. *Behold, I am vile, what ſhall I anſwer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I ſpoken, but I will not anſwer; yea twice, but I will proceed no further.* q. d. I have done, Lord, I have done; I could anſwer men, but I cannot anſwer thee: thou art holy, but I am vile.

(3.) There are ſometimes repreſentations of the *Goodneſs and Mercy of God* made unto the Souls of his people. When theſe produce an ingenuous thaw and melting of the Heart into an humble, thankful admiration of it, and an anſwerable care of pleaſing him in the ways of obedience; then have men communion with God in his goodneſs. The goodneſs of God runs down to men in a double channel; his goodneſs to their Bodies, in external providences; his goodneſs to their Souls, in ſpiritual mercies. When the goodneſs of God either way draws forth the love, and gratitude of the Soul to the God of our mercies; then have we real communion with him: Thus *Jacob*, Gen. 32. 9, 10. *And* Jacob *ſaid, O God of my Father* Abraham, *and God of my Father* Iſaac; *which ſaidſt unto me, Return unto thy Country, and to thy Kindred, and I will deal well with thee. I am not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant; for with my ſtaff I paſſed over this* Jordan, *and now I am become two bands.* Ah Lord, I ſee a multitude of mercies round about me, and the leaſt of them is greater than I. So *David*, 1 *Chron.* 17. 16, 17. *And* David *the King came and ſat before the Lord, and ſaid, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto? And yet this was a ſmall thing in thine eyes, O God*, &c. *what can* David *ſpeak more to thee?* You ſee in theſe inſtances what effects the goodneſs of God, even in inferiour outward mercies, uſeth to produce in ſanctified hearts. But then, if you come to ſpiritual mercies, and ponder the goodneſs of God to your Souls, in pardoning, accepting, and ſaving ſuch vile ſinful creatures as you have been; this much more affects the heart, and overwhelms it with a holy aſtoniſhment; as you ſee in *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. *The grace of our Lord was abundant: I was a perſecutor, a blaſphemer, yet I obtained mercy.* So *Mary*, that notorious ſinner, when pardoning grace appeared to her, into what a flood of tears, into what tranſports of love did the ſight of mercy caſt her Soul! She wept, and waſht her Saviours feet with tears of joy and thankfulneſs, *Luke* 7. 44. No terrors of the Law, no frights of Hell, thaw the heart like the appreherſions of pardoning mercy.

(4.) Sometimes there are ſpecial repreſentations of the *Veracity and Faithfulneſs of God*, made unto his People, begetting truſt and holy confidence in their Souls; and when they do ſo, then have men communion with God in his Faithfulneſs. Thus *Heb.* 13. 5, 6. *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee.* There is a diſcovery of the faithfulneſs of God, and what follows upon this? See *verſ.* 6. *So that we may boldly ſay, The Lord is our God; we will not fear what man can do unto us.* Here's faithfulneſs in God producing truſt and confidence in the Believer. This is that reciprocation, that ſweet fellowſhip and communion betwixt

twixt God and a Believer with reſpect to his fidelity. *Behold, God is my ſalvation, I will truſt and not be afraid*, *Iſa.* 12. 2. And truly, friend, this is what the Lord juſtly expects from thee, even thy truſt and confidence in him, thy ſteddy dependance on him, in return to all the diſcoveries of his Faithfulneſs to thee, both in his Word and Providences.

(5.) There are manifeſtations of the *Anger and Diſpleaſure of God*, by the hiding of his face from them, and the frowns of his Providence: when theſe produce repentance, and deep humiliation for ſin, an unquietneſs, a reſtleſneſs of Spirit till he reſtore his Favour, and manifeſt his Reconciliation to the Soul; even here alſo is real communion betwixt God and the Soul, *Pſal.* 30. 7. *Thou hideſt thy face, and I was troubled.* Nor will a gracious Soul reſt there, but will take pains to ſue out a freſh pardon, *Pſal.* 51. 8. *Make me to hear joy and gladneſs, that the bones which thou haſt broken may rejoice*; *reſtore unto me the joys of thy ſalvation*, verſ. 12.

I cannot omit to detect a great miſtake here, even amongſt God's own people: many of them underſtand not what communion there ſhould be with God, under the manifeſtations of his diſpleaſure for ſin: they know the affectionate meltings of their Souls into love, praiſe, *&c.* to be communion with God; but that the ſhame, grief and ſorrow, produced in them by the manifeſtations of God's diſpleaſure; I ſay, that even in theſe things there may be communion with God, they underſtand not. But let me tell thee, that even ſuch things as theſe are the choice fruits of the Spirit of Adoption, and that in them thy Soul hath as real and beneficial communion with God, as in the greateſt tranſports of ſpiritual joy and comfort. O 'tis a bleſſed frame to be before the Lord, as *Ezra* was, after conviction of thy looſneſs, careleſneſs, and ſpiritual defilements, the conſequents of thoſe ſins; ſaying with him, *O my God, I am aſhamed, and even bluſh to lift up my face unto thee*, Ezra 9. 6. Shame and bluſhing are as excellent ſigns of communion with God, as the ſweeteſt ſmiles.

Laſtly, There are repreſentations and ſpecial contemplations of the *Omniſcience of God*, producing ſincerity, comfort in appeals, and recourſe to it in doubts of our own uprightneſs. And this alſo is a choice and excellent method of communion with God. (1.) When the Omniſcience of God ſtrongly obliges the Soul to ſincerity and uprightneſs, as it did *David*, *Pſal.* 139. 11, 12. compared with *Pſal.* 18. 23. *I was alſo upright before him.* The conſideration that he was always before the Eye of God, was his preſervative from iniquity, yea, from his own iniquity. (2.) When it produceth comforts in appeals to it, as it did in *Hezekiah*, 2 Kings 20. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, that I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.* So *Job* 10. 7. he alſo appeals to this attribute, *Thou knoweſt that I am not wicked.* So did *Jeremiah*, Chap. 12. 3. *But thou, O Lord, knoweſt me, thou haſt ſeen me, and tried my heart towards thee.* (3.) When we have recourſe to it, under doubts and fears of our own uprightneſs. Thus did *David*, Pſal. 139. 23. *Search me, O God, and try my heart; prove me, and ſee my reins*; *ſee if there be any way of wickedneſs in me.* In all theſe attributes of God, Chriſtians have real and ſweet communion with him, which was the firſt thing to be opened, Communion with God in the meditation of his Attributes.

2. The next method of Communion with God, is *in the exerciſe of our Graces in the various duties of Religion*; in Prayer, Hearing, Sacraments, *&c.* in all which the Spirit of the Lord influences the Graces of his people, and they return the fruits thereof in ſome meaſure to him. As God hath planted various graces in regenerate Souls, ſo he hath appointed various duties to exerciſe and draw forth thoſe graces; and when they do ſo, then have his people ſweet actual communion with him. And,

(1.) To begin with the firſt grace that ſhews it ſelf in the Soul of a Chriſtian, to wit, Repentance and Sorrow for ſin. In the exerciſe of this grace of Repentance the Soul pours out it ſelf before the Lord, with much bitterneſs and brokenneſs of Heart caſts forth its ſorrows; which ſorrows are as ſo much ſeed ſown; and in return thereto the Lord uſually ſends an anſwer of peace: *Pſal.* 32. 4, 5. *I ſaid, I will confeſs my tranſgreſſion, and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin.* Here's a voice of ſorrow ſent up, and a voice of peace coming down; which is real communion betwixt God and Man in the exerciſes of Repentance.

(2.) As there are ſeaſons in duty, wherein the Sains exerciſe their repentance, and the Lord returns peace; ſo likewiſe the Lord helps them in their duties to act their *faith*, in return whereunto they find from the Lord inward ſupport, reſt and refreſhment, *Pſal.* 27. 13. *I had fainted unleſs I had believed.* And oft-times an aſſurance of the mercies they have acted their faith about, 1 *John* 5. 14.

(3.) The Lord many times draws forth eminent degrees of our *Love* to him, in the courſe of our duties; the heart is filled with love to Chriſt. The ſtrength of the Soul is drawn forth to Chriſt in love; and this the Lord repays in kind, love for love: *John* 14. 21. *He that loveth me, my Father will love him*; *and we will come and make our abode with him.* Here is ſweet communion with God in the exerciſes of Love. O what a rich trade do Chriſtians drive this way in their duties and exerciſes of grace!

(4.) To mention no more, in the duties of *Paſſive Obedience* Chriſtians are enabled to exerciſe their patience, meekneſs, and long-ſuffering for Chriſt; in return to which, the Lord gives them the ſingular conſolations of his Spirit, double returns of joy; *The Spirit of Glory and of God reſteth upon them*, 1 Pet. 4. 13, 14. The Lord ſtrengthens them with paſſive fortitude, with all might in the inner-man, unto all long-ſuffering; but the reward of that long-ſuffering is joyfulneſs, *Col.* 1. 11. This is the trade they drive with Heaven.

3. Beſide communion with God in the contemplation of his Attributes, and graces exerciſed in the courſe of duties, there is another method of communion with God in the way of his *Providences*, for therein alſo his people walk with him. To give a taſte of this, let us conſider Providence in a fourfold aſpect upon the people of God.

(1.) There are *afflictive Providences*, rods and rebukes, wherewith the Lord chaſtens his children; this is the diſcipline of his houſe, in anſwer whereunto gracious Souls return meek and childlike ſubmiſſion, a fruit of the Spirit of Adoption; they are brought to accept the puniſhment of their iniquities. And herein lies communion with God under the rod; this return to the rod may not be preſently made, for there is much ſtubborneſs unmortified in the beſt hearts, *Heb.* 12. 7. but this is the fruit it ſhall yield; and when it doth, there is real communion between God and the afflicted Soul. Let not Chriſtians miſtake themſelves, if when God is ſmiting they are humbling, ſearching, and bleſſing God for the diſcoveries of ſin made by their afflictions; admiring his Wiſdom, in timing, moderating, and chuſing the Rod; kiſſing it with a childlike ſubmiſſion; and ſaying, it is good for me that I have been afflicted: that Soul hath real communion with God, though it may be for a time without joy.

(2.) There are times wherein *Providence ſtraitens* the people of God; when the waters of comfort ebb, and run very low; wants pinch. If then the Soul returns filial dependance upon fatherly care, ſaying with *David*, Pſal. 23. 1. *The Lord is my ſhepherd, I ſhall not want*; It belongs to him to provide, and to me to depend; I will truſt my Father's care and love: Here now is ſweet communion with God under pinching wants. The wants of the Body enrich the Soul: Outward ſtraitnings are the occaſions of inward enlargements. O ſee from hence how good it is to have an intereſt in God as a Father, whatever changes of Providence may come upon you.

(3.) There are ſeaſons wherein the Lord expoſes his people to eminent and viſible dangers; when to the Eye of ſenſe there is no way of eſcape. Now when this produces truſt in God, and reſignation to the pleaſure of his Will; here is communion with God in times of diſtreſs and difficulty: thus *David*, Pſal. 56. 3. *At what time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee*, q. d. Father, I ſee a ſtorm riſing, thy poor child comes under his Fathers roof for ſhelter; for whither ſhould a diſtreſſed Child go but to his Father? And then as to the iſſues and events of doubtful Providences, when the Soul reſigns and leaves it ſelf to the wiſe diſpoſal of the Will of God, as *David*, in 2 *Sam.* 15. 25, 26. *Here am I, let him do with me as ſeemeth good in his ſight:* This is real and ſweet communion with God in his Providences. And ſo much for the nature of Communion with God.

Secondly, In the next place, I ſhall evidence the reality of communion with God, and prove it to be no fancy. I confeſs it grieves me to be put upon the proof of this, but the Atheiſm and Profaneneſs of the age we live in ſeems to make it neceſſary; for many men will allow nothing for certain but what falls under the cognizance of Senſe. And O that they had their ſpiritual Senſes exerciſed! then they would ſenſibly diſcern the reality of theſe things. But to put the matter out of queſtion, I ſhall evidence the truth and reality of the Saints communion with God divers ways.

*Evid.* 1. From the Saints union with Chriſt: if there be a *union* betwixt Chriſt and Believers, then of neceſſity there muſt be a *communion* between them alſo. Now the whole Word of God, which you profeſs to be the rule of your Faith, plainly aſſerts this union betwixt Chriſt and Believers; a union like that betwixt the branches and the root, *John* 15. 4, 5. or that betwixt the head and the members, *Eph.* 4. 16. Now if Chriſt be to believers as the root to the branches, and as the head to the members; then of neceſſity there muſt be a communion between them: For if there were not a communion, there could be no communications; and if no communications, no life. For it is by the communication of vital ſap and ſpirits, from the root and from the head, that the branches and members ſubſiſt and live.

*Evid.* 2. There is a *cohabitation* of Chriſt with believers; he dwells with them, yea, he dwells in them, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *I will dwell in them, and walk in them.* The Soul of a believer is the Temple of Chriſt, yea, his living Temple, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. And if Chriſt dwell with them, yea, if he dwell in them and walk in them, then certainly there muſt be communion betwixt him and them; if they live together, they muſt converſe together. A man indeed may dwell in his houſe, and yet cannot be ſaid to have communion with it; but the Saints are a living houſe, they are the living Temples of Chriſt; and he cannot dwell in ſuch Temples capable of communion with him, and yet have no communion with them.

*Evid.* 3. The reality of communion betwixt God and the Saints is undeniably evinced from all the Spiritual relations into which God hath taken them. Every believer is the Child of God, and the Spouſe of Chriſt. God is the Believer's Father, and the Church is the Lamb's Wife. Chriſt calls the Believer not only his Servant, but Friend; Henceforth I call you not Servants, but Friends, *&c.* Now, if God be the Believer's Father, and the Believer be God's own Child, certainly there muſt be communion between them. If Chriſt be the Believer's Huſband, and the Believer be Chriſt's Spouſe, there muſt be communion between him and them. What, no communion between the Father and his Children, the Huſband and the Wife? We muſt either renounce and deny all ſuch relations to him, and therein renounce our Bibles; or elſe yield the concluſion, that there is a real communion betwixt Chriſt and Believers.

*Evid.* 4. The reality of communion with God evidently appears from the inſtitution, and appointment of ſo many Ordinances, and duties of Religion, on purpoſe to maintain daily communion betwixt Chriſt and his People. As to inſtance but in that one inſtitution of *Prayer*, a duty appointed on purpoſe for the Soul's meeting with God, and communion with him: *James* 4. 8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.* Now to what purpoſe can it be conceived ſuch an Ordinance is appointed for the Soul's drawing nigh to God, and God to it; if there be no ſuch thing as communion to be enjoyed with him? If communion with God were a mere *Phantom*, as the carnal World thinks it to be, what encouragement have the Saints to bow their knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? But ſurely there is an acceſs to God in prayer, *Eph.* 3. 12. *In whom we have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence.* Acceſs to what? If God be not there, and that there can be no communion with him, what means that acceſs? *I will meet you, ſaith the Lord, and I will commune with you in every place where I record my Name*, Exod. 25. 22. Certainly dutys had never been appointed, but for the ſake of God's communing with us, and ours with him.

*Evid.* 5. This is yet further evidenced from the mutual deſires both of Chriſt and his People to be in ſweet and intimate communion one with the other. The Scripture ſpeaks much of the Saints vehement deſires of communion with Chriſt, and of Chriſt's deſires after communion with the Saints, and of both jointly. The Saints deſires after communion with him are frequent in all the Scriptures, ſee *Pſal.* 63. 1, 2, 3. *Pſal.* 42. 1. *Pſal.* 119. 20. and the like throughout the New Teſtament. And Chriſt is no leſs deſirous, yea, he is much more deſirous of communion with us than we are with him. Conſider that expreſſion of his to the Spouſe, in *Cant.* 8. 13. *O thou that dwelleſt in the Gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cauſe me to hear it.* As if he ſhould ſay, O my people, you frequently converſe one with another, you talk daily together; why ſhall not you and I converſe one with another? You ſpeak often to men, O that you would ſpeak more frequently to me! *Let me ſee thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for thy voice is ſweet, and thy countenance comely.* And then theſe deſires are mutually expreſt one to another, *Rev.* 22. 20. *Surely* (ſaith Chriſt) *I come quickly, Amen; even ſo come, Lord Jeſus,* ſaith the Church. Now if there be ſuch vehement mutual deſires after communion betwixt Chriſt and his people in this World; then certainly there is ſuch a thing as real communion between them, or elſe both muſt live a very reſtleſs and diſſatisfied life.

*Evid.* 6. The mutual complaints that are found on both ſides of the interruption of communion, plainly prove there is ſuch a thing. If God complain of his people for their eſtrangements from him, and the Saints complain to God about his ſilence to them, and the hidings of his face from them: Surely then there muſt be a communion between them, or elſe there could be no ground of complaints for the interruptions of it. But it is manifeſt God doth complain of his people for their eſtrangements from him, *Jer.* 2. 5. *Thus ſaith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindneſs of thy youth, and the love of thy eſpouſals. What iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?* As if he ſhould ſay, You and I have been better acquainted in days paſt; what cauſe have I given for your eſtrangements from me? And thus Chriſt in like manner complains of the Church of *Epheſus*; after he had commended many things in her, yet one thing grieves and troubles him, *Rev.* 2. 4. *Nevertheleſs I have ſomewhat againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love.* And then on the other ſide, when the Lord hides his face, and ſeems to eſtrange himſelf from his people; what ſad laments and moans do they make about it, as an affliction they know not how to bear? Thus *Heman*, Pſal. 88. 14. *Lord, why caſteſt thou off my Soul? Why hideſt thou thy face from me?* So *Pſal.* 27. 9. *Hide not thy face from me, put not thy ſervant away in anger.* This is what they cannot bear.

*Evid.* 7. The reality of communion with God is made viſible to others, in the ſenſible effects of it upon the Saints that enjoy it. There are viſible ſigns and tokens of it appearing to the conviction of others. Thus that marvelous change that appeared upon the very countenance of *Hannah*; after ſhe had poured out her heart in prayer, and the Lord had anſwered her, it is noted, 1 *Sam.* 1. 18. *She went away, and her countenance was no more ſad.* You might have read in her *face* that God had ſpoken peace and ſatisfaction to her *heart*. Thus when the Diſciples had been with Chriſt, the mark of communion with him was viſible to others, *Acts* 4. 13. *Now when they ſaw the boldneſs of* Peter *and* John, *they marvelled, and took knowledg of them that they had been with Jeſus.* 'Tis ſweet, Chriſtian, when the heavenly chearineſs, and ſpirituality of thy converſes with men, ſhall convince others that thou haſt been with Jeſus.

*Evid.* 8. We may prove the reality of communion with God, from the impoſſibility of ſuſtaining thoſe troubles the Saints do without it. If prayers did not go up, and anſwers come down, there were no living for a Chriſtian in this World. Prayer is the outlet of the Saints ſorrows, and the inlet of their ſupports and comforts, *Rom.* 8.26. Say not, other men have their troubles as well as the Saints, and yet they make a ſhift to bear them without the help of communion with God. 'Tis true, carnal men have their troubles, and thoſe troubles are often too heavy for them. *The ſorrows of the world work death*; but carnal men have no ſuch troubles as the Saints have, for they have their inward ſpiritual troubles, as well as their outward troubles. And inward troubles are the ſinking troubles; but this way the ſtrength of God comes in to ſuccour them: and except they had a God to go to, and fetch comfort from, they could never bear them. *Pſal.* 27. 13. *I had fainted unleſs I had believed. Paul* had ſunk under the buffetings of Satan, unleſs he had gone once and again to his God, and received this anſwer, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. 12. 9.

*Evid.* 9. We conclude the reality of communion with God, from the end of the Saints *Vocation*. We read frequently in Scripture of effectual calling; now what is that to which God calls his people out of the ſtate of nature, but unto fellowſhip and communion with Jeſus Chriſt? 1 Cor. 1. 9. *God is faithful, by whom ye are called unto the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* They are called, you ſee, into a life of communion with Chriſt; therefore certainly there is ſuch a communion, elſe the Saints are called to the enjoyment of a fancy, inſtead of a privilege, which is the greateſt reproach that can be caſt upon the faithful God that called them.

*Evid.* 10. Laſtly, In a word, the characters and deſcriptions given to the Saints in Scripture evidently prove their life of communion with God. The Men of this World are manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from the people of God in Scripture; they are called, *The Children of this World*; the Saints, *The Children of light*, Luke 16. 8. They are ſaid to be *after the fleſh*, Saints to be *after the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 5. They *mind earthly things*, but the Saints *converſation is in Heaven*, Phil. 3. 19, 20. By all which it undeniably appears that there is a reality in the Doctrin of communion betwixt Chriſt and his people. We are not impoſed upon, 'tis no cunningly deviſed fable; but a thing whoſe foundation is as ſure as its nature is ſweet.

Thirdly, In the laſt place, I ſhall ſhew you the tranſcendent excellency of this life of communion with God; it is the life of our Life, the joy of our Hearts, a Heaven upon Earth; as will appear by the Twenty Excellencies thereof following.

I. *Excellency.* It is the *aſſimilating* Inſtrument whereby the Soul is moulded and faſhioned after the Image of God. This is the Excellency of communion with God, to make the Soul like him.

There is a twofold *aſſimilation*, or conformity of the Soul to God, the one *perfect* and compleat, the other *inchoate* and in part. Perfect aſſimilation is the privilege of the perfect ſtate, reſulting from the immediate viſion and perfect communion the Soul hath with God in glory; 1 *John* 3. 2. *When he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* Perfect viſion produceth perfect aſſimilation; but the Soul's aſſimilation or imperfect conformity to God in this World, is wrought and gradually carried on by daily communion with him. And as our communion with God here grows up more and more into ſpirituality and power, ſo in an anſwerable degree doth our conformity to him advance; 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, as by the ſpirit of the Lord.* All ſorts of communion among men have an aſſimilating efficacy; he that walks in vain company, is made vainer than he was before; and he that walks in ſpiritual heavenly company, will be ordinarily more ſerious than he was before: but nothing ſo transforms the Spirit of a man, as communion with God doth. Thoſe are moſt like unto God that converſe moſt frequently with him. The beauty of the Lord is upon thoſe Souls; it figures the Spirit of a Man after the Divine pattern. That's the firſt Excellency of communion with God, it aſſimilates them to God.

II. *Excellency.* It is the *beauty* of the Soul, in the Eyes of God, and all good men; it makes the face to ſhine. No outward ſplendor attracts like this; it makes a man the moſt deſirable companion in the whole World. 1 *John* 1. 3. *Theſe things have I written unto you, that you might have fellowſhip with us; and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* This was the great and only inducement the *Apoſtle* makes uſe of to draw the World into fellowſhip with the Saints, that their fellowſhip is with God. And if there were ten thouſand other inducements, yet none like this. You read of a bleſſed time, *Zech.* 8. when the Earth ſhall be full of Holineſs; when the *Jews* that are now as a loſt Generation to the eye of ſenſe, ſhall be called, and an eminent degree of Sanctification ſhall be viſible in them; and then ſee the effect of this, *verſ.* 23. *In thoſe days ten men ſhall take hold out of all languages of the Nations, even ſhall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, ſaying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.* This is the powerful attractive, *the Lord is with you*; 'tis the effect of communion with God which makes the righteous more excellent than his neighbour, *Prov.* 12. 26. What a vaſt and viſible difference doth this make between one man and another! How heavenly, ſweet and deſirable are the converſes and company of ſome men! How frothy, burdenſom, and unprofitable is the company of others! And what makes the difference but only this, the one walks in communion with God, the other is alienated from the life of God!

III. *Excellency.* It is the *Center* which reſts the motions of a weary Soul; 'tis the Reſt and Refreſhment of a Man's Spirit, *Pſal.* 116. 7. *Return unto thy Reſt, O my Soul.* When we attain perfect Communion with God in Heaven, we attain to perfect Reſt; and all the Reſt the Spirit of man finds on Earth, is found in Communion with God. Take a ſanctified perſon who hath intermitted for ſome time his communion with the Lord; and ask him, Is your Soul at reſt and eaſe? He will tell you no. The motions of his Soul are like thoſe of a member out of joint, neither comely, nor eaſie. Let that Man recover his ſpiritual frame again, and with it he recovers his Reſt and Comfort. Chriſtians, you meet with variety of troubles in this World; many a ſweet Comfort cut off, many a hopeful Project daſht by the hand of Providence; and what think you is the meaning of thoſe blaſting, diſappointing Providences? Surely this is their deſign and errand, to diſturb your falſe reſt in the boſom of the Creature; to pluck away thoſe pillows you were laying your head upon, that thereby you might be reduced unto God, and recover your loſt communion with him; and ſay with *David*, *Return unto thy Reſt, O my Soul.* Sometimes we are ſettling our ſelves to reſt in an Eſtate, in a Child, or the like: at this time it is uſual with God to ſay, Go Loſſes, ſmite and blaſt ſuch a Mans Eſtate; go Death, and take away the deſire of his Eyes with a ſtroke, that my Child may find reſt nowhere but in me. God is the Ark, the Soul like the Dove *Noah* ſent forth, let it fly where it will, it ſhall find no reſt till it comes back to God.

IV. *Excellency.* It is the *Deſire* of all gracious Souls throughout the World. Wherever there is a gracious Soul, the deſires of that Soul are working after communion with God. As Chriſt was called, *The Deſire of all Nations*; ſo communion with him, is *The Deſire of all Saints*: and this ſpeaks the excellency of it, *Pſal.* 27. 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after; that I might dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life, to ſee the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple*; *i. e.* to enjoy communion with him in the publick Duties of his Worſhip. *One thing have I deſired*, that is, one thing above all other things; ſuch a one, as if God ſhall give me, I can comfortably bear the want of all other things. Let him deny me what he will, if ſo be he will not deny me *this one thing*; this one thing ſhall richly recompenſe the want of all other things. Hence the deſires of the Saints are ſo intenſe and fervent after this one thing, *Pſal.* 42. 1. *My Soul panteth after thee O God*; and *Pſal.* 119. 81. *My Soul fainteth for thy Salvation.* Pſal. 101. 2. *When wilt thou come unto me?* No duties can ſatisfy without it; the Soul cannot bear the delays, much leſs the denials of it. They reckon their lives worth nothing without it. Miniſters may come, Ordinances and Sabbaths may come; but there's no ſatisfaction to the deſires of a gracious Heart till God come too. *O when wilt thou come unto me?*

V. *Excellency.* As it is the *Deſire*, ſo it is the *Delight* of all the Children of God both in Heaven and Earth. As communion with the Saints is the delight of Chriſt, *Cant.* 2. 14. *Let me hear thy voice*; and again *Cant.* 8. 13. *The companions hearken to thy voice, cauſe me to hear it*: So communion with Chriſt is the delight of his people, *Cant.* 2. 3. *I ſat under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet unto my taſte.* 'Tis the pleaſure of Chriſt to ſee the yerning Countenances, the bluſhing Cheeks, the dropping Eyes of his people upon their Knees. And it is the delight of the Saints to ſee a ſmile upon his Face, to hear a voice of pardon and peace from his Lips. I muſt tell you Chriſtians, you muſt look for no ſuch delights as theſe in any earthly enjoyment; none better than theſe till you come home to glory. Communion with God then appears moſt excellent, in as much as it is found to be the deſire and delight of all gracious Souls.

VI. *Excellency.* 'Tis the *Envy* of Satan, that which cuts and grates that wicked Spirit. O how it grates and galls that proud and envious Spirit, to ſee Men and Women enjoying the felicity and pleaſure of that communion with God, from which he himſelf is fallen, and cut off for ever! To ſee the Saints emboſomed in delightful communion with Chriſt, whilſt himſelf feels the pangs of horror and deſpair! This is what he cannot endure to behold. And therefore you ſhall find in your experience, that times of communion with God are uſually buſie times of temptations from the Devil: *Zech.* 3. 1. *And he ſhewed me* Joſhua *the high-Prieſt ſtanding before the Lord, and Satan ſtanding at his right-hand to reſiſt him.* 'Tis well for thee Chriſtian, that thou haſt an *Advocate* ſtanding at God's right-hand to reſiſt and fruſtrate his attempts upon thee; otherwiſe *Satan* would this way deſtroy your communion with God, and make that which is now your delight, to be your terror. Many ways doth the *Devil* oppoſe the Saints communion with God, Sometimes he labours to divert them from it. This buſineſs ſhall fall in, or that occaſion fall out, on purpoſe to divert thy Soul's approach to God; but if he cannot prevail there, then he labours to diſtract your thoughts, and break them into a thouſand vanities. Or if he ſucceed not there, then he attacks you in your return from duty, with Spiritual Pride, Security, *&c.* Theſe fierce oppoſitions of Hell diſcover the worth and excellency of communion with God.

VII. *Excellency.* 'Tis the *End* of all Ordinances and Duties of Religion; God hath inſtituted every Ordinance and Duty, whether publick or private, to beget and maintain communion betwixt himſelf and our Souls. What are Ordinances, Duties, and Graces, but perſpective Glaſſes to give us a ſight of God, and help us to communion with him? God never intended his Ordinances to be our reſt, but *mediums* and inſtruments of communion with himſelf, who is our true reſt. When we go into a *Boat*, 'tis not with an intention to dwell and reſt there, but to ferry us over the Water, where our buſineſs lies. If a Man miſs of communion with God in the beſt Ordinances or Duty, it yields him little comfort. He comes back from it, like a Man that hath travelled a great many miles to meet a dear friend, upon ſpecial and important buſineſs; but met with diſappointment, and returns ſad, and diſſatisfied. God appoints Ordinances to be meeting places with our God in this World, *Exod.* 25. 21, 22. *Thou ſhalt put the mercy-ſeat above upon the Ark, and in the Ark thou ſhalt put the Teſtimony that I ſhall give thee; and there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy-ſeat, from between the two Cherubims.* It was not the ſight of the *golden Cherubims*, or of the *Ark* overlaid with pure gold, that could have ſatisfied *Moſes*, had not the ſpecial preſence of God been there, and he had had communion with him. *O God* ( ſaith *David* ) *my Soul thirſteth for thee, that I might ſee thy beauty and thy glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in the Sanctuary*, Pſal. 63. 1, 2. Magnificent ſtructures, artificial ornaments of the places of Worſhip, are of little account with a gracious Soul. 'Tis the preſence of God, and communion with him, which is the beauty and glory the Saints deſire to behold.

VIII. *Excellency.* 'Tis the *Evidence* of our Union with Chriſt, and Intereſt in him. All Union with Chriſt muſt evidence it ſelf by a life of communion with him, or our pretenſions to it are vain and groundleſs. There be many of you ( I wiſh there were more ) enquiring after evidences and ſigns of your union with Chriſt; why, here is an *Evidence* that can never fail you: Do you live in communion with him? May your life be call'd a walking with God, as *Enoch*'s was? Then you may be ſure you have union with him; and this is ſo ſure a ſign, as Death it ſelf ( which uſes to diſcover the vanity of falſe ſigns ) will never be able to deſtroy. 2 *Kings* 20. 2, 3. *Remember now, O Lord,* ( ſaith *Hezekiah* ) *that I have walked before thee in truth, and in a perfect Heart.* O Profeſſors, 'twill be a dreadful thing ( whatever ungrounded hopes, and falſe comforts you now have ) to find them ſhrinking away from you, as certainly they will do at death, and all upon this account; I have been a Man of knowledg, I have been frequent in the external duties of Religion, but my heart was not in them; I had no communion with the Lrod in them, and now God is a terror to my Soul. I am going to his awful bar, and have not one ſound evidence to carry along with me. That's a remarkable place, *Gal.* 5. 25. *If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit*; that is, let us evidence the life of grace in us by exerciſing that grace in a life of communion with God. When all is ſaid, this is the ſureſt evidence of our union with Chriſt, and no gifts or performances whatſoever can amount to an evidence of our union with Chriſt without it.

IX. *Excellency.* 'Tis *Eaſe* in all pains; ſweet and ſenſible eaſe to a troubled Soul. Look as the breathing of a vein cools, eaſes, and refreſhes a feveriſh body; ſo the opening of the Soul by acts of communion with God, gives ſenſible eaſe to a burdened Soul. Griefs are eaſed by groans heaven-ward. Many Souls are deep laden with their own fears, cares and diſtreſſes; no refreſhment for ſuch a Soul, no ſuch *Anodine* in the whole World as communion with God is. *Pſal.* 32. 1, 2, 3. How did troubles boil in *David's* Soul? Night and day God's hand was heavy on him; his Soul, as *Elihu* ſpeaks, was like bottles full of new Wine, he muſt ſpeak to God that he may be refreſhed; and ſo he did, and was refreſhed by it. *I ſaid, I will confeſs my tranſgreſſions unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin.* It would grieve one to ſee how many poor diſtreſſed Souls carry their troubles up and down the World, making their complaints to one, and another; but no eaſe. Away to thy God poor Chriſtian, get thee into thy cloſet, pour out thy Soul before him; and that eaſe which thou ſeekeſt in vain elſewhere will there be found, or nowhere.

X. *Excellency.* 'Tis *Food* to the Soul; and the moſt delicious, pleaſant, proper and ſatisfying food that ever it taſted; 'tis hidden *Manna*, Rev. 2. 17. *By theſe things, O Lord, do Men live, and in them is the life of their Soul*, Iſa. 38. 16. A regenerate Soul cannot live without it; their Bodies can live as well without bread or breath, as their Souls without communion with God; 'tis more than their neceſſary food. Here they find what they truly call marrow and fatneſs, *Pſal.*

63. 5, 6. O the ſatisfaction and ſupport they ſuck out of ſpiritual things, by thoughts and meditations upon them! *To be ſpiritually minded is life and peace*, Rom. 8. 6. The delicates upon Princes Tables are husks and chaff to this. *Crows* and *Vultures* can live upon the Carrion of this World; but a renewed Soul cannot ſubſiſt long without God. Let ſuch a Soul be diverted for a time from its uſual refreſhments this way, and he ſhall find ſomething within paining himſelf, like the ſucking and drawing of an empty ſtomach. 'Tis Angels food, 'tis that your Souls muſt live upon throughout Eternity, and moſt happily too.

XI. *Excellency*. 'Tis the *Guard* of the Soul againſt the aſſaults of temptation. 'Tis like a *Shield* advanced againſt the fiery darts of that wicked one. Your ſafety and ſecurity lies in drawing nigh to God, *Pſal.* 73. 27, 28. *They that are far from thee ſhall periſh: But it is good for me to draw near to God.* 'Tis good indeed; not only the good of *comfort*, but the good of *ſafety* is in it: *Deut.* 33. 12. *The beloved of the Lord ſhall dwell in ſafety by him.* You know the gracious preſence of God is your ſhield and ſafety; and if you will have the Lord thus preſent with you in all your fears, ſtraits and dangers, ſee that you keep near to him in the Duties of communion: *For the Lord is with you whilſt you are with him*, 2 Chron. 15. 2.

XII. *Excellency*. 'Tis the *Honour* of the Soul, and the greateſt honour that ever God conferr'd on any creature; 'tis the glory of the holy Angels in Heaven to be always beholding the face of God, *Matth.* 18. 10. O! that God ſhould admit poor duſt and aſhes unto ſuch a nearneſs to himſelf! To walk with a *King*, and have frequent converſe with him, puts a great deal of honour upon a *Subject*; but the Saints walk with God, ſo did *Enoch*, ſo do all the Saints: 1 *John* 1. 3. *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Chriſt Jeſus.* They have liberty and acceſs with confidence; the Lord as it were delivers them the golden key of Prayers, by which they may come into his preſence on all occaſions, with the freedom of Children to a Father.

XIII. *Excellency*. 'Tis the *Inſtrument* of mortification; and the moſt excellent and ſucceſsful inſtrument for that purpoſe in all the World. *Gal.* 5. 16. *This I ſay then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the works of the fleſh.* Walking in the Spirit is the ſame thing with walking in communion with God. Now, ſaith that Apoſtle, if you thus walk in the Spirit, in the actings of Faith, Love and Obedience, throughout the courſe of holy duties, the effect of this will be, that ye ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh. He doth not ſay, You ſhall not feel the motions of ſin in you, or temptations to ſin aſſaulting you; but he ſaith, you ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh, ſin ſhall not have dominion over you; this will let out the life-blood of ſin. A temptation overcome this way, is more effectually ſubdued than by all the vows, reſolutions, and external means in the World: as a Candle that is blown out with a puff of breath, may be rekindled by another puff; but if it be quencht in water, 'tis not ſo eaſily lighted again. So it is here, you never find that power or ſucceſs in temptations, when your hearts are up with God in there exerciſes of faith and love, as you do when your hearts hang looſe from him, and dead towards him. The *Schoolmen* aſſign this as one reaſon why the Saints in Heaven are impeccable, no ſin can faſten upon them, becauſe, ſay they, they there enjoy the beatifical viſion of God. This is ſure, the more communion any Man hath with God on Earth, the freer he lives from the power of his corruptions.

XIV. *Excellency*. 'Tis the *Kernel* of all Duties and Ordinances: Words, geſtures, &c. are but the integuments, husks, and ſhells of Duties. Communion with God is the ſweet *Kernel*, the pleaſant and nouriſhing food which lies within them; you ſee the fruits of the Earth are covered and defended by husks, ſhells, and ſuch like integuments; within which lie the pleaſant kernels and grains, and that's the food. The Hypocrite who goes no further than the externals of Religion, is therefore ſaid to feed on Aſhes, *Iſa.* 44. 20. to ſpend his mony for that which is not bread, and his labour for that which ſatisfieth not, *Iſa.* 55. 2. He feeds but upon husks, in which there is little pleaſure or nouriſhment. What a poor houſe doth a Hypocrite keep? Words, Geſtures, Ceremonies of Religion will never fill the Soul; but communion with God is ſubſtantial nouriſhment. *My Soul*, ſaith *David*, *ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs, whilſt I think and meditate on thee*, Pſal. 63. 5, 6. It would grieve ones heart to think what airy things many Souls ſatisfie themſelves with; feeding like *Ephraim* upon the wind, well contented if they can but ſhuffle over a few heartleſs empty duties; whilſt the Saints feed upon this hidden *Manna*, are feaſted as it were with Angels food.

XV. *Excellency*. 'Tis the *Light* of the Soul in darkneſs; and the pleaſanteſt light that ever ſhone upon the Soul of Man: There's many a Soul which walketh in darkneſs; ſome in the darkneſs of ignorance and unbelief, the moſt diſmal of all darkneſs except that in Hell. There are others who are Children of light, in a ſtate of reconciliation, yet walk in the darkneſs of outward afflictions, and inward deſertions and temptations; but as ſoon as ever the light of God's countenance ſhines upon the Soul in the duties of communion with him, that darkneſs is diſſipated and ſcattered; 'tis all light within him, and round about him. *Pſal.* 34. 5. *They looked unto him, and were enlightned:* they *looked*, there is faith acted in Duty; and were *enlightned*, there's the ſweet effect of Faith. The horrors and troubles of gracious Souls ſhrink away upon the riſing of this chearful light. As wild Beaſts come out of their Dens in the darkneſs of the night, and ſhrink back again into them when the Sun ariſeth, *Pſal.* 104. 20, 21, 22. So do the fears, and inward troubles of the people of God, when this light ſhines upon their Souls. Nay more, this is a light which ſcatters the very darkneſs of death it ſelf. It was the ſaying of a worthy Divine of *Germany* upon his death-bed, when his Eye-ſight was gone, being askt how it was within? *Why*, ſaid he, *tho all be dark about me*, yet pointing as well as he could to his breaſt, *hic ſat lucis*, *here is light enough.*

XVI. *Excellency*. 'Tis *Liberty* to the ſtraitned Soul, and the moſt comfortable and excellent liberty in the whole World. He only walks at liberty that walks with God, *Pſal.* 119. 45. *I will walk at liberty, for I ſeek thy precepts.* Wicked Men cry out of bands and cords in Religion, they look upon the duties of godlineſs as the greateſt bondage and thraldom in the whole World, *Pſal.* 2. 3. *Let us break their bands aſunder, and caſt away their cords from us. q. d.* Away with this ſtrictneſs and preciſeneſs, it extinguiſhes the joy and pleaſure of our lives; give us our Cups inſtead of Bibles, our profane Songs inſtead of Spiritual Pſalms, our Sports and Paſtimes inſtead of Prayers and Sermons. Alas, poor creatures, how do they dance in their ſhackles and chains! when in reality the ſweeteſt liberty is enjoyed in thoſe Duties at which they thus ſnuff. The Law of Chriſt is the Law of Liberty; the Soul of Man never enjoys more Liberty, than when it is bound with the ſtricteſt bands of Duty to God. Here's liberty from enthralling luſts, and from enſlaving fears. *The Spirit of life which is in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of Sin and Death,* Rom. 8. 2. And here is freedom indeed; *If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed,* John 8. 36. And here is freedom from fears, *Luke* 1. 74, 75. Thoſe that will not endure any reſtraint from their luſts, they will have their freedom to ſin; a freedom they ſhall have, ſuch as it is, *Rom.* 6. 20. *When ye were the ſervants of ſin, ye were free from righteouſneſs.* Let none therefore be prejudiced at the ways of Duty, and ſtrict Godlineſs. *The law of Chriſt is the perfect law of liberty,* James 1. 25. not liberty to ſin, but liberty from ſin.

XVII. *Excellency.* 'Tis a *Mercy* purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt for Believers, and one of the principal *Mercies* ſetled upon them by the new Covenant-grant: A peculiar mercy which none but the Redeemed of the Lord partake of; a mercy which coſt the blood of Chriſt to purchaſe it. I do not deny but there are thouſands of other mercies beſtowed upon the unregenerate; they have Health, Wealth, Children, Honours, Pleaſures, and all the delights of this Life: but for communion with God, and the pleaſures that reſult therefrom, they are uncapable of theſe. No ſupping with Chriſt upon ſuch excellent privileges and mercies as theſe, till the heart be opened to him by faith; you cannot come nigh to God, until you be firſt made nigh by reconciliation, *Eph.* 2. 13. *Heb.* 10. 19, 20, 21, 22. What would your lives, Chriſtians, be worth to you if this mercy were cut off from you? There would be little ſweetneſs, or ſavour in all your outward mercies, were it not for this mercy that ſweetens them all. And there is this difference, among many others, betwixt this mercy and all outward mercies: You may be cut off from the enjoyment of thoſe, you cannot from this; no priſon can keep out the Comforter. O bleſs God for this invaluable Mercy.

XVIII. *Excellency.* 'Tis *Natural* to the new Creature; the inclination and inſtinct of the new Creature leadeth to Communion with God. 'Tis as natural to the new Creature to deſire it, and work after it, as it is to the new-born babe to make to the breaſt: 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. *As new-born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.* There is a law upon the regenerate part, which inwardly and powerfully obliges it to acts of Duty, and converſe with God in them. Communion with God is a thing that riſeth out of the principles of Grace. You know all Creatures in this lower World act according to the Laws of Nature; the Sun will riſe, and the Sea will flow at its appointed time; and the gracious Soul will make towards its God in the times and ſeaſons of Communion with him. They are not forced on to thoſe Duties by the frights of Conſcience, and the fears of Hell, ſo much as by the natural inclination of the new Creature. Two things demonſtrate Communion with God to be connatural to the regenerate part, called the inner-man, and the hidden-man of the heart, *viz.* (1.) The *Reſtleſneſs* of a gracious Soul without it, *Cant.* 3. 2. The Church in the firſt *verſe* had ſought her beloved, but found him not; doth ſhe ſit down ſatisfied in his abſence? No, no, *I will riſe now and go about the City, in the ſtreets, and in the broad ways; I will ſeek him whom my Soul loveth.* (2.) The *Satisfaction* and *Pleaſure*, the reſt and delight which the Soul finds and feels in the enjoyment of Communion with God, plainly ſhews it to be agreeable to the new Nature. *Pſal.* 63. 5. *My Soul ſhall be ſatisfied whilſt I think on thee.* And when it is thus, then Duties become eaſie and pleaſant to the Soul, 1 *John* 5. 3. *His commandments are not grievous.* Yea, and ſuch a Soul will be conſtant and aſſiduous in thoſe Duties. That which is natural, is conſtant, as well as pleaſant. What's the reaſon Hypocrites throw up the Duties of Religion in times of difficulty, but becauſe they have not an inward principle agreeable to them? The motives to Duty lie without them, not within them.

XIX. *Excellency.* 'Tis the *Occupation* and trade of all ſanctified perſons, and the richeſt Trade that was ever driven by Men. This way they grow rich in Spiritual Treaſures; the Revenues of it are better than Silver and Gold. There be many of you have traded long for this World, and it comes to little; and had you gained your deſigns, you had gained but trifles. This is the rich and profitable occupation. *Phil.* 3. 20. *Our Converſation is in Heaven.* Our Commerce and Trade lies that way, ſo that word ſignifies. There be few Chriſtians that have driven this Soul-enriching Trade any conſiderable time, but can ſhew ſome Spiritual Treaſures which they have gotten by it, *Pſal.* 119. 50. *This I had becauſe I kept thy precepts.* As Merchants can ſhew the Gold and Silver, the Lands and Houſes, the rich Goods and Furniture, which they have gotten by their ſucceſsful Adventures abroad; and tell their Friends, ſo much I got by ſuch a Voyage, and ſo much by another: So Chriſtians have invaluable treaſures, tho their humility conceals them, which they have gotten by this heavenly Trade of Communion with God. Their Souls were weak, and by Communion with God they have gotten ſtrength, *Pſal.* 138. 3. *I cried, and thou ſtrengthnedſt me with ſtrength in my Soul.* They have gotten peace by it, a treaſure ineſtimable; *Pſal.* 119. 165. *Great peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* They have gotten purity by it, *Pſal.* 119. 3. *They do no iniquity that walk in thy ways.* O what rich returns are here! Nay, they get ſometimes full aſſurance by it. The riches of both the *Indies* will not purchaſe from a Chriſtian the leaſt of theſe mercies. Theſe are the rich rewards of our pains in the Duties of Religion; *In keeping thy Commandments there is great reward.*

XX. *Excellency.* 'Tis *Oil* to the Wheels of Obedience, which makes the Soul go on chearfully in the ways of the Lord: *Pſal.* 119. 32. *Then will I run the ways of thy Commandments, when thou ſhalt enlarge my heart. Non tardat uncta rota.* Oiled Wheels run trig and nimble. How prompt and ready for any Duty of Obedience, is a Soul under the influences of Communion with God! Then, as *Iſaiah* having gotten a ſight of God, *Here am I Lord, ſend me, Iſa.* 6. 8. Now the Soul can turn its hand to Duties of

1. *Active*; And
2. *Paſſive Obedience.*

1. Hereby the Soul is prepared and fitted for the Duties of *Active Obedience*, to which it applies it ſelf with pleaſure and delight: *Pſal.* 43. 3, 4. *Then will I go unto the Altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy*; or as it is in the Hebrew, *the gladneſs of my joy.* It goes to prayer as a hungry man to a feaſt, or as a covetous man to his treaſures: *Pſal.* 119. 14. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy commandments as much as in all riches.*

2. It prepares the Soul for *Paſſive Obedience*; makes a man to rejoice in his ſufferings, *Col.* 1. 24. 'Twill make a Chriſtian ſtand as *Porters* in *London* do, at the Merchants doors, to receive any burden or load they have to lay upon their ſhoulders, and thank them to be ſo employed: *This joy of the Lord is their ſtrength*, Neh. 8. 10. A Chriſtian under the chearful influences of near communion with God, can with more chearfulneſs lay down his neck for Chriſt, than other men can lay out a ſhilling for him. In all theſe Twenty particulars you have an account of the Excellency of this Privilege; but O how ſhort an account have I given of it! What remains, is the Application of this point, in a double Uſe:

1. *Of Information.*
2. *Of Exhortation.*

Firſt, For *Information* in the following Inferences.

Infer. 1. *How ſure and certain a thing is it that there is a God, and a ſtate of Glory prepared in Heaven for ſanctified Souls?*

Theſe things are undeniable, God hath ſet them before our ſpiritual Eyes and Senſes: Beſide the revelation of it in the Goſpel, which ſingly makes it infallible; the Lord, for our abundant ſatisfaction, hath brought theſe things down to the touch and teſt of our ſpiritual Senſes and Experiences. You that have had ſo many ſights of God by faith, ſo many ſweet taſtes of Heaven in the Duties of Religion, O what a confirmation and ſeal have you of the reality of inviſible things! You may ſay of Heaven, and the joys above, as the Apoſtle did of him that purchaſed it, 1 *John* 1. 1. *That which our Eyes have ſeen, and our Ears have heard, and our Hands have handled, &c.* For God hath ſet theſe things in ſome degree before your very Eyes, and put the firſt fruits of them into your own Hands. The ſweet reliſh of the joy of the Lord is upon the very palate of your Souls. To this ſpiritual Senſe of the believing *Hebrews* the *Apoſtle* appealed, *Heb.* 10. 34. when he ſaid, *Ye took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods, knowing in your ſelves that you have in Heaven a better and an induring ſubſtance.* This knowing in our ſelves is more certain and ſweet than all the traditional knowledg we get from the reports of others, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Whom having not ſeen ye love; whom though now ye ſee him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* There is more of Heaven felt and taſted in this World than men are aware of; 'tis one thing to hear of ſuch Countries as *Spain*, *Italy*, *Smyrna*, by the diſcourſes and reports we heard of them in our childhood, and another thing to underſtand thoſe Countries by the rich commodities imported from them in the way of our Trade and Commerce. O did we but know what other Chriſtians have felt and taſted, we would not have ſuch ſtaggering thoughts about inviſible things; but the ſecret comforts of Religion are, and ought to be for the moſt part incloſed things. Religion lays not all open; the Chriſtians life is a hidden life.

Infer. 2. *If ſuch a height of Communion with God be attainable on Earth, then moſt Chriſtians live below the duties and comforts of Chriſtianity.*

Alas, the beſt of us are but at the foot of this pleaſant Mount *Piſga*: as we are but in the infancy of our Graces, ſo we are but in the infancy of our Comforts; what a poor Houſe is kept by many of God's own Children? living between hopes and fears, ſeldom taſting the riches and pleaſures, the joys and comforts of Aſſurance. And will you know the reaſons of it? There are Five things which uſually keep them poor and low as to Spiritual Joys and Comforts. (1.) The incumbrances of the World, which divert them from, or diſtract them in their duties of Communion with God, and ſo keep them low in their Spiritual Comforts: They have ſo much to do on Earth, that they have little time for Heavenly employments. O, what a noiſe and din do the trifles of this World make in the Heads and Hearts of many Chriſtians! How dear do we pay for ſuch trifles as theſe? (2.) A Spirit of formality creeping into the duties of Religion, impoveriſhes the vital Spirit thereof; like the wanton embraces of the Ivy, which binds and ſtarves the Tree it claſps about. Religion cannot thrive under formality; and 'tis difficult to keep out formality in a ſetled courſe of Duty, and much more when Duties are intermitted. (3.) The buſineſs of temptations peſtering the minds of many Chriſtians, eſpecially ſuch as are of melancholy conſtitutions; how importunate and reſtleſs are theſe temptations with ſome Chriſtians? They can make little comfort or advantage out of Duty by reaſon of them. (4.) Heart-apoſtacy, inward decays of our firſt love, is another reaſon why our Duties proſper ſo little, *Rev.* 2. 4. *Thou haſt left thy firſt love.* You were not wont to ſerve God with ſuch coldneſs. (5.) In a word, Spiritual pride impoveriſhes our Comforts. The joys of the Spirit, like brisk Wines, are too ſtrong for our weak heads. For theſe cauſes many Chriſtians are kept low in Spiritual comforts.

Infer. 3. *How ſweet and deſirable is the ſociety of the Saints! it muſt needs be deſirable to walk with them, who walk with God*, 1 John. 1. 3. No ſuch companions as the Saints. What benefit or pleaſure can we find in converſes with ſenſual worldlings? All we can carry away out of ſuch company is guilt, or grief. *All my delight*, ſaith *David*, *is in the Saints, and in the excellent of the Earth, which excel in vertue*, Pſal. 16. 3. And their ſociety would certainly be much more ſweet and deſirable than it is, did they live more in Communion with God than they do. There was a time when the Communion of the Saints was exceeding lovely, *Mal.* 3. 16. *Acts* 2. 46, 47. The Lord reſtore it to its primitive glory and ſweetneſs.

Infer. 4. *What an unſpeakable Mercy is Converſion, which lets the Soul into ſuch a ſtate of Spiritual pleaſure?*

Here's the beginning of your acquaintance with God, the firſt taſte of Spiritual pleaſures, of which there ſhall never be an end. All the time men have ſpent in the World in an unconverted ſtate, hath been a time of eſtrangement and alienation from God; when the Lord brings a man to Chriſt in the way of Converſion, he then begins his firſt acquaintance with God, *Job* 22. 21.

*Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and be at peace, thereby good ſhall come unto thee.* This is your firſt acquaintance with the Lord, which will be a growing thing; every viſit you give him in prayer increaſeth your acquaintance, and begets more intimacy, and humble holy familiarity betwixt him and you. And O, what a paradiſe of pleaſure doth this let the Soul into! The life of Religion abounds with pleaſures, *Pſal.* 16. 11. *All his ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and his paths are peace,* Prov. 3. 17. Now you know where to go and unload any trouble that preſſeth your Hearts: whatever prejudices and ſcandals Satan and his Inſtruments caſt upon Religion; this I will affirm of it, that that man muſt neceſſarily be a ſtranger to true pleaſure, and empty of real comfort, who is a ſtranger to Chriſt and the duties of Communion with him. 'Tis true, here's no allowance for ſinful pleaſures, nor any want of Spiritual pleaſures. Bleſs God therefore for converting grace, you that have it; and lift up a cry to Heaven for it, you that want it.

*Infer.* 5. Laſtly, *If there be ſo much delight and pleaſure in our imperfect and often interrupted Communion with God here; O then, what is Heaven! What are the immediate viſions of his Face in the perfect ſtate?* 1 Cor. 2. 9. *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* You have heard glorious and raviſhing reports in the Goſpel of that bleſſed future ſtate, things which the Angels deſire to look into. You have felt and taſted joys unſpeakable, and full of glory, in the actings of your faith and love upon Chriſt; yet all that you have heard, and all that you have felt and taſted in the way to Glory, falls ſo ſhort of the perfection and bleſſedneſs of that ſtate, that Heaven will and muſt be a great ſurprize to them that have now the greateſt acquaintance with it. Though the preſent comforts of the Saints are ſometimes as much as they can bear, for they ſeem to reel and ſtagger under the weight of them, *Cant.* 2. 5. *Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, I am ſick of love:* Yet, I ſay, theſe high tides of preſent joy are but ſhallows to the joys of his immediate preſence, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. And as they run not ſo deep, ſo are they not conſtant and continued as they ſhall be above, 2 *Theſ.* 4. *ult. Ever with the Lord.* And thus much for Information.

### II. *Vſe for Exhortation.*

The laſt improvement of this Point will be by way of Exhortation,

1. *To Believers.*
2. *To Vnbelievers.*

Firſt, *Is this the privileged ſtate, into which all believers are admitted by Converſion? Then ſtrive to come up to the higheſt attainment of Communion with God in this World, and be not contented with juſt ſo much grace as will ſecure you from Hell; but labour after ſuch a height of grace and communion with God, in the exerciſe thereof, as may bring you into the ſuburbs of Heaven on Earth.*

Forget the things that are behind you, as to ſatisfaction in them, and preſs towards the mark, for the prize of your high calling. 'Tis greatly to your loſs that you live at ſuch a diſtance from God, and are ſo ſeldom with him. Think not the ableſt Miniſters, or choiceſt Books, will ever be able to ſatisfie your doubts, and comfort your hearts, whilſt you let down your Communion with God to ſo low a degree. O that you might be perſwaded now to hearken obediently to three or four neceſſary words of Counſel.

I. *Counſel.* Make Communion with God the very level and aim of your Souls in all your approaches to him in the Ordinances and Duties of Religion. Set it upon the point of your compaſs, let it be the very thing your Souls deſign; let the deſires and hopes of Communion with God be the thing that draws you to every Sermon and Prayer. *Pſal.* 27. 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may ſee the beauty of the Lord, and enquire after him in his Temple.* That was the mark *David* aimed at. And Mens ſucceſs in Dutys is uſually according to the Spiritual aims and intentions of their Hearts in them; both ſincerity and comfort lie much in mens ends.

II. *Counſel.* In all your approaches to God, beg and plead hard with him for the manifeſtations of his love, and further communications of his grace. *Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice; have mercy alſo upon me, and anſwer me. When thou ſaidſt, Seek ye my face, my heart ſaid unto thee, Thy face Lord will I ſeek. Hide not thy face far from me, put not thy ſervant away in anger,* Pſal. 27. 7, 8, 9. How full and thick of pleas and arguments for Communion with God was this prayer of *David*? Lord, I am come in obedience to thy command; thou ſaidſt, *Seek ye my face,* thou bidſt me come to thee, and wilt thou put away thy ſervant in anger? Thou haſt been my help, I have had ſweet experience of thy goodneſs, thou doſt not uſe to put me off, and turn me away empty.

III. *Counſel.* Deſire not comfort for comforts ſake, but comforts and refreſhments for ſervice and obedience ſake; that by it you may be ſtrengthned to go on in the ways of your duty with more chearfulneſs, *Pſal.* 119. 32. *Then will I run the ways of thy commandments, when thou ſhalt enlarge my heart.* As if he ſhould ſay, O Lord, the comforts thou ſhalt give me, ſhall be returned again in chearful ſervices to thee. I deſire them, as Oil to the Wheels of Obedience, not food for my pride.

IV. *Counſel.* As ever you expect to be owners of much comfort in the ways of your Communion with God, ſee that you be ſtrict and circumſpect in the courſe of your Converſations. 'Tis the looſneſs and careleſneſs of our heart and lives, which impoveriſhes our Spiritual comforts. A little pride, a little careleſneſs daſhes and fruſtrates a great deal of comfort which was very near us, almoſt in our hands; to allude to that, *Hoſea* 7. 1. *When I would have healed Iſrael, then the iniquity of Ephraim was diſcovered.* So here, juſt when the deſire of thy heart was come to the door, ſome ſin ſtept in the way of it. *Your iniquities,* ſaith God, *have ſeparated between you and your God, and your ſins have hid his face from you,* Iſa. 59. 2. The Comforter, the holy Spirit, is ſenſible and tender, he hath quick reſentments of your unkindneſſes and offences. As ever therefore you expect comfort from him, beware of him, and grieve him not.

Secondly, In the laſt place, this Point ſpeaks neceſſary counſel and advice to *Vnbelievers*; to all that live eſtranged from the life of God, and have done ſo from the Womb, *Pſal.* 58. 3. To you the voice of the Redeemer ſounds a ſummons once more, *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock.* O that at laſt you might be prevailed with to comply with the merciful terms propounded by him. Will you ſhut out a Saviour bringing Salvation, Pardon and Peace with him? Chriſt is thy rightful owner, and demands poſſeſſion of thy Soul; if thou wilt now hear his voice, thy former refuſals ſhall never be objected. If thou ſtill reject his gracious offers, mercy may never more be tendered to thee; there is a call of Chriſt, which will be the laſt call, and after that no more. Take heed what you do; if you ſtill demur and delay, your damnation is juſt, inevitable and unexcuſable. Hear me therefore you unregenerated Souls, in what rank or condition ſoever Providence hath placed you in this World; whether you be rich or poor, young or old, Maſters or Servants, whether there be any ſtirrings of conviction in your Conſciences or not. For however your conditions in this World differ from each other at preſent, there is one common miſery hanging over you all, if you continue in that ſtate of unbelief you are now fixed in.

And 1. Hearken to the voice and call of Chriſt, you that are exalted by Providence above your poorer neighbours; you that have your Heads, Hands and Hearts full of the World; men of trade and buſineſs; I have a few ſolemn queſtions to ask you this day.

(1.) You have made many gainful bargains in your time, but what will all profit you if the agreement be not made betwixt Chriſt and your Souls? Chriſt is that treaſure which only can enrich you, *Mat.* 13. 44. Thou art a poor and miſerable wretch, whatever thou haſt gained of this World, if thou haſt not gained Chriſt; thou haſt heaped, up guilt with thy riches, which will more torment thy Conſcience hereafter than thy eſtate can yield thee comfort here.

(2.) You have made many aſſurances to ſecure your floating Eſtates, which you call *Policies*; but what aſſurance have you gotten for your Souls? Are not they expoſed to eternal hazards? O impolitick man! To be ſo provident to ſecure trifles, and ſo negligent in ſecuring the richeſt treaſure.

(3.) You have adjuſted many accounts with men, but who ſhall make up your accounts with God, if you be Chriſtleſs? *What ſhall it profit a man to gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* Mat. 16. 26. Say not you have much buſineſs under your hands, and cannot allow time; you will have ſpace enough hereafter to reflect upon your folly.

2. You that are poor and mean in the World, what ſay you, Will you have two Hells, one here, and another hereafter? No comfort in this World, nor hope for the next? Your expectations here laid in the duſt, and your hopes for Heaven built upon the ſand? O, if you were once in Chriſt, how happy were you, tho you knew not where to fetch your next bread! *Poor in the World, but rich in faith; and heirs of the Kingdom which God hath promiſed*, James 2. 5. O bleſſed ſtate! If you had Chriſt, you had then a right to all things, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. you had then a Father to take care for you: but to be poor and Chriſtleſs; no comfort from this World, nor hopes from the next; this is to be truly miſerable indeed. Your very ſtraits and wants ſhould prompt you to the great duty I am now preſſing on you; and methinks it ſhould be matter of encouragement that the greateſt number of Chriſt's friends and followers came out of that rank and order of men to which you belong.

3. You that are *Seamen*, floating ſo often upon the great deeps, you are reckoned a third ſort of perſons between the living and the dead; you belong not to the dead, becauſe you yet breath; and ſcarcely to the living, becauſe you are continually ſo near death: What think you friends, have you no need of a Saviour? Do you live ſo ſecure from the reach and danger of death? Have your lives been ſo pure, righteous, and innocent, who have been in the thick of temptations in the World abroad? Ponder that Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. *Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with mankind, &c.* Ponder it, I ſay, and think whether you have not as great and preſſing a neceſſity of Jeſus Chriſt, as any poor Souls under Heaven? You have had many temporal Salvations from God, great and eminent deliverances, and will theſe ſatisfy you? Is it enough that your bodies are delivered from the danger of the Sea, tho your Souls ſink and periſh in the Ocean of God's wrath for ever? If you will yet accept Chriſt upon his terms, all that you have done ſhall be forgiven, *Iſa.* 55. 2. The Lord now calls to you in a ſtill voice; if you hear his voice, well; if not, you may ſhortly hear his voice in the tempeſtuous ſtorms without you, and a roaring Conſcience within you. Poor man, think what an intereſt in Chriſt will be worth, wert thou now (as ſhortly thou mayſt) floating upon a piece of wreck, or ſhivering upon a cold and deſolate rock, crying Mercy, Lord, mercy: Well, mercy is now offered thee, but in vain wilt thou expect to find it, if thou continue thus to deſpiſe and reject it.

4. You that are aged and full of days, hearken to the voice of Chriſt, God hath called upon you a long time: When you were young, you ſaid, 'tis time enough yet, we will mind theſe things when we are old, and come nearer to the borders of Eternity. Well, now you are old, and juſt upon the borders of it; will you indeed mind it now? you have left the great concernments of your Souls to this time, this ſhort, very ſhort time: And do the temptations of your Youth take hold upon your Age? what, delay and put off Chriſt ſtill, as you were wont to do? Poor Creatures, you are almoſt gone out of time, you have but a ſhort time to deliberate; what you do muſt be done quickly, or it can never be done: Your night is even come upon you, when no man can work.

5. You that are young, in the Bud or Flower of your time, Chriſt is a Suiter for your firſt Love; he deſires the kindneſs of your youth; your Spirits are vigorous, your Hearts tender, your Affections flowing and impreſſive, you are not yet entred into the incumbrances and diſtracting cares of the World: hereafter a crowd and thick ſucceſſion of earthly employments and engagements will come on; ſin will harden you by cuſtom and continuance. Now is your time; you are in the convertible Age; few that paſs the ſeaſon of youth (comparatively ſpeaking) are brought over to Chriſt afterwards: 'Tis a rarity, the wonder of an Age, to hear of the converſion of aged Sinners. Beſides, you are the hopes of the next Generation: Should you be Chriſt-neglecting and deſpiſing Souls; how bad ſoever the preſent Age is, the next will be worſe. Say not, we have time enough before us, we will not quench the ſprightly vigour of our Youth in melancholy thoughts: Remember there are Sculls of all ſizes in *Golgotha*; Graves of all lengths in the Church-yard: You may anticipate thoſe that ſtand near-

er the Grave than you ſeem to do. O you cannot be happy too ſoon: As young as you are, did you but taſt the Comforts that be in Chriſt, nothing would grieve you more, than that you knew him no ſooner. Behold he ſtandeth at thy Door, in the morning of thy Age, knocking this day for admiſſion into thy Heart.

6. You that have had ſome ſlight ineffectual vaniſhing Convictions upon you formerly; the Lord Jeſus once more renews his call: will you now at laſt hear his voice? 'Tis an infinite mercy to have a ſecond call. I doubt not, but there are many among you, whilſt you have ſat under the Word, have had ſuch thoughts as theſe in your Hearts: Sure, my condition is not right, nor ſafe; there muſt another manner of work paſs upon my Soul, or I am loſt for ever. External duties of Religion I do perform, but I am a ſtranger to Regeneration. Such inward convictions as theſe were the Knocks and Calls of Chriſt, but they paſſed away and were forgotten; your Convictions are dead, and your Hearts the more hardned; for it is in putting a Soul under Conviction, as it is in putting Iron into the Fire, and quenching it again, which hardens it the more. You have been near the Kingdom of God, but the more miſerable for that, if you be ſhut out at laſt. The quicknings of your Convictions is the right way to the ſaving of your Souls. The Lord make you this day to hear his Voice.

7. Such as have come hither upon vain or vile accounts, for mere novelty, or worſe ends; to catch advantages, or reproach the truths of God; ſcoffing at the moſt ſolemn and awful Voice of Chriſt. The Word that you have ſlighted and reproached, the ſame ſhall judg you in that great Day, except the Lord give you Repentance unto Life, and make the Heart tremble under it, that hath ſcoffed at it. *Be not mockers, leſt your bands be made ſtrong*, Iſa. 28. 22.

8. To conclude; Let all, whoſe Hearts the Lord hath opened this day, for the enjoyments of the Goſpel, the bleſſed inſtrument of their Salvation, bleſs the Lord, that hath made it a Key by Regeneration to open the door of Salvation to your Souls. And as you have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.

# AN
# APPENDIX
## To the Foregoing
# TREATISE
## FROM
## ROMANS I. 18.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs, and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs.*

IN all the foregoing Sermons I have been pleading and wooing for Chriſt. And as *Abraham's* Servant, to win the *Damſel's* Conſent, told her what Treaſures his Maſter's Son had, ſo have I laboured to ſhew you ſome part of the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt, if by any means I might allure your hearts, and be inſtrumental to cloſe the happy Match betwixt him and you; and (as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks) eſpouſe you to one Husband, even to Chriſt.

But alas! How few ſtir towards him? The moſt ſeem to be immovably fixed in their natural State, and ſinful Courſes. All our Arguments and Intreaties return to us again, and effect nothing. 'Tis amazing to think what is the matter, that Souls which have in them the inbred Hopes and Fears of the World to come, and ſelf-reflecting Powers, cannot for all this be prevailed with to quit the way of ſin, and to embrace the way of Holineſs, tho their Conſciences mean while ſtand convinced that Eternal Damnation is the iſſue and reſult of the one; Life, Peace and Eternal Joys, of the other.

This hath put me upon a ſerious ſearch what may be the cauſe and reaſon of this fixed and unreaſonable obſtinacy; and in this it ſeems evidently to lie, with moſt that live in an unregenerate ſtate under the Goſpel, that they put a force upon their own Conſciences, and do impriſon and hold the Truth in unrighteouſneſs, tho the Wrath of God be revealed from Heaven againſt all that do ſo.

If by this Diſcourſe I can but ſet Truth at liberty, and looſe the Lord's Priſoners which lie bound in your Souls, I ſhall not doubt but the value of Chriſt will quickly riſe among you, and free Convictions will make the work of your Miniſters much more eaſie and ſucceſsful than they now find it. 'Tis hardly imaginable but the things you have heard muſt leave your Souls under Convictions; but if you ſuppreſs and ſtifle them, they produce nothing but aggravations of Sin and Miſery. Now in order to the free and effectual working of all your Convictions, and begetting that reverence which is due to them from every Soul, as to the Voice of God, I have choſen this Scripture, the ſcope and ſenſe whereof I ſhall next give you.

The true ſcope and aim of this Context is to prove the Juſtification of Sinners to be only by the imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt in the way of Faith. To make this evident, he diſtributes the whole World into *Gentiles* and *Jews*; the one ſeeking Righteouſneſs by the dim Light of Nature, or the Law written in their Hearts; the other, *viz.* the *Jews*, by the works of the Law, or external Conformity to the Law of *Moſes*: but that neither can find what they ſeek, he diſtinctly and fully proves. He proves it firſt upon the *Gentiles*, from this verſe to the 17*th verſe of the ſecond Chapter*; and then he proves it upon the *Jews* alſo, from thence to the end of the *third Chapter*. As for the *Gentiles*, he acknowledges that they had inbred Notions of God, imprinted in their Nature; they had alſo the Book of the Creatures before them, enough to leave them without Excuſe, *ver.* 20. they have no pretence of Ignorance: but theſe common Notices of God, and of Good and Evil, they did not obey and put in practice, but acted againſt the very Light and Dictates of their natural Conſciences. For which cauſe the Wrath of God was revealed from Heaven againſt them, as the Text ſpeaks. Wherein note,

1. A clear and dreadful Revelation of Divine Wrath.
2. The Object or impulſive Cauſe thereof, *Ungodlineſs* and *Unrighteouſneſs*.
3. The ſpecial aggravation of this their Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs, *that they held the Truth in unrighteouſneſs*.

1. Here is a clear and dreadful Revelation of Divine Wrath, *the wrath of God* (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) *is revealed from Heaven*; ὀργὴ Θεȣ̃, the indignation or vengeance of God. 'Tis a word of deep and dreadful ſignification; the Damned that feel the weight of it, have the fulleſt ſenſe of it. 'Tis ſaid, *Pſal.* 90. 11. *Who knows the power of thine anger? according to thy fear, ſo is thy wrath*: that is, the fears of an incenſed Deity are no vain Bugbears, nor the effects of Ignorance and Superſtition, as *Atheiſts* fancy; but let mens Fears of it be what they will, they ſhall find except they repent, the Wrath of God to be according to, yea and far above their Fears of it. If the Wrath of a King be as the Meſſengers of Death, what then is the Wrath of the great and terrible God? This Wrath is here ſaid to to be *revealed*, Ἀποκαλύπτεται, diſcovered, or made manifeſt; and ſo it is divers ways; it was revealed to them by the light of Nature, their own Conſciences gave them notice and warning of it. Thus it was revealed to them by an internal Teſtimony, a Witneſs within them; and it was alſo revealed to them by the Inſtances and Examples of ſtrokes and puniſhments of Sin in all Ages by the immediate hand of a juſtly incenſed God. They came not by chance, but Divine direction; therefore it's added, ἀπ' ὀυρανȣ̃, *from Heaven*, or from God in Heaven.

2. Here is the *Object*, or impulſive Cauſe of this revealed and inflicted Wrath, 'tis revealed from Heaven *againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men.* ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν ϗ ἀδικίαν. The former, ἀσέβεια, *ungodlineſs*, comprizeth all ſins againſt the firſt Table; the irreligious lives and practices of Men, living in the neglect of the Duties of Religion: The other word ἀδικία, *unrighteouſneſs*, comprizeth all ſins againſt the ſecond Table, acts of Fraud, Uncleanneſs, *&c.* againſt Men. And becauſe theſe two general comprehenſive words are branched out into many particulars, therefore he ſaith, *the wrath of God is revealed againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs.* There is not one of the many ſins into which ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs are branched out, but incenſeth the Lord's Wrath: and tho he only mentions the Sins in the *Abſtract*, we are to underſtand the *Abſtract* put here for the *Concrete*; the Sins for the Sinners that commit them, or God's puniſhing theſe ſins upon the perſons of the Sinners.

3. Laſtly, we have here before us the ſpecial aggravation of theſe Sins, or that which made them much more provoking to God than otherwiſe they had been. And it was this, that whilſt they committed theſe Sins, or omitted thoſe Duties, *they held the Truth in unrighteouſneſs*: κατεχόντων, the word ſignifies to *detain*, *ſtop*, *hinder*, or put a *Remora* in the way of that Truth of God, or thoſe common Notions they had of his Being, Power, Goodneſs, Truth, *&c.* as alſo of his Worſhip, and the difference between Good and Evil. Theſe Truths ſtruggled in their Conſciences, as the Child in the Womb, to come to the Birth; Conſcience inſtigated them to Duty, and laboured to reſtrain them from Sin, but all in vain, they overbare their own Conſciences, and kept thoſe Sentiments and Convictions Priſoners, tho they ſtruggled for Liberty to break forth into Practice and Obedience. Their Convictions were kept down under the Dominion and Power of Corruptions, as a Priſoner is ſhut up by his Keeper: Their luſts were too hard for their Light. Thus you have both the Scope and Senſe of the Text. The Point from it is this,

Doct. *That the wrath of God is dreadfully incenſed againſt all thoſe that live in any courſe of Sin, againſt the light and dictates of their own Conſciences.*

Sins of Ignorance provoke the Wrath of God, yet are they not of ſo heinous a nature as ſins againſt Light and Conviction are, nor ſhall they be puniſhed ſo ſeverely. *Luke* 12. 47. *That ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.* It excuſes *a tanto* in ſome meaſure, when a man can ſay, Lord, had I known this to be a Sin, I would not have done it: but when the Conſcience is convinced, and ſtrives to keep us from ſuch an act or courſe of ſinful actions, and we ſtop our Ears againſt its Voice and Warnings; here is a high and horrid Contempt of God and his Law, and gives the Sin a ſcarlet Dye or Tincture. Sins of Ignorance cannot compare with ſuch ſins as theſe, *Joh.* 3. 19. *Job.* 15. 22. To open this Point let me,

1. *Shew you what Conſcience is.*
2. *What the Light of Conſcience is, and what its kinds are.*
3. *How this Light binds the Conſcience, and makes it ſtrive in us.*
4. *Then inſtance in ſome Caſes wherein it doth ſo.*
5. *And Laſtly, how and why the impriſoning of*

*theſe Convictions ſo dreadfully incenſeth the Wrath of God*

Firſt, 'Twill be needful to ſpeak a little to the nature of Conſcience in general. Conſcience (as our *Divines* well expreſs it) is the judgment of a man upon himſelf, as he is ſubject to the judgment of God. A Judgment it is, and a practical Judgment too; it belongs to the underſtanding faculty, 1 *Cor.* 11. 31. *If we would judg our ſelves,* &c. This ſelf-judgment is the proper office of the Conſcience; and to enable it for this its work and office, there are (as is generally obſerved) three things belonging to every man's Conſcience.

1. A Knowledg of the Rule or Law according to which it is to judg, called the *Sintereſis*, which is a treaſury of Rules and Principles without which Conſcience can no more do its work, than an *Artificer* that wants his Square or Level can do his.

2. Knowledg of the facts or matters to be judged, called the *Syneideſis*. The Conſcience of every man keeps a Regiſter of his Actions, Thoughts, and the very Secrets of the Heart.

3. An Ability and delegated Authority to paſs judgment on our ſelves and Actions according to the Rule and Law of God, called *Criſis*, Judgment. Here it ſits upon the Bench as God's Vicegerent, abſolving or condemning as it finds the Sincerity or Hypocriſie of the heart upon trial, 1 *Joh.* 3. 20, 21.

Conſcience therefore is a high and awful Power, it is *ſolo Deo minor*; next and immediately under God, our Judg; riding as *Joſeph* did in the ſecond Chariot. And concerning Conſcience he ſaith to every man, as he once did to *Moſes* with reſpect to *Pharaoh, See, I have made thee a God to* Pharaoh, *Exod.* 7. 1. The Voice of Conſcience is the Voice of God. What it bindeth or looſeth on Earth, *Clave non errante*, is accordingly bound or looſed in Heaven, 1 *Joh.* 3. 21. the greateſt Deference and preciſe Obedience is due to its Command. Its Conſolations are of all the moſt ſweet, and its Condemnations (only excepting thoſe by the mouth of Chriſt in the laſt Judgment) moſt terrible. *Zuinglius* ſpake not without ground when he ſaid, *What Death would I not rather chuſe? what Puniſhment would I not rather bear? yea, into what a profound Abyſs of Hell would I not rather enter, than to witneſs againſt my Conſcience?* 'Tis like he had felt the Terrors of it to be more bitter than Death. How many have choſen ſtrangling rather than life under the terrors of Conſcience? Wherever you go, Conſcience accompanies you. Whatever you ſay, do, or but think, it regiſters and records in order to the Day of Account. When all Friends forſake thee, yea when thy Soul forſakes thy Body, Conſcience will not, cannot forſake thee. When thy Body is weakeſt and dulleſt, thy Conſcience is moſt vigorous and active. Never more life in the Conſcience, than when Death makes its neareſt approach to the Body. When it ſmiles, chears, acquits, and comforts, O what a Heaven doth it create within a Man? And when it frowns, condemns, and terrifies, how doth it becloud, yea benight all the Pleaſures, Joys and Delights of this World? O Conſcience, how glad would the damned be to have taken their laſt farewel of thee, when they bid this World, and all its Inhabitants farewel at Death! And what had become of all the Sufferers and Martyrs, when ſhut up from Friends in Dungeons, had it not been for the chearing Cordials and Comforts thou there adminiſtredſt to ſupport them! 'Tis certainly the beſt of Friends, or the worſt of Enemies in the whole Creation. This is Conſcience, theſe are its Powers and Offices; which was the firſt thing.

Secondly, Our next enquiry muſt be into the Light of Conſcience, and the various kinds of that Light.

The Lord did not frame ſuch an excellent Structure as the Soul of Man, without Windows to let in light; nor doth he deny the benefit of light to any Soul: But there is a twofold Light which Men have to inform and guide their Conſciences.

1. The Light of Natural Reaſon, which is common.
2. The Light of Scripture-Revelation, which is ſpecial.

1. There is a common light of Natural Reaſon, which is connate, called by *Solomon*, Prov. 20. 27. *The Candle of the Lord. The Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord.* This is affirmed by him that had an extraordinary portion of intellectuals, a brighter lamp of Reaſon and Wiſdom than other Men: And this is not only true of the Soul in general, but of that ſpecial Power of it, which is called *Conſcience*, which is God's Spy, and Man's Overſeer. The *Heathens* had this Light ſhining in their Minds and Conſciences: Some of them by the alone help of this Natural Light made wonderful diſcoveries of the Myſteries of Nature; yea, they found its Efficacy and Power great in their Conſciences, to raiſe their hopes or fears according to the good or evil they had done.

*Conſcia mens ut cuique ſua eſt, ita concipit intra*
*Pectora pro facto, ſpemq; metumq; ſuo.* Ovid.

And to the ſhame of many that are called Chriſtians, ſome among them paid great Reverence to their own Conſciences.

——— *Imprimis reverere teipſum,*
*Turpe quid auſurus, te ſine teſte time.*

But however, the generality of them did not ſo, and are taxed for it in the Text: And beſides, this Light can make no diſcoveries of Chriſt, and of the way of Salvation by him. The moſt Eagle-ey'd Philoſophers among them were in the dark here. And therefore.

2. God hath afforded Men a more clear and excellent Light to ſhine in their Minds and Conſciences; even the Light of the Goſpel, which compared with the Light of Natural Reaſon, is as the Light of the Sun to the dim Moonlight. *Pſal.* 147. 20. *He ſheweth his Word to* Jacob, *his Statutes and his Judgments to* Iſrael; *he hath not dealt ſo with any Nation, and for his Judgments they have not known them. Praiſe ye the Lord.* Every Creature hath the Name of God engraven on it, but he hath magnified his Word above all his Name, *Pſal.* 138. 2. God who beſt knows the rate and value of his own Mercies, accounts this a ſingular favour and privilege to any Nation. Without Revelation we could never have known the cauſe of our Miſery, the fall of *Adam*, or the only way and means of our recovery by Chriſt: By this a People are lifted up to Heaven, *Matth.* 11. 21. in reſpect of means and advantages of Salvation; and conſequently the contempt or neglect of ſuch Light and Love, will certainly plunge the guilty into proportionable miſery. *John* 3. 19. *This is the condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkneſs rather than Light.*

Moreover, God doth not only afford the Light of Natural Reaſon, and External Goſpel-Revelation to ſome Men in an eminent degree; but to both theſe he ſuperadds the internal illumination of his Spirit, which is the cleareſt and moſt glorious Light in the whole World. *He ſhineth into their hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledg of the Glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 4. 6. Theſe are the three ſorts of Light that God makes to ſhine into the Souls and Conſciences of Men, to direct and guide them; the firſt a common and general Light, the two laſt the moſt clear and tranſcendent in Excellency, eſpecially that of the Spirit with the Goſpel: For tho the Sun be riſen, yet men may draw the Curtains about them, and lie in darkneſs; but the Spirit opens them, and makes it ſhine in.

Thirdly, How this Light ſhining into the Conſciences of Men, obligeth them to Obedience; and how Mens Luſts ſtruggle againſt the Obligations of an enlightned Conſcience, is the next thing to be ſpoken to.

'Tis manifeſt and beyond all Controverſie, that an enlightned Conſcience lays ſtrong and indiſpenſable Obligations and Engagements on the Soul to Obedience: For the Will of God is the Supream Law, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. 'tis the Will of *the only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*: And the promulgation and manifeſtation of it, ſo binds the Conſcience of the Creature to Obedience, as no Authority or Power on Earth can looſe thoſe bands; no Man can grant a *ſuperſedeas* in this caſe, or relieve the Soul ſo bound by a *noli proſequi*; for Conſcience as God's *Vicegerent* in his Name requireth Obedience, and the Man that heareth the Voice of God from the Mouth of his own Conſcience, preſently thereupon becomes a *Debtor*, *Rom.* 1. 14. put under a neceſſity, 1 *Cor.* 9. 16.

Now Conſcience by reaſon of the Light that ſhineth into it, feeling it ſelf under ſuch ſtrong bands and neceſſities, ſtimulates and urgeth the Soul to Obedience, warns, commands, and preſſes the Soul to its duty, againſt the contrary intereſt and inclinations of the Fleſh: And hence ariſe thoſe combats and conflicts in the boſoms of Men; as the ſtruggles of the Child in the Womb at the fulneſs of time cauſe the throws and pangs of Travail. Sometimes Conſcience prevails, and ſometimes Luſts and Corruptions prevail, and that with great difficulty; for 'tis not alike eaſie to all Men to ſhake off, or burſt the bands of their own Conſciences, tho others can do it eaſily. What a hard tug had *Saul* to conquer his own Conſcience? *I forced my ſelf*, ſaith he, 1 *Sam.* 13. 12. He knew it belonged not to him to offer Sacrifice, his Conſcience plainly told him it would be his Sin; but yet the fear of the Philiſtines being ſtronger than the fear of God, he adventured upon it, *renitente conſcientiâ*, againſt the plain dictates of his own Conſcience. Thus *Herod* gives Sentence to put *John* to Death, *Matth.* 14. 9. *The King was ſorry; nevertheleſs for his Oaths ſake, and them which ſat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her.* His Honour weighed up all his fears of ſin, his own Word weighed more with him than God's Word: *Nemo ita perplexus tenetur inter duo vitia, quin exitus pateat abſquet ertio:* No Man is held ſo perplexed between two Vices, but he may find an iſſue, without falling into a third.

*Pilate*'s Conſcience was convinced of Chriſt's Innocency, *Matth.* 27. 18, 19. yet the fear of *Ceſar* hurries him on to the greateſt of wickedneſſes, even to give Sentence againſt Innocent Blood, yea, the Blood of the Son of God. *Darius* in like manner, *Dan.* 6. 14. knew that *Daniel* was not only an excellent Perſon, but that he was entrapt by the *Nobles* merely for his Conſcience, and that to put him to Death was to ſacrifice him to their Malice: this he and his Conſcience debated all the day, many encounters he had with it, for the Text ſaith, He was ſore diſpleaſed with himſelf, and ſet his Heart on *Daniel* to deliver him, and laboured until the going down of the Sun to deliver him; but after a days ſharp fight betwixt him and his Conſcience, Luſt prevails at laſt againſt Light, and returns *Victor* out of the Field in the Evening. So it was with poor *Spira*, he ſeemed to hear as it were an inward Voice, *Don't write*, Spira, *don't write*; but the love of his Eſtate, Wife, and Children drew his Hand to the Paper, tho Conſcience ſtruggled hard to hold it back.

Thus as the reſtleſs Sea ſtrives to beat down, or break over its bounds, ſo do impetuous Luſts ſtrive to overbear Light and Conviction; *video meliora proboque, deteriora ſequor:* They know this or that to be a ſin, and that they hazard their Souls by it, but yet they will adventure on it, and ruſh into Sin as the Horſe into the Battel.

Fourthly, I promiſed to give you ſome inſtances of the Conflicts betwixt Mens Conſciences and their Corruptions, wherein Conſcience is vanquiſht and overborn, and by what Weapons the Victory over Conſcience is obtained. Now the Convictions of Men are twofold, *viz.*

1. General, reſpecting their State.
2. Particular, reſpecting this or that Action.

1. There are general Convictions, and Notices given to ſome Men and Women by their Conſciences, that their Condition or State of Soul is neither right, nor ſafe; that they want the main thing which conſtitutes a Chriſtian, *viz.* Regeneration, or a gracious change of Heart and Life: They hear and read the ſigns and effects of theſe things, but their Conſcience plainly tells them, it cannot find them in them; that they enjoy the external privileges of the Saints, but they belong not to them; that ſomething is ſtill wanting, and that the main thing too: O my Soul, thou art not right; thou haſt Gifts, thou haſt a Name to live, but for all that thou art dead. Some further work muſt be done upon thee, or thou art undone to Eternity: thou paſſeſt for a good Chriſtian among men, but wo to thee if thou die in the State thou art. Theſe, and ſuch as theſe are the whiſpers of ſome Mens Conſciences in their Ears, and yet they cannot yield themſelves up into the hands of their Convictions, ſo as to confeſs and bewail their Hypocriſie, and groſs miſtakes, and ſeek for a better foundation to build their hope on. *Felix* his Conſcience gave him ſuch a terrible rouze and monition as this, and made him to tremble whilſt *Paul* reaſon'd with him about Righteouſneſs, and Temperance, and Judgment to come, *Acts* 24. 25. it whiſpered in his Ear ſuch Language as this, O poor Soul, how ſhall ſuch an Oppreſſor, such an intemperate wretch as thou art ſtand before God in this day of Judgment, which *Paul* proves in thy face is certainly future? For as *Tacitus* ſaith of him, He was *inexplebilis Gurges*, an inſatiable gulph of Covetouſneſs; ſo it was with *Agrippa*, *Acts* 26. 28. he ſtood at half bent, dubious and unreſolved what to do: he ſaw the Heavenly Doctrine of Chriſtianity evidently confirmed by Do-

ctrine and Miracles, his Conſcience pleaded hard with him to embrace it, and had almoſt prevailed. Almoſt, or within a little, as the word is, thou perſwadeſt me to be a Chriſtian: but *Agrippa* had too much Wealth and Honours to deny and forſake for Chriſt; the Love of the preſent World overbore both the hopes and fears of the World to come. And thus that Excellent Fiſher for Souls, who had throughly converted ſo many to Chriſt, caught but a piece of *Agrippa*; *almoſt* is a great deal for ſo great a perſon. The Goſpel is a Drag-net, and brings up all ſorts, whole Chriſtians, and half Chriſtians. The Conſcience is caught, and the Will begins to incline, but O the power and prevalence of Sin! which like the Rudder, commands all to a contrary courſe.

If we come a little nearer, and enquire what are thoſe *remora's* that ſtop Conſcience in its courſe, bind and impriſon, ſtifle and ſuppreſs its Convictions; that although a Man ſtrongly ſuſpect his foundation to be but Sand, his hopes for Heaven a ſtrong deluſion, yet he will throw up his vain hopes, confeſs his ſelf-deceits, and begin all anew. What is it which over-bears Conſcience in this caſe? Let Men impartially examine their hearts, and it will be found that theſe three things bind and impriſon theſe Convictions of Conſcience, and hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs, *viz.* ſhame, fear, and pride of Heart.

(1.) Shame. Men that have been Profeſſors, and of good eſteem in the World, are aſhamed the World ſhould know the Miſtakes and Errors of all their life paſt, and what deluded Fools and ſelf-deceivers they have been: This is a powerful reſtraint upon Conviction, how ſhall they look their Acquaintance in the face? What will Men think and ſay of them? How can ye believe which receive Honour one of another? ſaith Chriſt, *John* 5. 44. *q. d.* What! you be Chriſtians, and yet not able to endure a cenſure, or a ſcoff upon your Names; that ſtand more upon your Reputation, than your Salvation: How can you believe?

O what Madneſs and exalted Folly appears in this Caſe! Men will chuſe rather to go on, though Conſcience tells them the end of that way will be Death, than ſuffer the ſhame of a juſt and neceſſary retraction, which yet indeed is not their ſhame, but their Duty, and Glory. You that are ſo tender of the ſhame of men, how will you be able to endure the contempt and ſhame that ſhall be caſt on you from God, Angels and Men in the great Day? *Luk.* 9. 26. 'Tis no ſhame to acknowledg your miſtake, but to perſiſt in it after Conviction, is ſhameful Madneſs.

I knew an excellent Miniſter, who proved an eminent Inſtrument in the Church of God, who in the beginning of his Miniſterial Courſe was not upon the right Foundation of Regeneration. This Man had rare Abilities, excellent Natural and Acquired Gifts, and could preach of Regeneration, Faith, and Heavenly-mindedneſs, though he felt nothing of theſe things in his own Experience. His Life was very unblamable, and he had no mean Intereſt and Eſteem among good men. It pleaſed the Lord whilſt this Man was ſtudying an excellent Spiritual Point to preach to others, his Conſcience firſt preach'd it in his Study to himſelf and that with ſuch a cloſe and rouſing Application, as made him to tremble at it; telling him, that though he had Gifts above many, and ſobriety in his Converſation, yet one thing, and that the main thing, Sanctifying Grace, was wanting. Hereupon the pangs of the New Birth ſeized his Soul, and the Lord made him a moſt inward, ſearching, experimental Miniſter, and crown'd his Labours with unuſual Succeſs. This Miniſter to his dying day was not aſhamed in all companies to acknowledg his miſtake, and bleſs God for his recovery out of it; and in moſt of his Sermons, he would endeavour to convince Profeſſors of the neceſſity of a ſecond Converſion.

(2.) *Fear* is another pull-back, which withholds men from executing the Convictions of their own Conſciences, and obeying its calls in this grand caſe and concern of the Soul. They are pretty eaſie and ſafe under the External Profeſſion, and Duties of Religion. and are afraid of throwing up their vain hopes, and engaging themſelves heartily and thorowly in Religion; and there be two things ſcare them.

*1ſt.* The inward pains and troubles of Spirit attending the New-Birth; which they have read and heard of, and ſeen the effects of in others. O 'tis a dreadful thing to lie under the Terrors that many have felt! and ſo 'tis with them as with one that hath a bone ill ſet, who if he have any eaſe, will rather endure a little daily pain, and be content to halt all his Life, than undergo the pain of another fraction or diſlocation in order to a perfect cure.

*2ly.* They are afraid of External Sufferings. The form of Godlineſs leaves men a latitude to take or leave according as the times favour or frown upon the ways of Religion, but the power of Godlineſs that will engage and put them beyond retreat: They muſt then ſtand to it, come what will. But, Soul, let me tell thee if the juſt fears and apprehenſions of Hell, and the Eternal Wrath of God were upon thee, to which thy Hypocriſie and Formality will expoſe thee; all theſe fears of inward or outward troubles would vaniſh the ſame Hour.

(3.) Pride of Heart ſuffers not this Conviction of Conſcience to work out its effects, but holds this Truth in unrighteouſneſs, to the hazard and ruin of many Souls. Men that live upon their own Duties, and Self-Righteouſneſs, are not eaſily brought to renounce all this, and live upon the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone for Juſtification. Proud Nature will rather venture the hazard of Damnation than ſuch ſelf-denial, *Rom.* 10. 3. As you ſee it common among poor People, to live meanly on coarſe Fare of their own, than upon the Alms and Bounty of another.

O but if once the day of God's Power be come, and a man begins to feel the Commandment come home to his Conſcience, as *Paul* did, *Rom.* 7. 9. when he comes to realize the World to come, the value of his Soul, and the danger it is in; then all theſe Remora's are as eaſily ſwept away, as ſo many ſtraws by the rapid Courſe of a mighty torrent. Then let men ſay or think what they pleaſe, I muſt not throw away my own Soul, to maintain a vain Eſtimation among men. Let inward or outward ſufferings be never ſo great, 'tis better for me to feel them, than to ſuffer the everlaſting wrath of the great and terrible God. Let my own Righteouſneſs be what it will, all is but dung and droſs to the pure and perfect Righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

2. As this General Conviction with reſpect to Mens State and Condition is held in Unrighteouſneſs, and Men and Women go with grumbling Conſciences and frequent inward Fears by reaſon

of it: ſo there are many particular Convictions bound and impriſoned in Mens Souls. Particular Convictions I ſay, both as to ſins committed, and known Duties omitted againſt both Tables of the Law of God; called in the Text, *ungodlineſs* and *unrighteouſneſs*. Conſcience labours and ſtrives to bring men to confeſs, bewail, and reform them, but cannot prevail; contrary Luſts and Intereſts overpower them, and detain them in unrighteouſneſs. What theſe are, and how they are withheld by thoſe Luſts, I ſhall give ſome Inſtances.

*Inſtance* 1. And Firſt, for Convictions of *Ungodlineſs*. There are many that call themſelves Chriſtians, whoſe Conſciences tell them God is to be daily and duly worſhipped by them, both in Family, and Cloſet Prayer. It ſets before them *Joſhua*'s pious practice, *Joſh.* 24. 15. *As for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.* They know God is the *Founder*, the *Owner*, the *Maſter* of their Families; that all Family Bleſſings are from him, and therefore he is to be owned, acknowledged and ſought, in daily Family Prayers and Praiſes. It tells them the Curſe of God hangs over prayerleſs Families, *Jer.* 10. 25. and that they live in the inexcuſable neglect of theſe Duties, ſeldom worſhipping of God with their Families, or in their Cloſets; and that therefore they live without God in the World. And dreadful will the account and reckoning be at the Great Day, for their own Souls, which they have ſtarved for want of Cloſet Prayer, and for the Souls committed to their charge, which periſh for want of Family Duties. This is the caſe of many who yet will needs paſs for Profeſſors of Chriſtianity.

Lord, how ſad a caſe is here? How can men poſſibly live in the daily neglect of ſo great, ſo neceſſary a Duty? Certainly 'tis not for want of Light or Conviction; the very light of Nature, if we had no Bibles, diſcovers theſe Duties. But three things hold this Truth of God dictated by Mens Conſciences in Unrighteouſneſs, *viz.*

1. *The Love of the World.*
2. *Conſciouſneſs of Inability.*
3. *A Diſinclined Heart.*

1. *The Love of the World* choaks this Conviction in the Souls of ſome: and they think it enough to plead for their Excuſe, the want of opportunities, and many encumberances they have, which will not allow them time for theſe Duties. The World is a ſevere Taskmaſter, and fills their heads and hands all the day with Cares and Toils.

And muſt the mouth of Conſcience then be ſtopped with ſuch a plea as this? No, no, God and Conſcience will not be anſwered and put off ſo. The greateſt number of Perſons in the World, from whom God hath the moſt ſpiritual and excellent Worſhip, are of the lower and poorer rank, *Pſal.* 74. 20. *Jam.* 2. 5. And it's highly probable your Neceſſities had been leſs, if your Prayers had been more. And what ſweeter outlet and vent to all theſe troubles can you find, than Prayer? This would ſweeten all your Labours and Sorrows in the World.

2. *Conſciouſneſs and ſenſe of Inability and want of Gifts*, reſtrains this Conviction in others. Should they attempt ſuch duties before others, they ſhall but expoſe their own ignorance and ſhame.

But this is a vain pretence to ſhake off Duty. The neglect of Prayer is a principal Cauſe of that inability you complain of. Gifts as well as Grace grow by Exerciſe. To him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundantly. And beſides, 'tis the fruit of Pride, and argues your eye to be more upon your own Honour than God's. The Lord regards not Oratory in Prayer; your broken Expreſſions, yea, your Groans and Sighs pleaſe him more than all the Eloquence in the World.

3. But the principal thing that reſtrains Men from obeying their Convictions as to Family and Cloſet Prayer is, *A diſinclined Heart.* That's the root and true cauſe of theſe ſinful Neglects and Omiſſions. You ſavour not the ſweetneſs of theſe things; and what a man reliſhes no ſweetneſs in, or finds no neceſſity of, is eaſily omitted and let paſs.

But wo to you that go from day to day ſelf-condemned for the neglect of ſo known, ſo ſweet, and ſo neceſſary a Duty. If our Hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, 1 *Joh.* 3. 20. He that lives without Prayer, is dead whilſt he lives; and let men talk what they pleaſe of ſecret Communion with God, I am ſure, if Religion did thrive in the Cloſet, it could never be baniſhed out of the Family. The time is coming alſo when Death will diſband and break up your Families, ſeparate the Wife from the Husband, the Child from the Parent, the Servant from the Maſter; and then where you ſhall find relief and comfort who have ſpent your time together ſo ſinfully and vainly, I cannot tell, nor what account you can give to God in the great day. Think ſadly on theſe things, they are worth thinking on.

*Inſtance* 2. A ſecond Inſtance of *Ungodlineſs* continued in under the Convictions of Conſcience, is *Formality* in all the external duties of Religion, and Ordinances of God. Have not ſome of your Conſciences often and plainly told you, that though you be often ingaged in the publick duties of Hearing, Prayer, *&c.* yet your hearts are not with God in thoſe duties? They do not work after communion and fellowſhip with him therein. 'Tis nothing but the force of Education, Cuſtom, and care of Reputation brings you there.

Such a conviction as this, could it work home, and do its work throughly, would be the ſalvation of thy Soul. Were power added to the form, as Conſcience would have it, thou wert then a real Chriſtian, and out of the danger of Hell. The want of this thy Conſcience ſees will be thy ruin, and accordingly gives thee plain warning of it. O what pity is it ſuch a conviction as this ſhould be held in Unrighteouſneſs! but ſo it is in very many ſouls, and that on ſeveral accounts.

1. Becauſe Hypocriſie is ſo odious and abominable a ſin, that men are loth to own and acknowledg it, how guilty ſoever they be of it. What, diſſemble with God, and play the Hypocrite with him; 'tis ſo black and foul a Crime, that men cannot eaſily be brought to charge themſelves with it. They may have the infirmities which are common to the beſt of men, but yet they are no hypocrites. Thus Pride of Heart caſts a chain upon this conviction, and binds it that it cannot do its work.

2. 'Tis a cheap and eaſie way to give God the external Service and Worſhip of the Body, but Heartwork is hard work. To ſit or kneel an hour or two is no great matter: but to ſearch, humble, and break the Heart for ſin; to work

up the dead and earthly Affections into a ſpiritual heavenly frame, this will coſt many a hard tug. 'Tis no ſevere task to ſit before God as his people, whilſt the fancy and thoughts are left at liberty to wander which way they pleaſe, as the thoughts of formal Hypocrites uſe to do, *Ezek.* 33. 31. but to ſet a watch upon the heart, to ſummon in the Thoughts to God, to retract every wandering thought with a ſigh; this is difficult, and the difficulty overpowers conviction of duty.

3. The *Atheiſm* of the heart quenches this conviction in mens Souls. Formality is a ſecret inviſible ſin, not diſcernable by man; the outſide of Religion looks fair to mans eye, and ſo long it's well enough, as if there were not a God that trieth the hearts and the reins. This, when a beam of light and conviction ſhines into the Soul, a cloud of natural Atheiſm overſhadows and darkens it.

But, poor ſelf-cozening Hypocrite, theſe things muſt not paſs ſo; thy Conſcience as well as the Word tell thee that it is not the place of Worſhip, but the ſpirituality of it that God regards, *Joh.* 4. 23, 24. That they are Hypocrites in Scripture account, who have God in their mouths, but he is far from their reins, *Jer.* 12. 2. and that Hypocrites will have the hotteſt place in Hell, *Matth.* 24. 51.

*Inſtance* 3. A Third inſtance of Convictions of ungodlineſs held in unrighteouſneſs, is in declining or denying to confeſs the known truths of God, which we our ſelves have profeſſed, when the confeſſion of them infers danger.

In times of danger Conſcience ſtruggles hard with men to appear for the Truths of God, and upon no account whatſoever to diſſemble or deny them; and enforceth its Counſels and Warnings upon us with ſuch awful Scriptures as theſe, *Luk.* 9. 62. *No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.* And *Matth.* 10. 33. *But whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in Heaven.* In this caſe Conſcience uſeth to ſtruggle hard with men, yet is many times overborn by the prevalent Temptations of the Fleſh; as,

1. By Carnal Fears. The fear of Suffering gets the aſcendant of the fear of God. Men chuſe rather to adventure their Souls upon Wrath to come, than the preſent Wrath of incenſed Enemies. They vainly hope to find mercy with God, but expect none from men. Thus the fear of man brings a ſnare, *Prov.* 29. 25. and ſo the voice of Conſcience is drowned by the louder clamours and threats of Adverſaries.

2. As the fear of man's Threatnings, ſo the diſtruſt of God's Promiſes defeats the deſign of Conſcience. If men believed the promiſes, they would never be afraid of their duties. Faith in a promiſe would make men as bold as Lions. If ſuch a word as that was minded, *Iſa.* 57. 11. *Of whom haſt thou been afraid or feared, that thou haſt lied, and haſt not remembred me?* Men would ſay, as *Zuinglius* in the like caſe, what Death would I not rather chuſe to die? what puniſhment would I not rather undergo? yea, into what vault of Hell would I not rather chuſe to be caſt, than to witneſs againſt my own Conſcience?

3. The immoderate and inordinate Love of the World overpowers Conſcience, and drowns its voice in ſuch an hour of Temptation. So *Demas* found it, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. O what a dangerous conflict is there in an hour of Temptation betwixt an enlightned head, and a worldly heart?

Laſtly, The Examples of others who comply, and embrace the ſinful terms of Liberty to eſcape the danger, embolden men to follow their Examples, and Satan will not be wanting to improve their Examples. Don't you ſee ſuch and ſuch men beating the road before you? Learned Men, and prudent men, who it may be have leſs Heat, but more Wiſdom than you. Why will you be ſingular? Why will you hazard all for that others will hazard nothing?

But certainly ſuch ſins as theſe will coſt you dear, 'tis a dreadful thing to betray the Truths and Honour of God for baſe ſecular ends; and you will find it ſo, when you and your Conſciences ſhall debate it together in a calm hour.

Secondly, There are alſo ſins of *Unrighteouſneſs* againſt the *Second Table*, in which many live againſt the plain dictates and warnings of their own Conſciences, tho they know the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the Truth in unrighteouſneſs. To give ſome Inſtances of this.

*Inſtance* 1. And firſt, let me inſtance in that ſin of *Defrauding*, and going beyond others in our civil Commerce and Dealings with them; over-reaching, cozening, and cheating the ignorant or unwary, who it may be would not be ſo unwary as they are, did they not repoſe truſt and confidence in your deceitful words and promiſes. Conſcience cannot but ſtartle at ſuch ſins, the very Light of Nature diſcovers the evil of it, and the ſober Heathens abhor it; but we that live under the Goſpel cannot but feel ſome terror and trembling in our Conſciences when we read ſuch a ſevere and awful prohibition, back'd with ſuch a dreadful threatning as that is in 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 6. *That no man defraud or go beyond his brother in any matter, becauſe that the Lord is the Avenger of all ſuch.* The word is, τὸ μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν, that no man overtop, *viz.* by power, or by craft and policy. To this ſin a dreadful threatning is annexed, the Lord is the *Avenger* of all ſuch. The word is ἔκδικος, but once more that I remember uſed in the New Teſtament, *Rom.* 13. 4. and is there applied to the Civil Magiſtrate, he muſt ſee Execution done upon Malefactors; but here, the Lord himſelf will do it, he will be this mans Avenger. This Rod, or rather this Ax, Conſcience ſhews Men, and gives warning of the danger, and yet its Convictions are overpowered and bound as Priſoners, by

1. The exceſſive Love of Gain; 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. *But they that will be rich fall into Temptation, and a ſnare; and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition.* When a reſolution is made for the world, men will be rich by right or wrong, this powerfully arms the Temptation. Set Gain before ſuch a Man, and he will break through the Law of God, and Convictions of Conſcience, but he will have it. This drowns them in perdition and deſtruction, that is, it ſurely, throughly, and fully ruins them: as he is a dead man that is only drowned, but to be drowned in deſtruction, yea in deſtruction and perdition too; this muſt needs make his ruin ſure, as ſure as words can make it, and ſo all ſuch perſons ſhall ſurely find it, who perſiſt in ſuch a Courſe.

2. Pinching Neceſſities and Straits overbear Conſcience in others. Neceſſity hath no Ears to

attend the voice of the Word and Conſcience. Here Conſcience and Poverty ſtruggle together, and if the Fear of God be not exalted in the Soul, it now falls a prey to Temptation. This danger wiſe *Agur* foreſaw, and earneſtly intreated the Lord for a competency, to avoid the ſnare of Poverty, *Prov.* 30. 8, 9. Poor Wretch! how much better were it for thee to endure the pains of a griping Stomach, than thoſe of a griping Conſcience? ſuch gains may be ſweet in thy mouth, but bitter in thy bowels.

3. The Examples of others who daily venture on ſuch ſins without ſcruple, and laugh at ſuch ſqueamiſh Conſciences as keck at ſuch things; this emboldens other to follow them, *Pſal.* 50. 18. and thus the voice of Conſcience is drowned, and Convictions buried for a time, but it will thunder at laſt, and thy buried Convictions will have a Reſurrection, and it ſhall be out of thy power to ſilence them again.

*Inſtance* 2. The Truth of God is held in unrighteouſneſs, when mens Luſts will not ſuffer them to reſtore what they have ſinfully and unjuſtly gotten into their hands. This Sin lies boking in the Conſciences of ſome men, makes them very uneaſie, and yet they make a hard ſhift to rub along under theſe regrets of Conſcience. Now thoſe things which make a forcible entry into the Conſcience, take the Truths of God Priſoners, and bind them, that they cannot break forth into the duty of Reſtitution, are,

1. The ſhame which attends and follows the duty to which God and Conſcience calls the Soul. O 'tis a ſhame and reproach, they think, to get the name of a *cheat.* Loth, loth they are, theſe works of darkneſs ſhould come into the open Light; men will point, and hiſs at them; and ſay, there goes a Thief, a Cheat, an Oppreſſor; this keeps many from Reſtitution.

But doſt thou not here commit a greater Cheat than the former? Which is the greater ſhame thinkſt thou; to commit ſin, or to confeſs and reform it? to tie the ſnare upon thy Soul by Commiſſion, or looſe it off from thy Conſcience by Repentance and Reſtitution? to be the deriſion of wicked men, (for none elſe will deride thee for thy duty) or to be the contempt and deriſion of God, Angels, and all good Men for ever? to attain inward peace at this hazard, or to lie under the continual laſhes and wounds of thy own Conſcience?

2. Poverty and Inability is ſometimes pleaded to quiet the troubled Conſcience; and indeed this is a juſt and very frequent blaſt of God upon ill-gotten goods. The curſe of God is upon them. They melt away. O what a miſerable ſnare have you now intangled your Souls in? Once you could, but would not reſtore, a worldly heart would not part with unjuſt gains; now you would, but cannot. Thus a worldly heart, and an empty purſe holds you firſt and laſt under the guilt of a known ſin. A lamentable caſe!

3. Vain purpoſes do often ſuppreſs and ſilence convictions: my condition may alter, I may be in a capacity hereafter when I can better ſpare it than at preſent. Or I'll do it in my laſt Will when I die, and charge my Executors with it. Thus do men bribe their Conſciences, to get a little quiet, whilſt they continue under known guilt, and cannot tell how ſoon death ſhall ſummon them to the awful Bar of a juſt and terrible God.

Sirs, As you value your peace, and which is more, your Souls; releaſe the Lord's *Priſoner* which lies bound within you with cords and chains of Satan's making; do it, I ſay, as you hope to ſee the face of God in peace. You know, without Repentance there can be no Salvation; and without Reſtitution, no Repentance: For how can you repent of a ſin you ſtill knowingly continue in? Repentance is the Soul's turning from ſin, as well as its ſorrow for ſin. You cannot therefore repent of ſin, and ſtill continue in it; *How ſhall we that are dead to ſin, continue any longer therein?* Rom. 6. 2. Truſt Providence for the ſupply of your wants, and the wants of yours, in the ways of Duty and Righteouſneſs. A little that a Righteous man hath is better than the Riches of many wicked. You'l have more comfort in Bread and Water with peace of Conſcience, than in full Tables with God's curſe. You'l lie more at eaſe on a burden of Straw, than on a Bed of Down with a grumbling Conſcience.

*Inſtance* 3. How many lie under the condemnations of their own Conſciences for the luſts of Uncleanneſs in which they live? And tho they read, and their Conſciences apply to them ſuch Scriptures as that, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. *Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with mankind,* &c. *ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God*; a dreadful Sentence! and that, *Heb.* 13. 4. *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judg:* Yet convictions are overborn and ſtifled by,

1. The impetuous Violence of carnal Luſts, which permit not of calm debates, but hurry them on to the ſin, and leave them to conſider the evil and dangerous conſequences afterward. Thus they go, *as an Ox to the ſlaughter, or as a Fool to the correction of the ſtocks,* Prov. 7. 22. Luſt beſots them. To give counſel now, is but to give Phyſick in a *Paroxiſm,* or counſel to him that is running a Race. Luſt anſwers Conſcience as *Antipater* did one that preſented him a Book treating of Happineſs, ȣ̓ σχολάζω, *I have no leiſure to read ſuch Diſcourſes.*

2. Others would feign ſolve their ſcruples, with the ſinful failings of good men, as *David, Solomon,* &c. not conſidering what brokenneſs of Heart it coſt *David,* Pſal. 51. and the other, *ſorrow more bitter than death,* Eccl. 7. 26. *Læta venire Venus, triſtis abire ſolet.* This is a preſumptuous way of ſinning, and how dreadful that is, ſee *Numb.* 15. 30.

*Inſtance* 4. Truth is often held in unrighteouſneſs by ſinful Silence, in not reproving other mens ſins, and thereby making them our own. We are ſometimes caſt into the company of ungodly Men, where we hear the Name of our God blaſphemed, the Truth, Worſhip or Servants of God reproached; and have not ſo much courage to appear for God, as others have to appear againſt him. In ſuch caſes Conſcience uſeth to inſtigate men to their duty, and charge it home upon them in the authority of ſuch a Scripture, as that *Lev.* 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him.* O ſaith Conſcience, thy ſilence now will be thy ſin. This poor wretch may periſh for want of a ſeaſonable, plain, and faithful rebuke. Thy ſilence will harden him in his wickedneſs. No ſooner doth ſuch a conviction ſtir in the Conſcience, but many things are ready to lay hold on it; as,

1. A Spirit of Cowardice, which makes us afraid to diſpleaſe men; and chuſes rather the wrath of God ſhould fall on them, than that their wrath ſhould fall on us. We dare not take as much liberty to reprove ſin, as others do to commit it. They glory in their ſhame, and we are aſhamed of what is both our glory, and our duty.

2. Dependance on, or near relation to the Perſon ſinning. 'Tis a Father, an Husband, a Superior, on whoſe favour I depend; and ſhould I diſpleaſe him, I may ruin my ſelf: this is the voice of the Fleſh. Hence duty is neglected, and the Soul of a Friend baſely betrayed; our intereſt preferr'd to God's, and thereby frequently loſt: for there is no way to ſecure our own intereſt in any mans heart, as to ſettle it by our Faithfulneſs in his Conſcience, and by being willing to hazard it for God's intereſt and glory. The Lord bleſſeth Mens Faithfulneſs above all their ſinful Carnal Policies, *Prov.* 28. 23. *He that rebuketh a man, afterwards ſhall find more favour than he that flattereth with his lips.*

3. Mens own Guilt ſtops their Mouths, and ſilences them. They are aſhamed and afraid to reprove other mens ſins, leſt they ſhould hear of their own. Fear of Retortion keeps them from the duty of Reprehenſion. Thus we fall into a new ſin for fear of reviving an old one. *He that reproveth a ſcorner, getteth to himſelf ſhame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man, getteth himſelf a blot,* Prov. 9. 7.

But this is the fruit of our Pride and Ignorance. What we fear might turn to our benefit. The Reproof given is a Duty diſcharged; and the Retortion in return, a freſh call to Repentance for ſin paſt, and a caution againſt ſin to come.

*Inſtance* 5. Another Inſtance of Convictions of unrighteouſneſs impriſoned in mens Souls, is in not diſtributing to the neceſſities of others, eſpecially ſuch as fear God, when it is in the power of our hands to do it, and Conſcience as well as Scripture calls us to our Duty.

Men cannot be ignorant of that Text, *Matth.* 25. 40, 41. where by a *Synecdoche*, Charity to the Saints is by Chriſt put for the whole of Obedience; and mens Eternal States are caſt according to their obſervance of this command; tho I fear few, very few ſtudy and believe it as they ought. Thou canſt, ſaith Conſcience, if thou wilt relieve ſuch or ſuch a poor Chriſtian, and therein expreſs thy love to Chriſt, yea refreſh the bowels of Chriſt; do it, God will repay it: if thou refuſeſt, *how dwelleth the love of God in thee?* 1 Joh. 3. 17. This is the Voice of God and Conſcience, but divers Luſts are ready to lay hold on and bind this Conviction alſo, aſſoon as it ſtirs, *viz.*

1. The exceſſive love of Earthly things. The World is got ſo deep in mens Hearts, that they will rather part with their peace, yea and with their Souls too, than part with it. Hence come thoſe churliſh anſwers like that of *Nabal*, 1 Sam. 25. 11. *Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my fleſh; and give it to men, whom I know not whence they be?*

2. Unbelief, which denies to give Honour and due Credit to Chriſt's Bills of Exchange drawn upon them in Scripture, and preſented to them by the hands of his poor Saints. They refuſe, I ſay, to credit them, tho Conſcience proteſt againſt them for their Non-compliance. Chriſt ſaith, *Mark* 9. 41. *Whoſoever ſhall give you a cup of cold water to drink in my name, becauſe ye belong to Chriſt, verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall not loſe his reward.* He ſhall gain that which he cannot loſe, by parting with that which he cannot keep.

3. The want of love to Jeſus Chriſt. Did we love Chriſt in ſincerity, and were that love ſo fervent as it ought be, it would make thee more ready to lay down thy neck for Chriſt, than thou now art to lay out a ſhilling for him. 1 *Joh.* 3. 16. 'Tis our Duty in ſome caſes to ſpend our blood for the Saints. So it was in the primitive times; Behold (ſaid the Chriſtians Enemies) how they love one another, and are willing to die one for another. But that Spirit is almoſt extinguiſhed in theſe degenerate days.

*Inſtance* 6. How many ſtand convinced by their own Conſciences what a ſin it is to ſpend their precious time ſo idly and vainly as they do? When a day is loſt in vanity, duties neglected, no good done or received; at night Conſcience reckons with them for it, and asks them what account they can give of that day to God, how they are able to ſatisfie themſelves to lie down and ſleep under ſo much guilt? and yet when the morrow comes, the vanity of their hearts carries them on in the ſame Courſe again the next day; and whilſt they keep themſelves in vain Company, they are quiet, till Conſcience finds them at leiſure to debate it again with them. Now the things which maſter Convictions are,

1. In ſome men, their ignorance and inſenſibility of the Preciouſneſs of Time. They know 'tis their ſin, to ſpend their time ſo vainly, but little conſider that Eternity it ſelf hangs upon this little Moment of Time; and that the great work of their Salvation will require all the time they have; and if it be not finiſhed in this ſmall allotment of time, it can never be finiſhed, *Joh.* 9. 4.

2. The Examples of other vain perſons, that are as prodigal of their precious time as themſelves, and entice them to ſpend it as they do.

3. The charming power of ſenſual Luſts and Pleaſures. O how pleaſantly doth time ſlide away in Plays, Alehouſes, in relating or hearing, taking Stories, News, &c.

4. Inconſiderateneſs of the ſharp and terrible rebukes of Conſcience for this on a Death-bed, or the terrors of the Lord in the day of Judgment.

In all theſe Inſtances you ſee how common this dreadful evil of holding the Truth in unrighteouſneſs is; yet theſe are but a few ſelected from among many.

*Fifthly*, In the next place I am obliged to ſhew, how and why the impriſoning of Convictions, or holding the Truths of God in unrighteouſneſs, ſo dreadfully incenſeth his Wrath. And this it doth on ſeveral accounts:

1. Knowledg and Conviction of ſin is an excellent means, or choice help to preſerve Men from falling into ſin: There be Thouſands of ſins committed in the World, which had never been committed, if Men had known them to be ſins before they committed them. Every Sinner durſt not make ſo bold with his Conſcience as you have done. The *Apoſtle* tells us the reaſon why the Princes of this World crucified the Lord of Glory, was, becauſe they knew him not, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8.

had they known him they wolud not have dared to do as they did. And ſo it is in multitudes of lower and leſſer ſins than that, Satan mops their Eyes with Ignorance, then uſes their Hands and Tongues in Wickedneſs; he is the Ruler of the darkneſs of the World, *Eph. 6.* 12. But when Men do know this or that to be ſin, and yet venture on it, here an excellent Antidote againſt ſin is turned into a dreadful Aggravation of ſin, which highly incenſes the Wrath of God.

2. Knowledg and Conviction going before, adds preſumption to the Sin that follows after it; and preſumptuous Sin is the moſt provoking and daring Sin; from this way of ſinning *David* earneſtly beſeeches God to keep him, *Keep back thy ſervant* (ſaith he) *from preſumptuous ſins.* When a man ſees ſin, and yet adventures on it, in ſuch ſinning there is a deſpiſing of the Law of God: A Man may break the Law, whilſt he approves, reverences, and honours it in his heart, *Rom.* 7. 12 13. but here the Commandment is deſpiſed, as God told *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 9. 'Tis as if a Man ſhould ſay, I ſee the Command of God armed with threatnings in my way, but yet I will go on for all that.

3. Knowledg and Conviction leave the Conſcience of a Sinner naked, and wholly without excuſe or apology for his ſin: In this caſe there is no plea left to extenuate the offence: *John* 15. 22. *Now they have no cloak for their ſin.* If a man ſins ignorantly, his ignorance is ſome excuſe for his ſin, it excuſes it at leaſt *à tanto*, as Paul tells us, thus and thus I did, *but I did it ignorantly:* Here is a cloak or covering, an excuſe or extenuation of the ſin; but Knowledg takes away this cloak, and makes the ſin appear naked in all the odious deformity of it, nothing left to hide it.

4. Light or Knowledg of the Law and Will of God, is a very choice and excellent Mercy; 'tis a choice and ſingular favour, for God to make the light of Knowledg to ſhine into a Man's mind or underſtanding; 'tis a Mercy withheld from multitudes, *Pſal.* 147. 19. and thoſe that enjoy it, are under ſpecial engagements to bleſs God for it, and to improve it diligently and thankfully to his Service and Glory; but for a Man to arm ſuch a Mercy as this againſt God, to fight againſt him with one of his choiceſt Mercies, this muſt be highly provoking to the Lord: 'Tis therefore mention'd as a high aggravation of *Solomon's* ſin, in 1 *Kings* 11. 9. that he ſinned againſt the Lord, *after the Lord had appeared unto him twice.*

5. This way of ſinning argues an extraordinary degree of hardneſs of heart; 'tis a ſign of little tenderneſs, or ſenſe of the evil of ſin. Some Men, when God ſhews them the evil of ſin in the glaſs of the Law, they tremble at the ſight of it: So did *Paul*, Rom. 7. 13. *When the Commandment came, ſin revived, and he died*; he ſunk down at the ſight of it. But God ſhews thee the evil of ſin in the glaſs of his Law, and thou makeſt nothing of it: O obdurate heart! When the Rod was turned into a Serpent, *Moſes* fled from it, was afraid to touch it; but tho God turns the Rod into a Serpent, and diſcovers the venomous Nature of Sin in his Word, thou canſt handle and play with that Serpent, and put it into thy boſom: this ſhews thy heart to be of a ſtrange complexion.

6. To go againſt the convincing warning voice of Conſcience, violates and wounds a Man's Conſcience more than any other way of ſinning doth; and when Conſcience is ſo wounded, who, or what ſhall then comfort thee? 'Tis a true Rule, *Maxima violatio Conſcientiæ, eſt maximum peccatum*: The more any ſin violates a man's Conſcience, the greater that ſin is: The ſin of Devils is the moſt dreadful ſin, and what makes it ſo, but the horrid violation of their Conſciences, and malicious Rebellion againſt their own Light and clear Knowledg? *James* 2. 19. They know and ſin, they believe and tremble; φρίσσουσι, they roar under the Tortures of Conſcience like the Rote of the Sea, or noiſe of the Rocks before a Storm.

O then, if there be any degree of ſenſe and tenderneſs left in you, if any fear of God, or regard to Salvation; let go all God's Priſoners which lie bound and are impriſoned in any of your Souls this day. Bleſſed be God ſome have done ſo, and are at eaſe and reſt in their Spirits by ſo doing: They could have no eaſe till they unbound them, and yielded obedience to them. 'Tis ſaid, *Acts* 16. 38. that when the Magiſtrates of *Philippi* underſtood, that thoſe Men whom they had bound and impriſoned, were *Romans*, they *feared*, and well they might; for the puniſhment was great for any Man that injured a Citizen, or Freeman of *Rome:* but every Conviction you impriſon is a Meſſenger of Heaven, a Commiſſion Officer of God, and wo to him that binds or abuſeth it. Do you know what you do? Are you aware of the danger? Waſt thou not afraid (ſaid *David* to the *Amalekite*) to ſtretch forth thine hand to deſtroy the Lord's Anointed? So ſay I, Art thou not afraid to deſtroy the immediate Meſſenger of God ſent to thy Soul for good? Conviction is a kind of Embrio of Converſion; the Converſion and Salvation of thy Soul would be the Fruit of it, were it obeyed: Thy ſtriving with it cauſes it to miſcarry, renders it abortive, and thy Life muſt go for it, except God revive and recover it again; as you know the Law is for ſtriking a pregnant Woman, *Exod.* 21. 22, 23. Looſe then every Man the Lord's Priſoners, I mean your reſtrained ſtifled Convictions, ſtifle them no longer; you ſee what a dreadful aggravation of Sin it is, and that the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of Men, that hold the Truth in unrighteouſneſs.

I. USE, *for Information.*

*Infer.* 1. This will prove a fruitful Doctrine to inform us, Firſt, *That Knowledg in it ſelf is not enough to ſecure the Soul of any Man from Hell.*

No Gifts, no Knowledg, but that only which is operative and influential upon the Heart and Life, and to which we pay obedience, can ſecure any Man from Wrath: *John* 13. 17. *If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.* The greateſt ſins may be found in conjunction with the greateſt knowledg, as you ſee in the fallen Angels: Light is then only a Bleſſing, when it guides the Soul into the way of Duty and Obedience: there's many a knowing Head in Hell. Yet from hence let no Man indulge himſelf in Ignorance, or ſhun the means of knowledg, that he may ſin more freely, and leſs dangerouſly; for you muſt account with God for all that knowledg you might have had, as well as for that you had; for the means of knowledg he gave you, as well as for that knowledg you did actually attain by them.

*Infer.* 2. What ſingular and choice Mercy is a tender Conſcience! A Conſcience yielding Obedience to Conviction! A drop of ſuch tenderneſs in the Conſcience is better than a Sea of ſpeculative Knowledg in the head, 1 *Cor.* 12. 31. Many poor Chriſtians are aſhamed to ſee themſelves ſo out-ſtripped and excelled by others in Gifts, and apt to be diſcouraged; but if God has bleſſed thee with a tender obediential Heart to the Will of God, ſo far as he is pleaſed to manifeſt it to thee, thou haſt no reaſon to be diſcouraged for want of thoſe excellent Gifts and Parts others do enjoy. You cannot diſcourſe *floridly*, nor diſpute *ſubtilly*; but can you obey conſcientiouſly, and comply with the manifeſted Will of God tenderly? Then happy art thou. O! 'tis far better to feel a Truth, than merely to know it. It was the high Commendation of the *Romans*, that they obeyed from the Heart that form of Goſpel-doctrin which was delivered them, *Rom.* 6. 17. or into which rather, they were delivered, as melted Metals are into the Moulds. Two Learned Divines travelling to the *Council* of *Conſtance*, were affected even to Tears at the ſight of a Shepherd in the Fields, mourning and melting at the ſight of a Toad, and bleſſing God that he had not made him ſuch a loathſom Creature; whereupon they applyed *Auſtin's* words to themſelves, *Surgunt indocti, &c.* The Unlearned will riſe and take Heaven from the Learned. Thy little knowledg made effectual by Obedience, is more *ſanctified*, more *ſweet*, and more *ſaving* than other Mens; and therefore of much greater value: 'Tis more *ſanctified*, for the Bleſſing of God is upon it, *Gal.* 6. 16. 'Tis more *ſweet*, for you reliſh the *Goodneſs*, as well as diſcern the *Truth* of Goſpel-Doctrins, *Pſal.* 119. 103. 'Tis not an inſipid dry ſpeculation. And then 'tis more *ſaving*, being one of thoſe better things that accompanieth Salvation, as it is, *Heb.* 6. 9.

εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε.

*Infer.* 3. Learn hence in the third place, *What an uncomfortable Life knowing, but unregenerate Men and Women do live: They are frequently in Wars and Combats with their own Conſciences.* Iſa. 46. 22. *There is no peace to the wicked, ſaith my God.* They and their Conſciences are ever and anon at Daggers drawing: They have little pleaſure in Sin, and none at all in Religion: They have none in Religion, becauſe they obey not its Rules; and little in Sin, becauſe their Conſciences are ſtill gauling and terrifying them for impriſoning their Convictions.

'Tis true, ſome Mens Conſciences are ſeared as with a hot Iron, 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. but moſt have grumbling, and ſome have raging and roaring Conſciences; they ſeldom come under the Word, or Rod, but their Conſciences laſh them: And when Death approaches, the Terrors of the Almighty do ſhake and terrifie them. Altogether to neglect Duty they dare not, and how to eſcape a laſh from their Conſciences they know not. Feign they would have the pleaſures of ſin, but then like *Balaam* they meet a Sword in the way; they plunge themſelves into Earthly diverſions like *Cain*, to be rid of a Fury within them, but all will not do. Is this a Life for thee, Reader, to live? No peace with God, nor any with thy ſelf? No, no, expect no peace whilſt thy Convictions lie bound and impriſon'd in thy Conſcience. Sin for a moment is ſweet in thy mouth, but it's preſently turned into the Gall of Aſps within thee, *Job* 20. 14. O that you did but know the pleaſures of a pure peaceable Conſcience, and how much it excels all the delights of ſenſe and ſin!

Infer. 4. *Miniſters had need often to repeat and inculcate the ſame Truths to their hearers: For the work is not half done, when Truth is got into the Minds and Conſciences of Men.*

Our work ſticks at the *Heart*, more than the *Head:* The Underſtanding is many times open'd, when the Heart and Will are lockt, and faſt bar'd againſt it. To open the paſſages betwixt the Head and Heart is the greateſt difficulty; this is the work of Almighty Power. There is knowledg enough in ſome Mens heads to ſave them, but it hath not its Liberty: Reſtrained Truth cannot do its Office. 'Tis much eaſier to convince the Mind, than to change the Heart, or bow the Will. The hardeſt part of the Miniſterial work is to preach Truths into the Hearts and Lives of Men. This makes the frequent inculcations of the ſame Truths neceſſary and ſafe to the peoples Souls; Phil. 3. 1. *To write the ſame things unto you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is ſafe.*

Infer. 5. *How aſtoniſhing and wonderful is the Power and Strength of Sin, which can hold Men faſt, after their Eyes are open'd to ſee the Miſery and Danger it hath involved them in.*

One would think if a Man's eyes were but once opened to ſee the *Moral* Evil that is in Sin, and the Everlaſting train of *Penal* Evils that follow Sin, together with a way of eſcape from both; it ſhould be impoſſible to hold that ſinner a day longer in ſuch a ſtate of Bondage; the work were then as good as done: but alas, we are miſtaken; ſin can hold thoſe Men and Women faſt, that ſee all this. They know it is a horrid violation of God's juſt and holy Laws, they know it brings them under his Wrath and Curſe, and will damn them to all Eternity if they continue in it: They know Chriſt is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, and that he is as willing as he is able; and yet no Arguments can prevail with them to part with ſin. Shew but a beaſt a flame of fire, and you cannot drive him into it, if he ſee any way to eſcape it. Tell a man this is rank poiſon, and will kill him, and you cannot make him ſwallow it, tho wrapt up in Sugar, or put into the moſt pleaſant *Vehicle.* But let a ſinner ſee death and deſtruction before him, and ſin can make him ruſh on *as a horſe into the battel*, Jer. 8. 6. He goes as an Ox to the ſlaughter. His heart is fully ſet in him to do evil, *Eccl.* 8. 11. As one ſaid, when his *Phyſician* told him, *If he followed ſuch a courſe of ſin, he would in a little time loſe his Eyes*; *Then*, ſaid he, *Vale lumen amicum, Farewel ſweet Light, I cannot part with this practice.* So 'tis with others, rather than forgo their pleaſures, and break their Cuſtoms in ſin, farewel Heaven, Chriſt, and all. O the inchanting efficacy of Sin! *Jer.* 18. 11, 12. *And they ſaid, There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices.* When a man conſiders what Viſions of Miſery and Wrath Conviction gives Men, he may wonder that all convinced men are not converted: and on the other ſide, when he conſiders the ſtrong hold ſin hath gotten upon the hearts of ſinners, it may juſtly ſeem as great a wonder that any are converted.

Infer. 6. *How dreadful is the State and Caſe of Apoſtates, who have had their eyes opened, their Con-*

*ſciences awakened, their Reſolutions for Chriſt ſeemingly fixed, and yet after all this, return again to their former courſe of Sin!*

You ſee, Brethren, Sin hath not only power to hold men in bondage to its Luſts after their eyes have been open'd; but it hath power to recover and fetch back thoſe that ſeemed to have clean eſcaped out of its hands, 2 *Pet.* 2. 18, 19. The unclean Spirit may depart for a time, and make his re-entry into the ſame Soul with ſeven Spirits worſe than himſelf, *Mat.* 12. 43. Reſtraints by conviction and formality do not wholly diſpoſſeſs *Satan*, he ſtill keeps his propriety in the Soul, for he calls it *my houſe*; and that propriety he keeps under all thoſe Convictions and partial Reformations, opens to him and all his Helliſh retinue a door for his return. But how doleful will the end of ſuch Men be! and how juſt is that *Martial Law* of *Heaven*, that dooms the Apoſtate to Eternal Wrath! *Heb.* 10. 38. Such are 'twice dead, and will be pluckt up by the Root, *Jude* 12.

*Infer.* 7. To conclude this Uſe, *How ſure and dreadful will be the Condemnation of all thoſe in the day of the Lord, who obſtinately perſiſt and continue in ſin, under the Convictions and Condemnations of their own Conſciences!*

Poor wretches, you are condemned already, *Joh.* 3. 18. condemned by the Law of God, and by the ſentence of your own Conſciences. What thy own Conſcience ſaith according to God's Law, God will confirm, and make it good; 1 *Joh.* 3. 20. *If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.* His ſentence will be as clear, as it will be terrible; for in the laſt Day the Books will be opened, the book of God's *Omniſcience*, and the book of thine own *Conſcience*. Now the book of Conſcience is as it were a *Tranſcript* or Counterpart of God's book, for thee to keep in thine own boſom. Now when God's book and thy own book ſhall be compared, and found exactly to agree, there can be no farther diſpute of the Equity of the account. O when God ſhall charge thee, ſaying, Thou kneweſt this and that to be ſin, and yet thy luſts hurried thee on to commit it; Is it not ſo? Look, ſinner, into thine own book, and ſee if thy Conſcience have not ſo charged it to thy Account. Thou kneweſt Prayer was thy duty, when thou neglectedſt it; and over-reaching the Ignorant, Credulous and Unwary, was thy ſin, when the love of gain tempted thee to it. You knew I had plainly told you, Theft, Uncleanneſs, Drunkenneſs, and Extortion, would bar you out of the Kingdom of Chriſt and of God, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. and yet putting that to the venture, you have lived in thoſe ſins; Is it not ſo? Examine the book in your own boſom, and ſee. The Lord make men ſenſible of Wrath, coming for thoſe ſins they live in under light, for the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt them.

## II. *USE.*

Is the Wrath of God revealed from Heaven againſt all that hold the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs? Then let me exhort and perſwade you, by by all the regard and love you have for your Souls, by all the fears you have of the incenſed Wrath of the great and terrible God; that you forthwith ſet your Convictions at liberty, and looſe all the Lord's Priſoners that lie bound within you: becauſe there is Wrath, beware; *Job* 36. 18. O ſtifle the Voices of your own Conſciences no more, ſlight not the ſofteſt whiſper, or leaſt intimation of Conſcience; reverence and obey its Voice. Motives preſſing and perſwading this are many, yet eſtimate them by weight rather than by number.

*Motive* 1. The Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt them that hold the Truth in unrighteouſneſs; and becauſe there is Wrath, beware. Are you truly informed what the Wrath of God is? *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? according to thy fear, ſo is thy wrath*, Pſal. 90. *v.* 11. O if the Wrath of a King (who in all his Glory is but a mortal Worm) be as the roaring of a Lion, and as the Meſſengers of Death; *Prov.* 20. 2. *Prov.* 16. 14. What then is the power of his Wrath, at whoſe frowns the Kings of the Earth tremble, the Captains and the Mighty Men ſhrink like Worms into their holes! If the leſſer Executions of it by Providence in this World be ſo dreadful, that men, yea good men, have deſired an hiding place in the Grave, till it be paſt, *Job* 14. 13. then what is the full execution thereof upon the ungodly in the place of Torments! If the threats and denunciations of it againſt others, have made an *Habakkuk*, tho aſſured of perſonal ſafety, to quiver with his Lips, and tremble in his Bowels; as you ſee it did, *Hab.* 3. 16. How much more ſhould thoſe tremble and quiver who are to be the Subjects of it, and not the mere Heralds of it as he was! And (which is more than all) if *Jeſus Chriſt* who was to feel it but a few Hours, and had the power of the Godhead to ſupport him under it, did notwithſtanding ſweat as it had been great drops of blood, and was ſore amazed; think with thy ſelf poor wretch, how ſhall thy heart endure, or thy hands be ſtrong when thou haſt to do with an incenſed Deity?

*Motive* 2. Till you let your Convictions go, Satan will not let you go. He binds you, whilſt you bind them. Here is the Command of God and the Command of Satan in competition. Let go my Truths, ſaith God, which thou holdeſt in unrighteouſneſs; bind and ſuppreſs them, ſaith Satan, or they'll deprive thee of the liberty and pleaſure of thy Life. Now, whilſt thou ſlighteſt the voice of God and Conſcience (for the voice of Conſcience is the voice of God) doſt thou not avowedly declare thy ſelf the bond-ſlave of Satan? *His Servants ye are, to whom you obey*, Rom. 6. 16. Dare not to make one ſtep further in the way of known ſin, ſaith Conſcience; continue not at thy Peril in ſuch a dangerous ſtate, after I have ſo clearly convinced and warned thee of it: fear not, ſaith Satan, if it be bad with thee, 'twill be as bad with Millions. God will wound the heads of ſuch as go on in their Treſpaſſes, ſaith the Scripture, *Pſal.* 68. 21. Tuſh, others do ſo, and eſcape as well as the moſt nice and tender, ſaith Satan. Now, I ſay, the Obedience to Satan's commands plainly declares thee all this while to be a poor enſlaved Captive to him, acted and carried according to the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of diſobedience.

*Motive* 3. Nay further, until you obey your Convictions, you are *Confederates* with the Devil in a deſperate Plot againſt your own Souls. You join with Chriſt's great and avowed Enemy to diſhonour him, and damn your ſelves.

Two things make you *Confederates* with the Devil,

Devil againſt your own Souls. (1.) Your *Conſent* to this his Project, for your Damnation; for ſo your own Conſciences out of the Scriptures inform you it is. Conſent makes you a Party. (2.) Your *Concealment* of this Plot brings you in as a Party with him. Confeſs thy ſin and bewail it, ſaith Conſcience; not ſo, ſaith Pride and Shame, how ſhall I look men in the face if I do ſo? Don't you in all this believe Satan, and make God a liar? Don't you act as men that hate your own Souls, and love death? *Prov.* 8. 36. O 'tis a dreadful thing for men to be acceſſary to their own Eternal Ruin, and that after fair warning and notice given them by their own Conſciences. Satan (be his power what it will) cannot deſtroy you without your own Conſent.

*Motive* 4. Whilſt you go on ſtifling your own Convictions, and turning away your ears from its calls to Repentance and Reformation, you cannot be pardoned. You are in your ſins, and the guilt of them all lies at your door. You may ſee what the Terms of Remiſſion are, *Iſa.* 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.* So again, *Prov.* 28. 13. *He that hardneth his neck ſhall not proſper, but he that confeſſeth and forſaketh ſhall find mercy.* You ſee by theſe, and may ſee by many more plain Scripture-Teſtimonies, there can be no hope of Remiſſion whilſt you go on in this path of Rebellion; concealing, yea and perſiſting in your known wickedneſs. There is a neceſſary and inſeparable Connection betwixt Repentance and Remiſſion, *Acts* 5. 31. and *Luke* 24. 47. And can you endure guilt to be your Bedfellow during Life, and your Gravefellow after Death?

*Motive* 5. You can never have peace with your own Conſciences, whilſt you keep Convictions Priſoners. Now a man's Conſcience is his beſt Friend, or his worſt Enemy. Thence are the ſweeteſt Comforts, and thence are the bittereſt Sorrows. 'Tis a dreadful thing for a man to lie with a cold ſweating Horror upon his panting Boſom. *Tum pallida mens eſt Criminibus, tacita ſudant præcordia culpâ.* And this (or which is worſe) Obduration and Stupidity muſt be the caſe of them that hold the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs. There can be no ſounding a retreat to theſe Terrors, till *Sheba*'s Head be thrown over the Walls; I mean, till that Sin your Conſcience convinceth you of, be delivered up. As *Iſrael* could have no peace, till *Achan* was deſtroy'd; ſo thou ſhalt have no peace, whilſt thy ſin is covered, and hid. Men may cry peace, peace, to themſelves, whilſt they continue in ſin, *Deut.* 29. 18, 19. but the ſharpeſt troubles of Conſcience are better than ſuch peace. Deliver up thy ſelf Man, if thou love peace, into the hands of thy own Convictions, and thou art in the true way to peace. Thy rejoicing muſt be in the Teſtimony of thine own Conſcience, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. or thou rejoiceſt in a dream, in a deluſion, in a thing of nought.

*Motive* 6. What dreadful Charges are you like to meet with upon your death-beds, on the account of thoſe ſins you have lived in, againſt Knowledg and Conviction! Conſcience is never more active and vigorous than in the laſt hours and moments of Life. Now, it will be ſtifled, and over-ruled no longer. It whiſpered before, but now it thunders. If a Man have a clear and quiet Conſcience, his Evening is clear, and his Sun ſets without Clouds. See *Pſal.* 37. 37. *The end of that man is peace.* In contemplation of this Felicity it was that *Balaam* uttered that wiſh, *Let my laſt End be like his.* This peace is the reſult of a Man's integrity and obedience to the voice of Conſcience, this being the Evidence we can moſt ſafely rely upon of our Uprightneſs, and Intereſt in Chriſt; but the reſult of ſuch violences and abuſes to thy Conſcience, cannot be peace to thy Soul. 'Tis true, ſome wicked Men die in ſeeming peace, and ſome good Men in trouble, but both the one and other are miſtaken; the firſt, as to the good Eſtate he fancies himſelf in, and the other as as to his bad Eſtate; and a few Moments will clear up the miſtakes of both.

*Motive* 7. Obedience to Convictions will not only produce peace at Death, but it will give you preſent eaſe, preſent relief and refreſhment in hand. No ſooner did *David* reſolve to obey the voice of his Conſcience, in confeſſing his ſin, but he had ſenſible eaſe in his own Spirit, *Pſal.* 32. 5. So *Iſa.* 32. 17. the fruit of Righteouſneſs is peace, quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever. On the contrary, you find in *Job* 20. 20. wicked Men have no quietneſs [redacted], that is, in their Conſciences; for Guilt lies boking there as a Thorn doth in the Fleſh. And what is Life worth without eaſe? To live ever in pain, to live upon the Rack, is not worth while to live. If then you love eaſe and quietneſs, obey your Conſciences: Pull out that Thorn, I mean that Sin that ſticks faſt in thy Soul, and akes in thy Conſcience. Who would endure ſo much anguiſh for all the flattering pleaſures of ſin?

*Motive* 8. Convictions followed home and obeyed, are the inlets to Chriſt and Eternal Salvation by him; they are the firſt leading work of the Spirit, in order to union with Chriſt, *John* 16. 8. Till you obey and yield up your ſelves to them, Chriſt is ſhut out of your Souls; he knocks, but finds no entrance. At your peril therefore be obedient to their calls: All the while you parly with your Convictions, and demur to their demands, Chriſt ſtands without, offering himſelf graciouſly to you, but not admitted; ſo that no leſs than your Eternal Happineſs or Miſery depend on your obedience, or diſobedience to the Voices and Calls of your Convictions.

*Motive* 9. Obey your Convictions, honor their Voices, and reſtrain them not; then ſhall your Conſciences give a fair teſtimony for you at the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. You read, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. *of the anſwer of a good Conſcience toward God*; than which nothing can be more comfortable: This gives a Man boldneſs in the day of Judgment, 1 *John* 4. 17. Believe it, ſirs, 'tis not your Baptiſm, your Church-privileges, the Opinion Men have of you; but the teſtimony of your Conſciences that muſt be your comfort. I know Men are not juſtified at God's Bar by their own Obedience, nor any exactneſs of Life, 'tis only Chriſt's Righteouſneſs that is the Sinners plea; but yet your Obedience to the Calls and Voices of God and Conſcience, are your evidence that you are in Chriſt.

*Motive* 10. Laſtly, conſider what a choice Mercy it is to be under ſuch Calls and Convictions of Conſcience as are yet capable of being obeyed: 'Tis not ſo with Mens convictions after this Life. Conſcience convinceth in Hell as well as here, but all its Convictions there are for torment, not recovery. O 'tis a choice Mercy your Convictions are yet *Medicinal*, not purely *Penal*; that you are not *malo obſirmati*, ſo fixed in the ſtate of Sin and Miſery as the damned are, but may yet enjoy the ſaving benefit of your Convictions; but this you will not enjoy long, therefore I beſeech you by all that is dear and valuable in your Eyes, reverence your Conſciences, and let go the Lords Priſoners that lie bound within you.

### III. USE.

I next come to expoſtulate the matter with your Conſciences, and propound a few Convictive Queries to your Souls this day.: I cannot but look upon this Aſſembly with Fear, Jealouſie and Compaſſion. I am afraid there be many of you in this wretched caſe, Men and Women that hold the Truths of God in Unrighteouſneſs, tho the Wrath of God be revealed from Heaven againſt all them that do ſo. Let me demand,

*Demand* 1. Do not ſome of you ſtand convinced by your own Conſciences this day, that your Hearts and Lives, your Principles and Practices, are vaſtly different from the People of God among whom you live, and whoſe Characters you read in Scripture? Do not your own Conſciences tell you, that you never took that pains for your Salvation you ſee them daily to take; that there be ſome it may be in your Families, nay poſſibly in your Boſoms, that are ſerious and heavenly, whilſt you are vain and earthly; that are in their Chambers upon their knees, wreſtling with God, whilſt you are in your Beds, or about the things of the World? And doth not Conſcience ſometimes whiſper thus into thine Ear, Soul thou art not right; ſomething is wanting to make thee a Chriſtian: thou wanteſt that which others have; and except ſomething further be done upon thee, thou wilt be undone for ever? If it be ſo, let me adviſe thee to hearken diligently to this voice of Conſcience: Don't dare to adventure to the Judgment-ſeat of God in ſuch a caſe: Ponder that Text, *Matth.* 21. 32. and let the diſparity your Conſcience ſhews you betwixt your own courſe and others, awaken you to more diligence and ſeriouſneſs about your own Salvation: How canſt thou come from the *Alehouſe*, or thy vain Recreations, and find a Wife, or Child in Prayer, and thy Conſcience not ſmite thee? It may be they have been mourning for thy Sins, whilſt thou haſt been committing them. It may be there lives not far from thee a Godly poor Man, who out of his hard and preſſing labours redeems more time for his Soul in a week, than ever thou didſt in thy life. O hearken to the voice of thy Conſcience! Elſe thou art he that holdeſt Truth in Unrighteouſneſs.

*Demand* 2. Did thy Conſcience never meet thee in the way of Sin, as the Angel of the Lord met *Balaam*, with a drawn Sword brandiſhing the threatnings of God againſt thee? Did it not ſay to thee as a Captain once ſaid to his Soldiers about to retreat, he caſt himſelf down in their way, ſaying, If you go this way, you ſhall go over your Captain, you ſhall trample him firſt under your feet. Stop Soul, ſtop, ſaid thy Conſcience; this and that Word of God is againſt thee: If thou proceed, thou muſt trample upon the Soveraign Authority of God in this or that Command; yet thy impetuous Luſts have hurried thee forward: Thou wouldſt not fairly debate the caſe with thy Conſcience; and then did not thy Conſcience ſay to thee, as *Reuben* ſpake to his Brethren, *Gen.* 42. 22. *Spake I not unto you ſaying, do not ſin againſt the child, but you would not hear; therefore alſo his blood is required of you?* If this have been your courſe of ſinning, verily you are the perſons that have held the Truths of God in Unrighteouſneſs, and againſt you the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven.

*Demand* 3. Have you not ſeen the Wrath of God revealed from Heaven againſt other Sinners that have gone before you in the very ſame track and courſe of ſin in which you now go, and yet you perſiſt in it, notwithſtanding ſuch dreadful Warnings? Thus did *Belteſhazzer*, tho he ſaw all that the God of Heaven had done to his Father, *Dan.* 5. 20, 21, 22. You have ſeen great Eſtates ſcattered, and their Owners that got them by fraud and oppreſſion reduced to beggary; and yet when a temptation is before you, you cannot forbear to take the advantage (as you call it) to get the gain of oppreſſion. You have ſeen Drunkards clothed with rags, and brought to miſerable ends: Adulterers ſeverely puniſhed, their Names and Eſtates, Souls and Bodies blaſted and waſted by a ſecret, but juſt ſtroke of God. Have you taken warning by theſe ſtrokes of God, and hearkned to the monitions and cautions your Conſciences have thereupon given you? If not, thou art the Man that holdeſt the Truth of God in unrighteouſneſs.

*Demand* 4. Do not you inwardly hate, and do not your hearts riſe againſt neceſſary and due reproofs given you by thoſe that love your Souls better than your ſelves? If you hate a faithful Reprover, tho you know you juſtly deſerve the reproof, and are guilty of the ſin he reproves; if you recriminate, or deny in ſuch caſes, you are certainly ſo far Confederates with Satan againſt your own Souls, and impriſon your own Convictions.

*Demand* 5. Are not ſome of you apoſtatized from the firſt Profeſſion, and are not thoſe hopeful bloſſoms that once appeared upon your Souls blaſted and gone? You had quick Convictions, and melting Affections, tenderneſs in your Conſciences, and zeal for Duties: But all is now vaniſhed; your Affections are grown cold, your Duties omitted, tho Conſcience often bids you remember from whence you are fallen, and do your firſt Works. You are the perſons guilty of this ſin.

*Demand* 6. Do none of you preſume upon future Repentance, and ſo make bold with your Conſciences for preſent, thinking to compound that way with it? This argues thee to be a ſelf-condemned Man, and one that holdeſt Truth in unrighteouſneſs: Thy Sin is preſent and certain, thy Repentance but a peradventure, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. This is a high and a daring way of preſumptuous ſinning.

*Demand* 7. Laſtly, Have none of you taken the Vows of God upon you, to reform your courſe, and break off your iniquities by Repentance, when you have been under dangerous ſickneſs on ſhore, or dreadful tempeſts at Sea? Have you not ſaid, Lord, if thou wilt but ſpare and ſave me this once, I will never live at the rate I have lived any more: Try me O Lord this once: And yet when that Affliction hath vaniſhed, your purpoſes and promiſes to God have vaniſhed with it: You are the Perſons that hold the known Truths of God priſoners in your Souls; and to all theſe ſeven ſorts of Sinners, this Text may juſtly be as the hand-writing upon the Wall once was, even a *Mene tekel*, that may make thy very loins to ſhake.

## IV. *USE.*

This Doctrine winds up and finiſhes in *Directions* for the prevention of ſuch preſumptuous ſins in Men for time to come; that Truth may have its free courſe through your Souls.

*Direct.* 1. And to this end, my firſt Counſel and Direction is, that you fail not to put every Conviction in ſpeedy execution. Don't delay, 'tis a very critical hour, and delays are exceeding hazardous: Convictions are fixed and ſecured in Mens Souls four ways. 1. By deep and ſerious conſideration, *Pſal.* 119. 59. *I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy teſtimonies.* 2. By earneſt Prayer; thus *Saul* under his firſt Convictions fell preſently on his knees, *Acts* 9. 11. *Behold he prayeth:* The warm breath of Prayer foments and nouriſhes the ſparks of Conviction, that it be not extinct. 3. By diligent attendance on the Word; the Word begets it, and the Word can through God's bleſſing preſerve it, *Jam.* 1. 23, 24. 4. Preſent Execution, falling without delay on the Duty thou art convinced of, *Jam.* 1. 24. Be not forgetful hearers, but doers of the word; otherwiſe a Man is as one that looks into a glaſs, and ſtraightway forgets what manner of man he was. Take the ſenſe thus, a man looks into the Glaſs in the Morning, and there perhaps he ſees a ſpot on his Face, a diſorder in his Hair, or Clothes; and thinks with himſelf, well I will rectifie it anon; but being gone from the place, one thing or other diverts his mind, he forgets what he ſaw, and goes all the day with the ſpot on his Face, never minding it any more. O Brethren, delays are dangerous, ſin is deceitful, *Heb.* 3. 13. Satan is ſubtil, 2 *Cor.* 11. 3. and this way gains his Point. This *Motto* may be written on the Tombſtones of moſt that periſh, *Here lies one that was deſtroyed by delays.* Your Life is immediately uncertain, ſo are the ſtrivings of the Spirit alſo. Beſides, there is a mighty advantage in the *primus impetus*, the firſt heat of the Soul: when thy heart is once up in warm Affections and Reſolutions, the work may be eaſily done; as a *Bell* if once up goes eaſily, but is hard to raiſe when down. See 2 *Chron.* 29. 36. What advantage there is in a preſent warm frame! Beſide, the nature of theſe things is too ſerious and weighty to be poſt-pon'd and delay'd. You cannot get out of the danger of Hell, or into Chriſt too ſoon. Moreover, every repetition of ſin after Conviction greatly aggravates it. For it is in ſinning, as it is in numbering, if the firſt be one, the ſecond is ten, the third a hundred, the fourth a thouſand. And to conclude, think what you will, you can never have a fitter ſeaſon than the preſent; the ſame difficulties you have to day you will have to morrow, and it may be greater. Fall preſently therefore to execute your Convictions.

*Direct.* 2. If you would be clear from this great Sin of holding the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs, then ſee that you reverence the Voice, and ſtand in awe of the Authority of your own Conſciences; and reſolve with *Job*, *My heart ſhall not reproach me as long as I live*, Job 27. 6. There be two conſiderations apt to beget reverence in men to the Voice of their own Conſciences.

1. *'Tis our beſt Friend when pure and inviolated.*
2. *'Tis our worſt Enemy when wounded and affronted.*

1. Conſcience obey'd and kept pure and inviolate is thy beſt Friend on Earth, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *This is our rejoicing, the teſtimony of our Conſciences.* The very Heathens could ſay,

> *Nil conſcire tibi, nulla palleſcere culpa,*
> *His murus aheneus eſto.*

What comforted *Hezekiah* on his ſuppoſed Death-bed, but the fair Teſtimonial his Conſcience gave in of his Integrity? 2 *Kings* 2. 3. *A good man* (ſaith *Solomon*) *ſhall be ſatisfied from himſelf; but the backſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own ways.* Mark the oppoſition, Conſcience gives the Backſlider his Belly-full of ſorrow, and the upright man his Heart-full of peace. He is ſatisfied from himſelf, that is from his own Conſcience, which tho it be not the Original Spring, yet it is the Conduit at which he drinks peace, and joy, and encouragement.

2. Conſcience wounded and abuſed, will be our worſt Enemy. No Poniards ſo mortal as the wounds of Conſcience. *A wounded Spirit who can bear? Prov.* 18. 14. Could *Judas* bear it, or could *Spira* bear it? What's the Torment of Hell, but the Worm that dies not? and what is that Worm, but the remorſe of Conſcience? *Mark* 9. 44. O what is that fearful Expectation mentioned, *Heb.* 10. 27. See how you like that life deſcribed, *Deut.* 28. 65, 66. The primitive Chriſtians choſe rather to be caſt to the Lions, than into the Paws of an enraged Conſcience; *ad Leones, potius quam ad Lenones.* Every little trouble will be inſupportable to a ſick and wounded Conſcience, as a quart of water would be to your Shoulder in a great leaden Veſſel.

O if men did but fear their own Conſciences, if they did reverence themſelves, as the *Moraliſt* ſpeaks; if they did herein exerciſe themſelves to have always a Conſcience void of offence, as *Paul* did, *Acts* 24. 16. Then would you be clear of this great Sin of holding the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs.

*Direct.* 3. If you would eſcape the guilt and danger of holding God's Truths in Unrighteouſneſs, then keep your Hearts under the awful ſenſe of the Day of Judgment, when every ſecret thing muſt come into Judgment, and Conſcience like a Regiſter-book is to be opened and examined. The Conſideration of that day gives your Conſciences a ſevenfold defenſative againſt Sin. 1. It provokes every man to get real ſolid Grace, and not reſt in an empty Profeſſion, *Mat.* 25. and this ſecures us from formal Hypocriſy, that we be not found fooliſh Virgins. 2. It excites us to the diligent improvement of our Talents, that we be not found ſlothful Servants, neglecting any duty God and Conſcience calls us to. *Mat.* 25. 21. 3. It confirms and eſtabliſhes us in the ways of God, that we wound not Conſcience by Apoſtacy, 1 *Joh.* 2. 28. 4. It's a loud call to every man to Repentance, and not to lie ſtupid and ſenſeleſs under guilt, *Acts* 17. 30, 31. 5. 'Tis a powerful Antidote againſt formality in Religion, the general and dangerous diſeaſe of Profeſſors, *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. 6. It excites holy fear and watchfulneſs in the whole courſe of Life, 1 *Pet.* 1. 17. 7. It puts us not only to our watch, but to our knees in fervent Prayer, 1 *Pet.* 4. 7.

And he that feels ſuch effects as theſe from the conſideration of that Day, is fortified againſt that ſin my Text warns of, and dares never hold the Truth of God in Unrighteouſneſs. 'Tis our regardleſs of Judgment to come, and ignorance of the Nature of it, which ſo emboldens us to neglect known Duties, and commit known Sins, *Amos* 6. 3. 2 *Pet*. 3. 3, 4. If our Thoughts and Meditations were engaged more frequently and ſeriouſly on ſuch an awful Subject, you would rather chuſe to die than to do violence to your Conſciences.

*Direct*. 4. Get right apprehenſions of the *Moral* Evil that is in ſin, and of the *Penal* Evil that follows ſin: then no Temptation ſhall prevail with you to commit a ſin, to eſcape a preſent trouble, or neglect a known duty, to accommodate any earthly intereſt, and conſequently to hold no Truth of God in unrighteouſneſs. 'Tis fear of Loſs and Sufferings that ſo often overbears Conſcience; but if men were once made throughly ſenſible, that the leaſt ſin is worſe for them than the greateſt affliction or ſuffering, the peace of Conſcience would be well ſecured. And that this is really ſo, appears thus. 1. Afflictions do not make a man vile in the Eyes of God. A Man may be under manifold Afflictions, and yet very dear and precious in God's Account; *Heb*. 11. 36, 37, 38. but Sin makes a man vile in the Eyes of God, *Dan*. 11. 2. 2. Afflictions do not put men under the Curſe of God, Bleſſings and Afflictions may go together; *Pſal*. 94. 12. but Sin brings the Soul under the Curſe, *Gal*. 3. 10. 3. Afflictions make men more like unto God, *Heb*. 12. 10. but Sin makes us more like the Devil, 1 *Joh*. 3. 8. *Joh*. 8. 34. 4. Afflictions for Conſcience ſake are but the Creatures wrath inflam'd againſt us; but Sin is the inflamer of God's Wrath againſt us, as in the *Text*. 5. Afflictions are but outward Evils upon the Body, but Sin is an internal Evil upon the Soul, *Prov*. 8. 36. 6. Afflictions for Duties ſake have many ſweet Promiſes annexed to them, *Mat*. 5. 10. but Sin hath none. 7. The effects of Sufferings for Chriſt are ſweet to the Soul, 2 *Cor*. 7. 4 but the fruits of Sin are bitter, it yields nothing but ſhame and fear. 8. Afflictions for Chriſt are the way to Heaven, but Sin is the *Road-way* to Hell, *Rom*. 6. *ult*. 9. Sufferings for Duty are but for a Moment, 2 *Cor*. 4. 17. but Sufferings for ſin will be Eternal, *Mark* 9. 44.

If ſuch thoughts might be ſuffered to dwell with us, how would they guard the Conſcience againſt Temptations, and ſecure their Peace and Purity?

*Direct*. 5. Be throughly perſwaded of this great Truth, that God takes great pleaſure in uprightneſs, and will own and honour Integrity amidſt all the dangers that befal it, *Pſal*. 11. 7. *Prov*. 11. 20. When he would encourage *Abraham* to a Life of Integrity, he engages his Almighty power for the protection of him in that way, *Gen*. 17. 1. *I am God Almighty, walk thou before me and be perfect*. So *Pſal*. 84. 11. *The Lord God is a Sun and a Shield; he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly*.

An upright man is the boaſt of Heaven, *Job* 1. 8. He is God's darling; and the reaſon is becauſe he bears the Image of God, *Pſal*. 11. 7. *The upright Lord loveth uprightneſs*: Yea, and if Integrity brings them into trouble, they may be ſure the Lord will bring them out; *Pſal*. 34. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of all*. How ſafely then may they leave themſelves in the hands of his infinite Wiſdom, Power, and fatherly Care? Nay, God is not only the *Protector*, but he is alſo the *Rewarder* of conſcientious Integrity, *Pſal*. 18. 20. and that four ways. 1. In the inward peace it yields them, *Iſa*. 32. 17. *The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever*. But the effect of ſinful ſhifts and carnal Policies, are ſhame and ſorrow. 2. In the Succeſs and Iſſue of it; it not only turns to God's glory, but it anſwers and accommodates our own deſigns and ends far better than our ſinful projects can do, *Prov*. 28. 23. 3. Great is the Joy and Encouragement reſulting from it in the day of Death, 2 *King*. 23. 3. *Pſal*. 37. 37. 4. In the World to come, *Pſal*. 49. 14. Were this duly conſidered, and throughly believed, men would chuſe rather to part with life, than the purity and peace of their own Conſciences. They would ſuffer all wrongs and injuries, rather than do Conſcience the leaſt injury.

*Direct*. 6. Do not idolize the World, nor overvalue the Trifles of this life; 'tis the love of the World that makes men warp from the Rules of their own Conſciences, 2 *Tim*. 4. 10. 'tis this that makes men ſtrain hard to get looſe from the ties and bonds of their own Conſciences. The young man was convinced, but the World was too hard for his Convictions, *Luk*. 18. 23. the degree of his Sorrow was according to the degree of his Love to the Creature. 'Tis not the having, but the overloving of the world that ruins us. 'Tis a worldly Heart which makes men twiſt and turn, ſhuffle and diſſemble at that rate they do in time of Temptation. Could you once dethrone this Idol, how ſecure and ſafe would your Conſciences be! The Church is deſcribed, *Rev*. 12. 1. as clothed with the Sun, and the Moon under her Feet. The moſt zealous Age of the Church was the Age of Poverty. Try theſe few conſiderations on your hearts to looſe them from the inordinate love of the World. 1. What good will the World do when you have loſt your Integrity for its ſake, and peace is taken away from the inner man? What Joy of the world had *Judas*, and what comfort had *Spira*? If you part with your integrity for it, God will blaſt it, and it ſhall yield you no joy. 2. Except you renounce the World, you are renounced by Chriſt. Diſclaim it, or he will diſclaim you; *Luke* 14. 33. No man can be admitted into Chriſt's Service, but by ſealing thoſe Indentures with him. 3. Whatever loſs or damage you ſhall ſuſtain for Chriſt and Conſcience ſake, he ſtands obliged to repair it to you, and that with an infinite overplus, *Mark* 10. 29, 30. 4. In a word, all the Riches, Pleaſures, Honors, and Liberties in the world are not able to give you that Joy and heart-refreſhing Comfort, that the acquitting and chearing voice of your own Conſciences can do. Settle theſe things in your hearts, as defenſatives againſt this danger.

*Direct*. 7. Laſtly, Beg of God, and labour to get more Chriſtian Courage and Magnanimity; for want of this Conſcience is often overborn againſt its own Light and Conviction. Chriſtian Magnanimity is Conſcience's ſecurity. 'Tis excellent and becoming a Chriſtian, to be able to face any thing but the frowns of God and his own Conſcience. All the famous Companions of Truth, and Witneſſes for God that came victorious out of the Field of Temptation with ſafe and unwounded Conſciences, were men of Courage and Reſolution; ſee *Dan*. 3. 16. *Heb*. 11. 27. *Acts* 21. 13. And what is this Chriſtian Courage, but the fixed reſolution of the Soul to encounter all dangers, all ſufferings, all reproaches, pains and loſſes in the ſtrength of aſſiſting Grace, that ſhall aſſault us in the ways of our duty; and ſo it ſtands oppoſed in Scripture to *the Spirit of Fear*, *Heb.* 11. 27. to *Shame*, *Mark* 8. 38. to *Apoſtacy*, *Heb.* 10. 39. He muſt neither be afraid, nor aſhamed, nor loſe one inch of ground for the ſake of whatſoever dangers he meets with, and that becauſe he hath embraced Chriſtianity upon thoſe terms, and was told of all this before, *Joh.* 16. 1. becauſe there's no retreating but to our own ruin, *Heb.* 10. 38. becauſe he owes all this, and much more than this to Chriſt, *Phil.* 1. 29. becauſe he underſtands the value of his Soul above his Body, and of Eternals above and beyond all Temporals, *Mat.* 10. 28. and in a word, becauſe he believes the Promiſes of God's Aſſiſtance, and Rewards, *Heb.* 11. 25, 26, 27.

O my Friends, were our fears thus ſubdued, and our Faith thus exalted, how free and ſafe would Truth be in our Conſciences. He that owns any Truth to live upon it, or accommodate a carnal Intereſt by it, will diſown that Truth, when it comes to live upon him, let Conſcience plead and ſay what it will: but he that hath agreed with Chriſt upon theſe Terms, to be content to be miſerable for ever, if there be not enough in Chriſt to make him happy; this man will be a ſteddy Chriſtian, and will rather lie in the worſt Priſons than impriſon God's known Truths in Unrighteouſneſs.

## *The Concluſion.*

I have now done my Meſſage, I have ſet before you the Lord Jeſus in the glory of his Free Grace, and condeſcending Love to Sinners; O that I had skill and ability to have done it better! I have wooed and expoſtulated with you on Chriſt's behalf. I have laboured, according to my little meaſure of ſtrength, to caſt up and prepare the way by removing the ſtumbling Blocks and Diſcouragements out of it. This hath been a time of Conviction to many of you; ſome have not been able to hold their Convictions any longer under reſtraints, but many I fear do ſo, and therefore I have in the cloſe of all handled this ſtartling and awakening Scripture among you, to ſhew you what an horrid evil it is to detain God's Truths in Unrighteouſneſs. I have alſo in the Name and Authority of God demanded all the Lord's Priſoners, his ſuppreſſed and reſtrained Truths, at your hands: If you will unbind your Convictions this day, cut aſunder the bonds of carnal fear, ſhame, *&c.* with which you reſtrain them; thoſe Truths, you ſhall ſo make free, will make you free: If not, but you will ſtill go on ſtifling and ſuppreſſing them in your own Boſoms; remember that there are ſo many Witneſſes prepared to give evidence againſt you in the Great Day. And O that whilſt you delay this Duty, the ſound of this *Text* may never out of your ears, nor ſuffer you to reſt. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs.*

## *FINIS.*

# *MOUNT PISGAH.*

A

# SERMON

## Preached at the Publick Thankſgiving, *February* xiiij, $168^{8}_{9}$.

For *England*'s Deliverance from Popery, *&c.*
Upon *Deut.* 3. 24, 25.

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### To the Right Honourable *GEORGE* Earl of *Southerland*, Lord *Strathnaver*, Heritable Lord of Regalitie, and Sheriff in the Shire of *Southerland*.

My Lord,

IT *was a ſweet refreſhment to me in the days of our late Exile to be providentially caſt into your Lordſhip's Company and Acquaintance. I ſavoured in your ſelf, and your moſt accompliſhed Lady, thoſe things which are rarely found in Perſons of your eminent ſtation and quality in the World.*

*I have neither forgotten your tender ſympathy with poor diſtreſſed* Sion, *nor my weak endeavours to prop up your Faith with reſpect to a more chearful aſpect of Providence upon the Churches.*

*And now my Lord, we that mourned for, and ſuffered with* Sion, *are this day called to rejoice with her. Yea, you are called to rejoice with a joy above the common joy, in as much as your Lordſhip is not only a partaker of the common mercy with others, but God hath honoured you in accompanying and aſſiſting the glorious Inſtrument of our Deliverance.*

*My Lord, It is a greater honour to be ſerviceable to the Intereſt of Chriſt, than to deſcend from the blood of Nobles. 'Tis the honour of Angels, that they are Miniſtring Spirit for the Churches good. What my apprehenſions of, and expectations from this Providence are, your Lordſhip will meaſure from the following Diſcourſe.*

*Let* England *rejoice to behold a Proteſtant King upon its Throne: A King that gives more Honour to the Throne, than it is capable to reflect on him that ſits thereon. His ſoundneſs in Proteſtant Principles, his Prudence and Equity in Government, his Zeal for the Intereſt of Chriſt at the loweſt ebb, ſpeak him ſuch a bleſſing to this Nation as for Ages paſt it hath not enjoyed: And now my Lord, we may expect, if ever, to find that glorious deſcription of a juſt and holy King anſwered in him, that he ſhall be to us as the light of the Morning, when the Sun riſeth, even a morning without Clouds,* &c. 2 Sam. 23. 4.

*My Lord, Having in my place performed the Duty of Thankſgiving to God, enjoyned by publick Authority, with the ſame alacrity that* Moſes *his Mother obeyed the Command of* Pharaoh's *Daughter, to nurſe her own Child; I am bold (notwithſtandiug the imperfections that attend it) to offer it in all humility to your Lordſhip's hands; being confident the deſign of it will be agreeable to your Spirit, tho there be nothing of External Ornament to commend it to your fancy. So heartily congratulating your Lordſhip's ſafe and happy return, with your pious and ingenious Lady, in the memorable year of* England's *Deliverance from the Romiſh Yoak, I beg your Honour's pardon for this preſumption, and remain*

Your Honour's moſt Obliged
Servant to Command,

*J. FLAVELL.*

# MOUNT PISGAH.

## DEUT. III. 24, 25.

*O Lord God, thou haſt begun to ſhew thy Servant thy greatneſs, and thy mighty hand; for what God is there in Heaven, or in Earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee let me go over and ſee the good land that is beyond* Jordan, *that goodly Mountain, and* Lebanon.

Dr. Goodwin. *in Apoc. p.* 189.

'TIs the Obſervation of a Learned Man, that the Revolution of a Hundred Years hath produced (eſpecially in theſe latter times) new Motions and Alterations in the Church, like unto thoſe that fell out a Hundred Years before. So it was in *Germany*, and *Bohemia*; *John Hus* at the ſtake, about the year 1417, uttered this remarkable ſpeech, *After a hundred years you Papiſts ſhall be called to an account.* The *Bohemians* cauſed *poſt centum annos* to be ſtampt upon their Coin, for the preſervation of ſo memorable a Prediction; and accordingly in a Hundred Years, *viz.* 1517. *Luther* aroſe, and with him the Reformation. It hath been ſo in *England.* Our Fathers deſervedly ſet a ſignal remembrance upon the Year 1588. *Annus octogeſimus octavus eſt Annus mirabilis*; the Year *Eighty Eight* is a wonderful year, and it was ſo indeed, for then the Lord defeated the formidable Enemies of his Cauſe and People with a mighty hand, and an outſtretched arm upon the great Waters. Then did *England* ſing his Praiſes, ſaying, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, doing wonders?* Exod. 15. 11.

A full *Century* is now run out ſince that year of Wonders, wherein we have reaped the precious and ineſtimable fruits of that year's Mercy. And notwithſtanding the great ingratitude of this Nation for all the Civil and Spiritual Mercies it hath enjoyed in conſequence to that Mercy, whereby God hath been highly provoked to ſay to *England* as he did to *Iſrael*, *Judg.* 10. 13. *I will deliver you no more*; yet behold another *Eighty Eight* crowned and enriched with Mercies, no leſs admirable and glorious than the former; a Year for which the Children yet unborn ſhall praiſe the Lord.

You are called this day to rejoice; I am not only called to rejoice with you in the Publick Mercies of this day, but alſo to direct you to the beſt way of improving the Mercies you rejoice in, that they may prove introductive to greater mercies than themſelves. To that end I choſe this Scripture which contains both Parts of the Work and Duty of the Day. The Text contains the ſum of *Moſes* his Prayer at *Edrei*, after the ſignal Victory God there gave him over the laſt Enemy that forbad his paſſage to the Confines of *Canaan.* This *Edrei* was a Town on this ſide *Jordan*, ſituate in the fruitful Country of *Baſhan*, near unto that famous River by which it was divided from the Land of Promiſe, and afterwards fell to the lot of *Manaſſeh.* Hither *Moſes* had led the People, and now it was but one remove more, (their paſſage over *Jordan*) and they ſhould finiſh their weariſom peregrination, and arrive at the deſire of their hearts, even reſt and ſettlement in that good Land the Lord had promiſed them. And here you may ſee how ſwift and ſtrong the motion of *Moſes* his ſpirit in Prayer is, now it was come ſo nigh the *Center*, almoſt in ſight of that pleaſant Land, where God intended to ſettle his Worſhip and record his Name. *O Lord, thou haſt begun to ſhew thy Servant thy greatneſs*, &c. *I pray thee let me go over, and ſee the good land that is beyond* Jordan, *that goodly Mountain, and* Lebanon. Wherein note,

1. *The Mercy pray'd for.*
2. *The Argument pleaded to obtain it.*

1. The Mercy *Moſes* prays for, that he might go over, and ſee the good Land, &c. The good land was *Canaan*, called the glory of all Lands, *Ezek.* 20. 6. it was a glorious land in reſpect of its natural Fertility and Amenity; but much more glorious in reſpect of the Preſence of God in his Ordinances. And therefore above all the pleaſant ſights in *Canaan*, he deſires to ſee *that goodly Mountain*, that is *Mount Moriah*, on which *Abraham* offered up his only ſon *Iſaac*, and whereon by the Spirit of Prophecy *Moſes* foreſaw the glorious Temple was to be built, whither the Tribes ſhould go up to worſhip, even the Tribes of the Lord, unto the Teſtimony of *Iſrael.* There were to be the Symbols of his Preſence, and the Houſe of Prayer for all People. There the Ark was to reſt, and all the Promiſes made to *Abraham* and his ſeed to be fulfilled. This inflames the deſires of *Moſes* (now upon the very borders) to have a ſight of that goodly Mountain, and *Lebanon*, that famous Foreſt ſo renowned in Scripture, of whoſe ſtately Cedars the Glorious Temple was to be built, 1 *King.* 5. 6, 9. This deſire of *Moſes* was not from any ſuperſtitious opinion he had of the holineſs of the place, in reſpect of the *Patriarchs* whoſe bones were laid in that land, (as ſome *Popiſh* Gloſſes would have it) but he earneſtly deſired to ſee the accompliſhment of the Promiſes now ſo nigh the birth, by

the actual poſſeſſion of that good land. This was the Mercy he pray'd for.

*Object.* But how could *Moſes* deſire to go over *Jordan* into this good Land, when God had before ſo expreſly told him he ſhould not? *Numb.* 20.12. *And the Lord ſpake unto Moſes and Aaron, Becauſe ye believed me not, to ſanctifie me in the eyes of the Children of Iſrael, therefore ye ſhall not bring this Congregation into the land which I have given them.* Did this Holy Man ſuffer his deſires to tranſport him beyond his Duty, to go further than God would have him?

*Sol.* No, he did not, but not being ſure the threatning was abſolute, but might be ſuch a one as was made of *Hezekiah*'s Death, 2 *Kings* 20. 1. or of *Niniveh*'s Deſtruction, *Jonah* 3. 4. there was room for Prayer. You ſee the Mercy *Moſes* pray'd for.

2. Let us next conſider the Argument by him pleaded for the obtaining of his ſuit, and that is taken from the whole ſeries of former Mercies which were all introductive to this remaining and compleating Mercy, the planting yf them in the Land of Promiſe. *O Lord God, thou haſt begun to ſhew thy ſervant thy greatneſs, and thy mighty hand,* &c. Where note,

1. His moſt thankful acknowledgment and magnifying of paſt and preſent mercies. His Eyes were not ſo dazled with the ſplendor of Mercy to come, and in a near expectation, as to overlook the former or preſent Mercies as ſmall and inconſiderable. No, he lifts up the name of God in his Praiſes for them, and tells him he had begun to ſhew him his Greatneſs in them. They are great in *Moſes*'s Eye, and he expreſſes a ſutable ſenſe of them. He well knew the way to engage further Mercies, is thankfully to acknowledg and magnify paſt and preſent ones. But,

2. He reſts not there, but improves theſe beginnings of Mercies, and pleads them in his argumentative Prayer for the conſummating and perfecting Mercies yet to come: *q. d.* Lord, thy works are perfect, thou doſt not uſe to begin and not to finiſh, as Men do; to bring to the birth, and not cauſe to bring forth: The Gods of the Heathen are a lie, and vanity, but thou art the true God, and thy Promiſes are Truth it ſelf. Now Lord, in purſuance of thy promiſes to *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, thou haſt begun to fulfil the Mercy promiſed; *Iſrael* is brought with Signs and Wonders and a mighty hand out of *Egypt*, and upon the very borders of the Land; Lord compleat the work now, in giving them the poſſeſſion of it: and for me Lord, I pray thee (if it be thy Will) let me enter with them; and as I have had my part in the troubles of *Egypt*, ſtraits and trials theſe forty Years in the Deſert, let me take my part alſo in the Joy, Reſt and Comfort of that bleſſed Land to which I am now come ſo nigh. This ſeems to be the ſenſe and meaning of *Moſes*'s Prayer. Divers Excellent points of Doctrine naturally offer themſelves from the Text, as

### Doctrine I.

*That the reſt and proſperity of the Church is a very deſirable Mercy in the eyes of the Saints.*

If any thing will make a Chriſtian deſirous to abide on Earth, next to the finiſhing of the work of Grace on him, and the work of Obedience by him, this is the thing. *Pſal.* 106. 4, 5. *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou beareſt unto thy people; O viſit me with thy ſalvation: that I may ſee the good of thy choſen, that I may rejoyce with the gladneſs of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance.*

### Doctrine II.

*How deſirable ſoever it be to ſee the Churches Glory and Proſperity on Earth, yet the greateſt and beſt of Saints may be denied it.*

*Moſes* the Saint of God, the Favorite of Heaven, earneſtly deſired the ſight of this Mercy, and was denied it. Get thee up to Mount *Nebo*, ſaith God, and die there, thou ſhalt not go over *Jordan*, and yet *Moſes* was no loſer by it. Though God ſhut him out of *Canaan*, he took him into Heaven. We read, *Matth.* 13. 17. of that bleſſed day when Chriſt was among men in the fleſh, preaching, praying, and working Miracles, that many Prophets and Righteous Men deſired to ſee thoſe things which they ſaw (among whom he walked) and ſaw them not, and to hear the things which they heard, but did not hear them. *Demarathus* of *Corinth* was wont to ſay, that thoſe *Grecians* loſt a great part of the Comfort of their Lives, that had not ſeen great *Alexander* ſitting upon *Darius* his Throne. St. *Auguſtine* wiſhed to have ſeen three things, *Rome* in its glory, *Paul* to the face, and Chriſt in the fleſh. But we muſt not be our own chooſers, it ſhall be given to them for whom it is appointed. But I ſtay not upon either of theſe, there are two other points in the Text which invite my Thoughts and Diſcourſe this day; *viz.*

### Doctrine III.

*That great Mercies received (though there be yet greater than they to be expected) call for an anſwerable ſenſe and acknowledgment in the Saints.*

### Doctrine IV.

*That the beginnings of Mercy and Deliverance to the Church are convertible into ſo many Pleas and Arguments in prayer for the perfection and conſummation thereof.* I begin with the former, *viz.*

### Doctrine III.

*That great mercies received (though there be greater than they to be expected) call for an anſwerable ſenſe and acknowledgment in the Saints.*

*Moſes* magnifies the Mercies received in *Egypt*, and in the *Wilderneſs* at the *Red Sea*, and at *Edrei*, as things wherein God had begun to ſhow him his greatneſs, and his mighty hand, things on which God had viſibly ſtampt and impreſſed his Greatneſs; though he ſtill expected greater things to come. 'Twas *Elihu*'s Counſel to *Job* with reſpect to God's providential proceedings with him, *Job* 36. 24. *Remember that thou magnifie his work which men behold.* *Elihu* thought it to be *Job*'s Duty (and doubtleſs it was ſo) to magnifie or lift up the Name of God even under afflictive providences, to exalt God when God caſt him down; but you are called this day to magnifie the work of God in comfortable providences, and to lift up his Name, whilſt he is lifting you up in Deliverances, and chearful Providences. 'Tis true, we cannot magnifie any work of God by making any addition to it, or making it greater than it is; but we ſhould magnifie every work of God, by giving it its full dimenſions in our conſiderations of it, and ſutable affections to it. *The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all them that have pleaſure therein,* Pſal. 111. 2. We then magnifie them, when we ſearch them out, ponder and weigh them in all their circumſtances; and this muſt needs affords ſingular pleaſure to a ſanctified ſoul. O 'tis ſweet to trace the footſteps of God along thoſe pleaſant paths of Mercy and Salvation, wherein he hath walked towards his Church, or our ſelves in particular. Two things invite our thoughts to dwell upon them at this time.

1. *What makes a work of Mercy truly great.*
2. *What is that ſutable ſenſe we ſhould have of ſuch Works.*

1. What are the things that make any Work of Mercy truly great.

Now there are ſeven conſiderations or properties of a work of Mercy, which make it great indeed. If but one or two of theſe be found upon ſuch a work, it deſerves the name of great; but if there be a concurrence of them all in any Work of God, as there is in that Work which we celebrate this day, O how great will it then appear!

(1.) Then doth a Work of Mercy or Deliverance deſerve the name of great and magnificent, when it involves our Spiritual as well as our Civil and Natural Comforts and Enjoyments in it, and reſcues our Souls as well as our Bodies from Ruin and Miſery.

Temporal Mercies have their value, 'tis no ſmall Mercy to have our Eſtates, Liberties, and Lives ſecured from Rapine and Violence. *Deborah* celebrated this Mercy in her Song of Praiſe, *Judg.* 5. 6, 7, 11. *In the days of Shamgar the ſon of Anath, in the days of Jael, the high ways were unoccupied, and the Travellers walked through by-ways. The inhabitants of the Villages ceaſed in Iſrael, until that I Deborah aroſe, that I aroſe a mother in Iſrael. They that are delivered from the noiſe of Archers in the places of drawing water; there ſhall they rehearſe the righteous acts of the Lord, even the righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages in Iſrael: then ſhall the people of the Lord go down to the gates.* 'Twas a ſad time in *Iſrael*, when they were barr'd from their Fountains, and forced to creep through By-ways and Woods by night for fear of the Enemy; when the courſe of Juſtice was ſtopt, and there were no Judges in the Gates: Therefore the People are here excited to praiſe the Lord for their Deliverance from theſe Calamities.

But 'tis a far greater Miſery to be cut off from the Wells of Salvation, barr'd from the Springs of Ordinances; forced to creep through by and obſcure ways to get bread to relieve their Souls; to have our Teachers driven into Corners; which hath been the Caſe of God's People for many years in *England*. Now, to be delivered from ſuch Miſeries, is a Mercy above all value.

Liberty to ſerve the Lord without fear, liberty without a ſnare or hook in it, and a well ſettled durable liberty, for ſuch is that we may now (if ever) promiſe our ſelves; what ſoul can dilate it ſelf wide enough, to take in the adequate ſenſe of ſuch a Mercy? We were glad of Liberty from our Enemies, when we ſought it not; we peaceably and thankfully improv'd it, though juſt Fears and Jealouſies much darkned the Luſtre of it: But the Lord in this diſpenſation of his Providence will I hope ſo eſtabliſh the juſt Liberties of his People, that it ſhall never be in the power of violent and wicked men any more to oppreſs them. There was a time when the Witneſſes of Chriſt lay dead, and their Enemies rejoiced over them; the Lord hath begun to revive them, and the time (I truſt) even the appointed time is at hand, when *they ſhall hear a great voice from heaven* (*juſſu Supremi Magiſtratus*, ſaith learned *Mede*) ſaying *Come up hither*; and both *England* and *France* ſhall rejoice together in their Spiritual as well as Civil Liberties and Mercies. What Soul that loves Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity doth not feel it ſelf chear'd and raiſed in proportion to the Hopes and Evidences it hath of the approach of ſo great and deſirable a Mercy?

(2.) Then is any work of Mercy and Deliverance to the Church deſervedly ſtiled *great*, when it is wrought out in an *extraordinary way*, and the finger of God evidently ſeen therein. Thus it was with *Iſrael* in their introduction into the Land of Promiſe, *Pſal.* 44. 3. *For they got not the land in poſſeſſion by their own ſword, neither did their own arm ſave them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance; becauſe thou hadſt a favour unto them.* It was not by the ſtrength of their own Arm, or the length of their own Sword, that they ſubdued and conquer'd; no, it was a ſmile of Providence that did the work. The finger of God in Providence appears in the ſecret influences of God upon the ſpirits of men, infuſing Courage into the hearts of ſome, and ſending faintneſs into the ſpirits of others; ſo that the feeble become as *David*, when mean while the men of might cannot find their hands. This lifts up the Wheels above the Earth, as *Ezek.* 1. 19.

(3.) The ſudden production of Mercy magnifies it. Mercies are highly to be prized, how long ſoever we wait for them; but when they come ſurprizingly, they come with great advantage upon us, and have for that the more raviſhing ſweetneſs in them, *Pſal.* 126. 1, 2, 3. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with ſinging; then ſaid they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them, The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.* The change was ſo great, ſo ſudden, that it amazed them; they took it rather for a *Phantom* that deluded their Senſes, than for a reality. The deliverance was incredible, they could not believe themſelves to be delivered, when they really were delivered. They fancied when they came to *Jeruſalem*, that it was rather a pleaſant dream of *Jeruſalem* in *Babylon*, than ſo indeed. Are we indeed ſet at liberty to worſhip God at *Jeruſalem*? or are we mocked with a dream, and deluded with a pleaſant Fancy of ſuch a Mercy? So again we read, *Iſa.* 66. 8, 9. *Who hath heard ſuch a thing? Who hath ſeen ſuch things? ſhall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or ſhall a nation be born at once? For aſſoon as Sion travelled, ſhe brought forth her children.* What, ſow and reap in the ſame day! The birth to anticipate the pangs of Travail! Who hath ſeen or heard ſuch things, ſaith the *Prophet?* Surely *England* hath ſeen it this day. *Cardinal Pool* once abuſed this Scripture in his Letter to Pope *Julius* the third, applying it to the ſudden change of *England* to *Popery* in the beginning of Queen *Mary*'s Reign. But we are called this day to ſanctify the Name of God in a work of Providence, wherein the Lord hath indeed fulfilled it before our eyes. So great and ſudden! *Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are thy ways, O thou King of Saints.* Generations to come will think we do but hyperbolize, when they ſhall read the one half of the Wonders of our days.

(4.) When one Mercy is an introductive leading

Mercy to many more, that are greater than it ſelf; that Mercy which is ſo, though in it ſelf it were never ſo ſmall, well deſerves the Title of a great Mercy; and may we not judg the preſent Mercy to be ſuch? In the rending off theſe Kingdoms from Antichriſt, the tenth part of the great City is viſibly fallen. *Rome* hath paid her Tenths to Chriſt already, and that as an earneſt of the whole, which is ſhortly to fall into his hands. *Rome*'s Glaſs was turned up by Chriſt more than 1200 years paſt, and in the Judgment of very many Learned and Searching men, is now almoſt run down. *Antichriſt* hath lately had a Triumph, and ſaid, *I ſit as a Queen, and ſhall not ſee widowhood, or loſs of children any more.* The Kings of the Earth have given δύναμιν ϗ ἐξουσίαν, their force of Arms, and power of Laws unto the *Beaſt*. But the Lord hath begun to ſhake Heaven and Earth, that the things which are made may be ſhaken down, and ſo to ruin him by the ſame means he firſt aroſe. He is taking to himſelf his Power and Reign, that the Kingdom and Dominion under the whole Heavens may be the Lord's; and that work of Providence which we celebrate this day, appears to me a great ſtep towards it. Call it *Gad*, for a Troop follows it. The World hath found, and ſhall ſtill find much Truth in that Obſervation of the Learned Dr. *More: I am not aſhamed* (ſaith he) *to profeſs, that I think it clear out of the* Apocalypſe, *that the Scene of things in* Chriſtendom *will in a ſhort time be very much changed for the better; the time of the Churches appearing, that is truly* Apoſtolical *both in Life and Doctrine, appears by the computation of Propheſies to be very near at hand, when the Witneſſes ſhall riſe, and the Woman come out of the Wilderneſs, and the Kingdoms of the World ſhall be the Kingdoms of the Lord and his Chriſt, and he ſhall reign for ever and ever. There is no ſtability to be expected in the Kingdoms of Men, (but Vengeance will ever and anon flow in upon them) till that City be raiſed whoſe not only Foundation is laid in twelve, but whoſe Gates, Tribes, Angles, the breadth and height of the Wall, and the ſolid continent of the whole City, are nothing elſe but a replication ſtill of twelve throughout: that is to ſay, till that Church appear which is purely Apoſtolical in Doctrine and Worſhip.*

*Myſtery of Godlineſs, l.* 5. *c* 17. *printed* 1660.

*England* is ſaid to be the firſt Kingdom that received the Goſpel with the Countenance of Supream Authority. This was its Honour; and to be the firſt that breaks off from Antichriſt, will be as great an Honour as the former. The reſt are to follow in their order. O what a leading Mercy is the mercy of this Day!

(5.) Then may a Work of God be ſtiled great and magnificent, when the Lord carries it on through great Difficulties and ſeeming Impoſſibilities. The greater the difficulties in the way, the greater muſt the mercy be when it arrives to us through them all. Thus came the *Iſraelites* into the Land of Promiſe, *Pſal.* 66. 12. *Thou cauſedſt men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but thou broughteſt us out into a wealthy place.* To paſs through Fire and Water, is a proverbial Speech, noting the greateſt difficulties and deadly dangers. Such was that at the *Red Sea*: a deliverance out of ſuch dangers, may be called Life out of Death, and ſuch have our Deliverances been. Our Enemies had graſped all power into their hands, and were full of confidence. They were folded together as Thorns, and drunk as Drunkards; as the Prophet expreſſes it, *Nah.* 1. 10. Strong Combinations, and anſwerable Confidence and Security of the Event; but when the time of Mercy was come, Armies, Navies, Counſels, Foreign Confederates, and all give way to the deſign of Mercy. And what are all the Mountains before *Zerubbabel?*

(6.) That which exceedingly greatens a Mercy or Deliverance, is the *ſeaſonableneſs* thereof, when it nicks the proper Seaſon, comes in the moſt opportune time; *Deut.* 32. 36. *The Lord ſhall judg his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants; when he ſeeth that their power is gone, and that there is none ſhut up, or left.* The Lord ſuffers the Danger to come to an extremity, and then in the Mount of Difficulties and ſtraits he appears. If deliverance ſhould come ſooner, it would be leſs valued; and if later, it would come too late for our comfort. He is a God of Judgment, and all his Works are made beautiful by their ſeaſonableneſs. How the Caſe ſtood with the *Proteſtant* Intereſt in *Europe*, when God began to ſtir up the Spirits of the Princes to commiſerate and relieve it, we all know; our Enemies looked upon us as their ſure prey, and we could not but look upon our ſelves in great hazard. The Lord ſuffered the miſchief conceived to go to the parturient fulneſs of its time, and then gave it a miſcarrying Womb. Who is like unto the Lord? and what works are like his Works!

(7.) In a word, then is a work of Mercy truly great, when it brings forth invaluable Bleſſings at a cheap rate; when Enjoyments and Comforts, more worth than our lives, come at eaſie rates to our hands.

You read, *Iſa.* 9. 5. *Every battel of the Warrior is with confuſed noiſe and garments roll'd in blood.* War is terrible and coſtly, eſpecially Civil Wars. When a Nation like a Candle lighted at both ends quickly conſumes and melts down in the middle. There are confuſed noiſes in Battels, terrible to hear. The thundering of Drums, and ſound of Trumpets; the neighing of Horſes, and ſhouts of Armies; the roaring of Cannons, the Shrieks and Groans of dying Men; theſe are confuſed noiſes indeed: and yet it's worth enduring all this to hear the joyful ſound of the Goſpel, and preſerve the pure Reformed Religion in the midſt of us: 'Twere better part with our Blood than the Goſpel; exhauſt our Treaſure, and leave our Children poor, than deveſt them of the beſt of bleſſings, and leave them to be train'd up in Idolatry, and ſtretch out their hands to a ſtrange God.

But lo, what hath God wrought for *England!* you have thoſe Mercies that have coſt others dear, and they have coſt you nothing. You have ſold your ſelves for nothing, and are redeemed without price. Your God hath been liberal in Mercy, but ſparing of Blood. Such mercies, ſo many mercies without a ſtroke! according to this time it ſhall be ſaid, *What hath God wrought?*

Thus you ſee what thoſe mercies are wherein God ſhews his Greatneſs.

Secondly, In the next place let us conſider what that ſutable ſenſe, or thoſe anſwerable impreſſions are, which ſuch great mercies call for. *Moſes* in the *Text* expreſſes a very becoming ſenſe of the great things God had begun to do for him and his people; O that there were ſuch a heart in us this day. Now there are five things wherein the comely behaviour of our Souls towards God under great Mercies doth conſiſt.

(1.) In our eying the Hand of God in the Mercy, and thankful Aſcriptions of all the Glory and Praiſe to his Name. So doth *Moſes* in the *Text*, *Thou haſt begun to ſhew thy ſervant thy greatneſs and thy mighty hand.* The *Iſraelites* were a great Hoſt, Six Hundred Thouſand Men that marched out of *Egypt*, an Army ſufficient to invade and ſubdue a far greater Country than *Canaan* was; but *Moſes* looks off from them, and aſcribes all their Succeſſes and Victories to the Hand of God: Not my *mighty hoſt*, but *thy mighty hand.* God affects not ſocial Glory; the dividing of the Praiſe forfeits the Mercy. He that doth all in us and for us, expects juſtly the Praiſe and Glory of all from us. *Pſal.* 115.1. *Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy Name give glory.* Here's a double Negative, and no more than need; for there is double danger of the Creatures invading the Rights of Heaven, and ſacrilegious Uſurpation of God's peculiar Praiſe. Let us therefore look off from Armies, and Navies, from the prudent Conduct and Courage of Men; and ſee the hand of God in all the great and marvellous things wrought in the midſt of us this day.

(2.) 'Tis decorous and ſutable to great Mercies, to have our hearts filled with a joy and chearfulneſs anſwerable to them. Praiſe is comely for the upright. As it would be our ſin not to mourn when God ſmites and rebukes us, ſo will it alſo not to rejoice when he chears and comforts us. 'Tis not our *Liberty* only, but our *Duty* to rejoice in ſuch works of Mercy as theſe are: *Iſa.* 65. 18. *But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold I create Jeruſalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.* Methinks Joy ſhould not be under a Chriſtian's command, when he ſees what God is creating for *Jeruſalem.* As the Morning-Stars ſang together, and all the Sons of God ſhouted for joy at the Creation of the World; ſo ſhould all his Sons and Daughters ſing and ſhout at this new Creation of the new Heavens, and the new Earth.

Miſtake not here, I call you not to rejoice in the Miſeries or Calamities that are upon any this day, much leſs at the Calamities of our late Sovereign. He that ſearcheth my Heart, knows I commiſerate his Condition, and from my ſoul deſire the Lord to bleſs his afflictions to his Illumination, and Eternal Salvation. But that which you are to rejoice in this day, is the advancement of Chriſt's Intereſt in the World, and the Salvation of his Church from the imminent dangers it was ſo lately under; and the proſpect the Lord now gives you of far greater mercies to his People, than ever yet they enjoyed. Theſe are the proper Objects of our Rejoicing.

(3.) Then have we a becoming ſenſe of great mercies, when thoſe mercies kindly thaw and melt our hearts into Repentance for Sin, and a ſenſe of our great unworthineſs of them; when we abaſe our ſelves under exalting Providences. We greatly miſtake our ſelves if we think *England* hath obliged God to be thus peculiarly favourable to it. 'Tis aſtoniſhing to think, that a Nation ſo ſwarming with *Drunkards*, *Perſecutors*, *Formaliſts* in Religion, yea *Atheiſts* and *Scoffers* at all practical and ſerious Piety, ſhould nevertheleſs be thus favoured, delivered and exalted in mercy above all the Nations round about us. I know God hath a great number of precious and upright-hearted ones in *England*, that have ſighed and cried for the Abominations committed in the midſt thereof; but ſo far are they from *arrogating*, that they are every where *admiring* the Goodneſs of God in unexpected mercies. They think, if he had given them their lives for a prey in ſome obſcure corner of the World, he had done more for them than they could juſtly have expected: Or if he had furniſht them with a ſufficient ſtock of Faith and Patience to ſtand quietly at the ſtake, and have glorified him in the midſt of the Flames; he had done more than they had deſerved at his hands: but to be delivered from all thoſe Fears, to ſit down in Peace amidſt pure Goſpel-Ordinances, and to look on all theſe but as the beginnings of Mercy, the dawning of a more bright and glorious day than ever yet this ſinful Nation enjoyed; this I ſay is melting and humbling indeed to all gracious Spirits. 'Tis a lovely ſight to ſee the Tears of Repentance overtaking the Tears of Joy and Thankfulneſs; Sighs and Bluſhes for Sin, mixed with Smiles and Rejoicings in Mercies.

(4.) Then do we anſwer the voice of Mercy, and diſcover a ſutable ſenſe of it, when it ſtrongly obliges us to new Obedience, and more exactneſs in walking with God for time to come. We find an excellent Example of both theſe effects of Mercy, *viz.* Repentance for paſt Sins, and Reſolutions for new Obedience, in the 79th *Pſal.* 8, and 13. *Remember not againſt us former iniquities,* ſaith *Aſaph*, that was the frame of his heart as to paſt ſins; and then *ver.* 13. as to the future, if he would let *the ſighing of the Priſoners to come before him, and deliver thoſe that were appointed to die*, as he ſpeaks *ver.* the 11th. Then ſaith he, *We thy people, and the ſheep of thy paſture will give thee thanks for ever, we will ſhew forth thy praiſe to all generations.* O *England, England!* thy God this day calls thee to thy Knees, tho it be thy Day of Thankſgiving and rejoicing. He expects to ſee thy Tears upon thy Cheeks this day for thy former iniquities, and that thou bind thy ſelf to thy God with theſe bonds of Mercy, never to return any more to Folly. 'Tis not Bells and Bonfires, but Repentance for thy paſt Follies, and new Obedience, thy God looks for at thy hands.

(5.) Laſtly, Then do we act becomingly to the Mercies of God, when Mercies already brought forth do encourage and ſtrengthen our faith for thoſe that remain ſtill in the Womb of the Promiſes. So it was with *Moſes* in my Text, and O that it might be ſo with us all! Our greateſt and beſt mercies are yet to come, but thoſe we bleſs God for this Day are pledges and earneſts of them. You ſee them not, neither did you ſee theſe you are now praiſing him for ſix months ago; hath he cauſed theſe mercies to be brought forth, and will he ſhut up the Womb? hath he done things we looked not for, and ſhall he not be truſted farther than we can ſee? Look as the head of *Leviathan* was ſerved into the *Iſraelites* Table in the Wilderneſs, garniſhed about with rich Experiences of the Goodneſs and Faithfulneſs of God, that it might be food to their Faith in the Wilderneſs; ſo, much ſo are the Mercies and Deliverances of this day to be improved, for the encouragement of Faith for further and future Mercies.

## USE.

The Point before us is full of uſeful Inſtructions,

ons, Cautions and Counſels. Time will permit me to do little more than note them to you; becauſe I have noted to you another point of Doctrine, which ſhould I omit, I ſhould be wanting to the Duty of the Day, and your juſt Expectations. Well then, are the Mercies of God already perform'd, ſuch great things? and do they require ſuch ſenſe and improvement of them from us? Then

(1.) Take heed of ſlighting and deſpiſing the Mercies of God which are freſh and new before your eyes this day. There are two ſpecial duties incumbent on all the Saints under ſuch Mercies as theſe, *viz.* to obſerve the Lord's Providences, and to reſound his praiſes; and the latter depends upon the former. God can have no praiſe, we can have no comfort from unobſerved or ſlighted mercies. *Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord*, Pſal. 107. 43. A due obſervation of mercies will beget a due valuation of them; and a due valuation of mercies is fundamental to all your praiſes of God for them. Look upon the other ſide of theſe Providences, and think what your Condition had been, if the Lord had left your Eſtates, Liberties and Lives to the Wills and Mercies of your Enemies.

(2.) Check all Atheiſtical thoughts from this experiment of the hand of God ſo ſeaſonably interpoſing betwixt his People and their Deſtruction. *Verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth*, Pſal. 58. 11. Great and notorious is the Atheiſm of theſe times, all ſerious Piety is hiſs'd and ridicul'd; the very exiſtence of a Deity, and Divine Providence is denied by ſome. But would men open their eyes, and obſerve what is before them this day, they would ſee enough to ſtop the mouth of Atheiſm for ever. Are theſe fortuitous Hits and Accidents, or the effects and productions of the wiſe and ſteddy Counſels of Heaven? *The Lord is known by the Judgments that he executeth.* But when his hand is lifted up, men will not ſee. 'Tis convincingly clear, the Hand of God, not the Power or Policy of Men hath done this. There was no power in the prevailing part, but what might with far greater probability be repelled by the other; no Policy in the one, but as great to countermine it in the other. But you ſee the Race is not to the ſwift, nor the Battel to the ſtrong; 'tis the hand of God that diſpoſeth theſe great Events.

(3.) Be not ſtagger'd if you ſhould ſee new difficulties ariſing in the way of Mercy, after God hath begun to do great things for his people. *Moſes* and his People encounter'd many ſuch difficulties, after God had lifted up his hand in great ſigns and wonders for them in *Egypt*: and ſo may we, even when we are come upon the borders of our expected Mercies. Let us not ſay, we ſhall never be moved more; there is a great deal of filthineſs in *England* yet unpurged, many Corruptions to be removed; and let us not expect much tranquillity till God hath refined and reformed us. When the morbifique matter is not well purged out of the Body Natural or Politick, there is danger of a Recidivation, or Relapſe into the old Diſeaſe, which God in mercy prevent. Former ſins and follies will caſt us back into former ſtraits and miſeries. O let us not return again to Folly. We are now upon Trial once more how we will carry it under Mercies and Liberties; God forbid ſo great an opportunity as this for ſettling the Church and State upon the true Foundations of Liberty and Proſperity ſhould be loſt. Take heed of a diſcontented Spirit under gracious Providences, leſt you provoke the Lord to turn his hand of Judgment again upon you. Who could have thought that *Jonah* who was ſo lately in the *Whales Belly*, called *the Belly of Hell*, and was ſo greatly humbled there, and ſo miraculouſly and graciouſly delivered thence, ſhould preſently fall into a pet of diſcontent with God, and that for a trifle, the withering of a Gourd? yea, and which was worſe, for his Mercy to others. O we know not what manner of Spirits we are of. The greateſt Mercies and Deliverances do not long pleaſe us, unleſs our little by-intereſt be gratified.

(4.) Let *England* now ſtudy to do great things for God, who hath impreſſed his greatneſs upon the Mercies it enjoys this day. O *England*, God hath done great things for thee, ſaved thee with a great Salvation; and he expects returns from thee ſutable to thy great mercies and obligations. Let me ſay to thee, as *Elihu* to *Job*, *Chap.* 36. 2. *Suffer me a little, and I will ſhew thee that I have yet to ſpeak on God's behalf.*

(1.) A National Reformation is now expected by the Lord; he hath ſtrongly obliged us to it this day by ſo glorious and unparallel'd a National Salvation. 'Tis our reproach that a Land of Miniſters, a Land of Bibles, a Land of peculiar Mercies, ſhould be a Land ſwarming in every part of it with profane *Swearers*, filthy *Adulterers*, beaſtly *Drunkards*, and Heaven-daring *Atheiſts*. Do we thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh People and unwiſe? Thy God, O *England*, is pleading with thee this day by the voice of mercy, drawing thee out of theſe puddles and pollutions by the Cords of Love, whilſt he is pleading againſt the ſame ſins in the Nations round about thee by Fire and Sword. He hath now ſet upon thy *Throne* a great Example of Virtue, to correct thy Lewdneſs, and effect thy Reformation. O *England*, wilt thou not be made clean? When ſhall it once be? When, if not now, under ſuch ſtrong inducements, and ſignal advantages?

(2.) The looſing of every yoke, and undoing of every heavy burden is now expected from thee. God hath looſed the Yoke of Popery from our Necks, which neither we nor our Fathers could bear; and God forbid we ſhould lay any other yoke upon our brethrens Necks, than what Jeſus Chriſt hath laid by his plain Commands upon all his Diſciples, or make any thing a term or condition of Communion, which himſelf hath not made ſo.

O let the Groans and Crys of oppreſſed Conſciences be heard no more from henceforth in *England*. Did not the Lord lately ſhake the Rod of our common Enemies over us all? Had we not an *Eccleſiaſtical Court* erected among us, which made thoſe to tremble, at whoſe Bars others had trembled? If our God hath been ſo good to us, beyond all Examples or Expectations, to deliver us from our Fears and Dangers; ſurely he expects that thoſe who have found mercy, ſhould be ready to ſhew mercy: elſe we muſt expect he will make good his threatning againſt us, *James* 2. 13. *He ſhall have judgment without mercy that ſhewed no mercy*; or *unmerciful Judgment*, as κρίσις ἀνίλεως may be rendered; and the Inſtruments and Executioners of his Judgments are not ſo far off, but he can quickly hiſs for them again, if we anſwer not to the voice and call of Mercy.

(3.) A hearty and laſting Union amonſt all that fear God, is now juſtly expected from us. I never expect Union and Coalition betwixt the Godly and Ungodly, 'twill be as much as I can expect to ſee the wickedneſs of men reſtrain'd and curb'd by good Laws that they perſecute not; but renewing Grace muſt change their hearts and deſtroy their inbred Enmity, before they cloſe with the people of God in Love. Nor do I think *ſupercilious Phariſees* or *ſuperſtitious Bigots* will inwardly and heartily affect the ſincere and ſpiritual Servants of Chriſt; 'twill be a mercy they cannot *afflict*, whom they do not *affect*: but I ſhould hope that in ſuch a time as this, all that love the Lord Jeſus in ſincerity, and are animated by the ſame Spirit of Grace and Adoption, ſhould now every where depoſe their Wrath, compoſe their little differences; and that their hearts be now melted, in the ſenſe of theſe great and common Salvations, into more love and union than ever. Such returns as theſe will be pleaſing to the Lord, and the only methods of lengthening out *England's* Tranquillity. And tho my Infirmities as well as Age cut off my expectations of being much longer ſerviceable, or of enjoying long the mercies God is preparing for his People; yet I ſhould account it an extraordinary mercy to ſee theſe beginnings of mercy well improved in order to thoſe greater and better ones. Which brings me to the laſt Obſervation, which next comes to be opened and applied, *viz.*

Obſerv. *That the beginnings of Mercy and Deliverance to the Church, are convertible into ſo many Arguments, and Pleas in Prayer for the Perfection and Conſummation thereof.*

The Point lies clear and obvious in the Text: to open it let us conſider,

1. *What the Mercies were which are here called the beginnings of Mercy?*
2. *What the greater Mercies were, he expected beyond* Jordan?
3. *How the former ſtrengthen Faith in Prayer for the latter?*
4. *Why the compleating of Mercies begun is ſo deſirable to the Saints?*

1. What thoſe mercies were which are here called the beginnings of Mercy? And they were great and manifold: in this *Catalogue* are to be placed all the mercies they had received for forty years, from the day they came out of *Egypt*, unto this great deliverance at *Edrei* incluſively.

(1.) God began to ſhew his great Power in their wonderful Deliverance out of *Egypt*, with mighty Signs, and an out-ſtretched Arm. This Deliverance from *Egypt* was a Pattern or Model of the future Deliverances of his Churches in New-Teſtament days. *Micah* 7. 15. *According to the days of thy coming out of the land of* Egypt, *will I ſhew unto him marvellous things.* Which ſeemeth to have relation to the time of the Reſtitution, and ſaving of all *Iſrael*. After the manner of *Egypt* alſo hath God begun to ſave the Gentile Churches from *Rome*, which is ſpiritually called *Egypt*, *Rev.* 11. 8. And this begun Deliverance from the *Myſtical* is greater than that from *Literal Egypt*, and ſo much greater, by how much Spirtual Bondage and Slavery of mens Souls, is worſe than that on their bodies. The hand of God was evidently ſeen in that, and is no leſs admirable in this. The Wonders of the *Reformation* are like thoſe in *Egypt*, wrought out by the mighty Hand and Power of God.

(2.) The Hand and Power of God was ſeen in making proviſion for them in all their Wilderneſs Straits, after they came out of *Egypt*. There were no tilled Fields, or Barns, no Storehouſes in the Wilderneſs, nor *Shops* to furniſh them with Clothes for forty years in the Deſert; yet God took care to ſuſtain them. 'Tis ſaid, *Nehem.* 9. 21. *Forty years didſt thou ſuſtain them in the wilderneſs, ſo that they lacked nothing, their clothes waxed not old, and their feet ſwelled not.* And certainly it would furniſh an admirable Hiſtory of Providence, if the inſtances of God's Care over his poor ſcattered perſecuted Saints were collected, and how the Lord hath ſuſtain'd them from the beginning of the Reformation, tho none were ſuffered to buy or ſell that received not the Mark of the Beaſt in their Foreheads, or right hand, *Rev.* 13. 17. Their Enemies would have ſtarved them, but their God hath wonderfully provided for them.

(3.) The Lord fruſtrated all the Plots of their Enemies to deſtroy them, and there was no Enchantment againſt *Jacob*, nor Divination againſt *Iſrael*: *Remember, O my people* ( ſaith God ) *what Balak King of Moab conſulted, and what Balaam the Son of Peor anſwered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteouſneſs of the Lord.* They built many *Altars*, and offered many Sacrifices; what would they not have done, to have gotten but a word or two out of God's mouth againſt his People? But their God was true and faithful to them, and would not hearken to *Balaam's* inſinuations againſt them. There have been Plots upon Plots to deſtroy the begun Reformation. *Rome* and Hell have conſulted our Deſtruction, as they did theirs, but to no purpoſe.

(4.) The Lord diſcomfited and defeated the open Force as well as the ſecret Treachery of their Enemies, and no Weapon formed againſt them ever proſpered. The Kings, ſeveral Kings by whoſe lands they travelled towards *Canaan*, fell upon them in their way, but ſtill to their own coſt, they forfeited their Lives and Lands by their quarrel with *Iſrael*. And now the laſt of thoſe Kings and Kingdoms that oppoſed their paſſage, is fallen into the hands of *Iſrael*: Theſe were the Mercies wherein God had begun to ſhow his Greatneſs to *Moſes* and his People, and after the manner of *Egypt*, unto us alſo.

2. But what were the greater Mercies he expected beyond *Jordan*, which he ſo vehemently deſires to ſee, and in compariſon wherewith he ſtiles all theſe great things but the beginnings of Mercy? Certainly *Moſes* expected better things than theſe, as great and glorious as they were: and theſe were,

(1.) The full and free Enjoyment of all God's Ordinances, which the people had not enjoyed for Forty Years before. All that were born by the way were not circumciſed, *Joſ.* 5. 5. and for the *Paſſover* we find but three of them celebrated all that ſpace, the firſt in *Egypt*, *Exod.* 12. the ſecond at *Mount Sinai*, *Numb.* 9. the third at *Gilgal* in *Joſhua's* time, *Joſ.* 5. 10. and as for their other Sacrifices and Offerings appointed by the Lord, they were either omitted, or very diſorderly performed, which becauſe of their many troubles, and frequent removes, they could not enjoy; and when they did, they were not performed as he required, which the Lord ſmartly rebuked them for, *Amos* 5. 25. *Have ye offered unto me ſacrifices and offerings in the wilderneſs forty years, O houſe of Iſrael?* No they had not, at leaſt not in the due order as God required. But when they ſhould arrive to a ſettled condition in *Canaan*, then the Ordinances of God ſhould be more frequently enjoyed, and that after the due Order, for ſo *Moſes* had told them, *Deut.* 12. 8, 9. *Ye ſhall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatſoever is right in his own eyes; for ye are not as yet come to the reſt, and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you.* When they ſhould be ſettled in *Canaan*, and the Ark find reſt, *Moſes* knew that all things ſhould then be reduced to the Rule and Pattern God had given them. And truly nothing is more beautiful, more deſirable in the eyes of the Saints. For ſo much of God's Order as is found in his Worſhip, ſo much of his Preſence and Bleſſing may be expected, and no more. And as he expected more purity in Ordinances, ſo

(2.) Reſt and Peace was expected in *Canaan*, a Mercy the People had long wanted. The *Ark* had been ambulatory a long time, removing now here, now there: but in the Temple it was to find reſt. Therefore you read in *Pſal.* 132. 8. the Temple called the place of reſt; *Ariſe O Lord into thy reſt, thou and the Ark of thy ſtrength*, becauſe there it was to have a fixed abode. And as the Ark was there to find a place of reſt, ſo the people alſo, who inſtead of *Tents* ſhould now be placed in Towns and Cities.

(3.) But eſpecially that which *Moſes* deſired to ſee in *Canaan*, was the fulfilling and accompliſhment of the promiſes of God made to the *Patriarchs*, in the Faith and Comfort whereof they lived and died. This Privilege *Joſhua* enjoyed, *Chap.* 23. 14. *Not one thing hath failed, all are come to paſs.* O what a lovely and deſirable ſight was this?

But in theſe latter days, we, for whom better things are provided, look for greater Mercies than *Moſes* and the people could expect in *Canaan*. For we according to the Promiſes expect,

(1.) An abundant increaſe of the Church, both *extenſively*, in the number of Converts; and *intenſively*, in the power of Religion. The beſt Miniſters every where complain with the Prophet, that they labour in vain, and ſpend their ſtrength for nought. They now and then at beſt hear but of a ſingle Soul wrought upon; but the time will come, when they ſhall not fiſh with Angle-Rods, but ſpread out their Nets, and incloſe multitudes, according to that glorious promiſe, *Ezek.* 47. 10. And as to the *intenſive* increaſe of the Church in the Spirit and Power of Godlineſs, we expect to ſee a Generation of more Spiritual, Active, and Lively Chriſtians to ſpring up, ſuch as ſhall far excel thoſe of this drowſie, lukewarm Generation, according to that promiſe, *Iſa.* 60. 21. *Thy people alſo ſhall be all righteous.*

(2.) Greater peace and quietneſs from perſecuting Enemies, is yet to be expected. The poor Church hath been afflicted, and toſſed with Tempeſts. Perſecutors have broken in ever and anon upon it, and made havock of it; a tender Conſcience hath caſt men upon great difficulties to preſerve it; but the days are coming when God will give his Church reſt, either by the converſion, or reſtraint of all its Enemies: *the Wolf ſhall lie down with the Lamb.* Antipathies ſhall be depoſed, *Iſa.* 11. 6. not a pricking Briar or grieving Thorn, that ſhall not be rooted up, *Ezek.* 28. 24. Surely this is a ſweet and deſirable mercy to the weary Saints, and yet a far ſweeter mercy than that is to be expected, *viz.*

(3.) The pouring out of the Spirit of Unity on the people of God, to conſolidate and ſtrengthen the poor dilacerated Church. For the diviſions of *Reuben*, there have been great thoughts of heart. Our Diviſions have darkned the luſtre of Religion, imbittered and ſpoiled the Communion of Saints, prejudiced the World, and obſtructed Converſion. But God will melt the Hearts of the Saints into one, *Jer.* 32. 39. They ſhall have one Heart, and one Way, and ſerve the Lord with one conſent. Then ſhall Religion ſhine in its native Glory. One reaſon of our juſtlings one againſt another hath been the darkneſs that hath been upon us all. But this darkneſs ſhall break up: for

(4.) We expect a more Spiritual and Excellent Miniſtry than the Church for many years hath enjoyed; *Jer.* 3. 15. *I will give you Paſtors according to mine heart, which ſhall feed you with knowledg, and underſtanding.* 'Tis a ſore plague and judgment upon the World, when men ſhall be ſet over the people, that are ignorant of Regeneration, ſtrangers and enemies to practical Holineſs, Men that break their profane Jeſts upon the very Spirit of Prayer. But theſe unclean Spirits ſhall paſs out of the Land, *Zech.* 13. 2. O what a good riddance will this be! when God ſhall ſet up in their room laborious, faithful and godly Miniſters, full of experimental knowledg of Chriſt; Watchmen that ſhall ſee eye to eye, as he ſpeaks *Iſa.* 52. 8. Then ſhall we ſee another moſt deſirable and ineſtimable Mercy perform'd to the Church, beyond all it hath enjoyed ſince the primitive days, namely,

(5.) The purity of Ordinances and Officers in the Church, the whole Worſhip and *Oeconomy* of the Church meaſured by the Scripture-Reed, according to *Rev.* 11. 1, 2. and *Ezek.* 43. 11. all reduced to the pure primitive Rule and Standard, which will diſcover and correct the oblique and corruptive ſuperadditions of men; things under which men of tender Conſciences, and ſuch as tremble at the Word, in all Ages have groaned. And then will the Ordinances of God ſhine forth in their Beauty, and be mighty in power and efficacy; eſpecially when

(6.) There ſhall be a more eminent preſence of God among his People. For ſo it is promiſed, *Ezek.* 48. *ult.* *And the name of the City* (viz. the meaſured regulated Church) *from that day ſhall be, The Lord is there.* 'This is the true Glory of the Church; this makes the new Heavens and the new Earth, which according to his Promiſe we look for, and the great and marvellous things our Eyes behold this day are the beginnings and introductions to it: which brings us to the third General Head, namely,

3. What influence theſe begun works of God have to ſtrengthen and encourage our ſouls in Prayer for theſe greater and more perfect Mercies: and this they do upon a threefold account.

(1.) As theſe begun introductive works of Mercy are indications and ſigns that the time of

Mercy, even the ſet time is come.

There is an appointed or ſet time for the Churches Deliverance now, as well as for theirs out of *Egypt*; that was called *the time of the promiſe*, *Acts* 7. 17. Deliverance can neither come before it, nor will it linger when that time is fully come. Promiſes like a pregnant woman, have their appointed Months, *Hab.* 2. 3. their ſet and appointed time, *Pſal.* 102. 13. Now, when we behold ſuch things done, and doing in the World, as are at this day before our eyes, we may rationally conclude the time of Mercy, even the ſet time is near; as our Saviour ſpeaks, *Mat.* 24. 32, 33. *Learn a parable of the figtree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that Summer is nigh: ſo likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall ſee all theſe things, know that it is near, even at the door.*

Now, it is a ſingular encouragement in Prayer, when we know, or can but probably conjecture that the time is near for the accompliſhment and performance of thoſe very promiſed Mercies we pray for. As we ſee in *Daniel*, *Chap.* 9. 2, 3. when *Daniel* underſtood by ſearching and ſtudying the Sacred Records, ſuch Propheſies as that *Jer.* 25. 11, 12. that the time foreſet was near at an end, then he ſet himſelf with extraordinary fervency to Prayer. And do not the generality of learned and good men agree, that the ſet time for *Rome*'s deſtruction is now near, even at the door? 'Tis near 1260 years ſince Chriſt turned up her Glaſs, and you ſee this day all things working towards the accompliſhment of the written Word. This cannot but be a ſtrong encouragement to ſeek God by Prayer for the full accompliſhment of what is ſo near us.

(2.) God hath ordered the Deliverances and Mercies of his Church to be birthed out by the Cries and Prayers of his People. When therefore Mercies are come to the Birth, 'tis a ſpecial ſeaſon, and ſingular encouragement to Prayer. *Ezek.* 36. 36, 37. *I the Lord plant that that was deſtroyed, I have ſpoken it, and I will do it: thus ſaith the Lord God, Yet for this will I be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael, to do it for them.* So again in *Jer.* 29. 11, 12. *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, ſaith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil; to give you an expected end. Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go and pray unto me; and I will hearken unto you.* In both theſe places, you ſee God will have Prayer to aſſiſt the Birth of Mercy; and never is any Mercy ſo ſweet, as when Prayer comes betwixt our Dangers and Deliverances, our wants and ſupplies. Hence it was that *Hezekiah* ſent that ſeaſonable Meſſage to the Prophet *Iſaiah*, 2 Kings 19. 3. *Lift up a cry for the remnant that is left, for the Children are come to the birth, and there is no ſtrength to bring forth.* If ever men will ſtrive with God to purpoſe in Prayer, 'tis when they perceive the greateſt Mercies are at the Birth, and Prayer is the Midwife to bring it forth.

(3.) When God hath begun a work of Mercy, it gives ſingular encouragement to Prayer, becauſe that time is the time of finding a proper and acceptable Seaſon; as it is *Pſal.* 32. 6. *For this ſhall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayeſt be found:* Or in a time of finding. *Courtiers* who have great Requeſts to make to Kings, do carefully obſerve their *molliſſima fandi tempora*, as they call them; their convenient ſeaſons when they find the King moſt propenſe and inclinable to Acts of Grace. That which is in motion, is the more eaſily moved. God is now in the way of Mercy. His Goodneſs is moving ſpontaneouſly towards us; and if ever Prayer be like to ſpeed and prevail, now is the time. And in the laſt place,

(4.) Manifold and weighty are the Reaſons and Motives that ſhould fully engage the moſt fervent deſires and prayers of all the Saints to ſee the full Deliverance of *Sion*; and to paſs over *Jordan*, to behold that goodly Mountain and *Lebanon*, I mean thoſe ſix glorious Mercies and Privileges before mentioned.

*Firſt*, The Saints Love to Chriſt makes it above meaſure deſirable to them. Nothing is more dear and precious to a Chriſtian, than the Glory and Intereſt of Chriſt; and anſwerable to the ſtrength of their Love, is the fervor of their Deſires. 'Tis ſaid, *Pſal.* 102. 16. *When the Lord ſhall build up Sion, he ſhall appear in his glory.*

Whilſt the Church groans under Antichriſt, the Glory of Jeſus Chriſt is darkned and much eclipſed in the World. It hath been the chief part of the Saints Sufferings to ſee his Ordinances polluted, and the Rights of Heaven invaded by the Uſurpations of Men; this is it that hath coſt them more ſorrow of Heart than their perſonal Sufferings have done. But to ſee the accompliſhment of that Propheſie, *Rev.* 11. 19. what will it be but as life from the dead? *And the Temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was ſeen in his Temple the Ark of his Teſtament*, &c. As it was an exceeding joy to the Godly in *Iſrael*, when good *Joſiah* came to the Crown, to ſee the Temple opened, which had been neglected in the days of his Predeceſſors *Manaſſeh* and *Amon*, in whoſe Reigns the Book of the Law had lain in the rubbiſh, but now the Worſhip of God was reſtored; ſo it cannot but raviſh a gracious heart with ſingular delight and joy, to ſee the pure primitive Worſhip of God reſtored to its firſt Purity and Glory: And the more any man is ſanctified, the more he is inflamed with deſires after it, becauſe the Glory of Chriſt is ſo much intereſted and concerned therein.

*Secondly*, Their love to the *Church*, of which they are Members, makes this greatly deſirable. *Moſes* was a Man who excelled in love to the Church. witneſs that tranſcendent rapture of his, *Exod.* 32. 32. but though he be ſcarcely imitable therein, yet every real Chriſtian doth in his right frame prefer *Jeruſalem* to his chief joy, *Pſal.* 137. 5, 6. and accordingly, their love to *Zion* is evidenced in their Prayers for and deſires of its proſperity. *Iſa.* 61. 2. *For Zions ſake will I not hold my peace, and for Jeruſalems ſake I will not reſt, until the righteouſneſs thereof go forth as brightneſs, and the ſalvation of it as a lamp that burneth.* So again, *Pſal.* 122. 8. *For my brethren, my companions ſake, I will now ſay, Peace be within thee.* For when the Church ſhall be delivered from the Antichriſtian yoke, and ſetled in peace and purity, great will its increaſe be. Her Children ſhall ſay again in her Ears, The place is too ſtrait, give room that we may dwell. She will look forth as the Morning, and her glory be freſh in her.

*Thirdly*, The pity and compaſſion the Saints have for the poor, miſerable, periſhing World, cannot but make this a deſirable thing in their Eyes. For whilſt the Goſpel is reſtrained in its full liberty, or the Ordinances corrupted by the mixture of Humane Inventions and Traditions; 'tis not to be expected that the Church ſhould be much enlarged by addition of Converts.

The Kingdom of our Lord Jeſus is for preſent confined within ſtrait and narrow limits; and it is juſt matter of ſorrow to conſider, how ſmall a part of the habitable World is in ſubjection to him: So many Millions bowing down to Idols; the dark places of the Earth, are full of the habitations of Cruelty, *Pſal.* 74. 20. The ſight of precious Souls periſhing for want of the Word, made the bowels of the compaſſionate Redeemer to yern within him, *Matth.* 9. 36. and the ſame conſideration and occaſion cannot but affect and melt every Soul in which is the Spirit of Chriſt: proportionably to the compaſſions Men have for the miſeries of the periſhing World, will their deſires be for the enlarging and perfecting of Goſpel Privileges and Mercies.

*Fourthly*, Love to our ſelves will make us long for ſuch a ſight as this: For what is there in this World more pleaſant to a Chriſtian, than to ſee Chriſt walking amidſt the Golden Candleſticks? the peaceful and ſweet enjoyment of God in his pure Ordinances? *Pſal.* 27. 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my Life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple.* This was *David's hoc unicum*, one thing above all other things in this World in his Eye, and ſo it is to all that ſee things with ſuch an Eye as *David* had; and next to that is the ſweet and comfortable communion of Saints, with one heart and mouth glorifying God, and ſerving him with one conſent. Theſe are the things that make it worth while to live on Earth: The pleaſure of Life doth conſiſt in them. Now all theſe deſirable things cannot be enjoyed in any eminent degree on this ſide *Jordan*, I mean till the great promiſes now near their birth, be accompliſhed.

## USE I.

The point before us frowns upon, and ſeverely reprehends two ſorts of perſons, *viz.*

1. The Wicked.
2. The Godly.

(1.) It adminiſters juſt reprehenſion to wicked men, who inſtead of thankful acknowledgments of the beginnings of mercies, and improving them in Prayer for the obtaining of greater, do inwardly repine and fret at the Work of Mercy begun, and are afraid of nothing more than a full and compleat Reformation. Are there not ſuch wretched Creatures to be found this day in *England*, that would be better pleaſed to be at their old perſecuting work again, and ſee good men deſtroyed, than to enjoy a due liberty to worſhip God according to the dictates their Conſciences, after they have ſeriouſly ſtudied and pray'd for information? Some there are who call themſelves *Proteſtants*, but (bluſh O Heavens at this, and be aſtoniſhed) they have not been aſhamed to ſay, *rather Popery than Presbytery:* And *Haman* like, take no comfort in their own liberty, becauſe thoſe they hate injoy theirs.

Thus it was with the ungodly *Murmurers* in *Iſrael*, when God had brought them out of *Ægypt* with Signs and Wonders, and a mighty hand, yet their luſts being croſſed, they would needs make them a *Captain*, and return back to *Egypt*, *Numb.* 14. 4. What madneſs was here? Could they think God would divide the Red Sea for them in their return to *Egypt*, as he did at their departure thence? Or that they ſhould find ſuch welcome in *Egypt*, which they had deſerted, diſobliged, and brought ſo much ruine upon? What ſtupendous madneſs was here!

(2.) It juſtly rebukes the dead-heartedneſs and ingratitude of good men, among many of whom is neither found that fervency in Prayer, nor ſenſe of preſent mercies which God expects, and the preſent diſpenſations of his Providences call for.

How inexcuſable at this time, is a flat, diſcouraged and dull Spirit in Prayer? To be found under ſuch a temper as this, when the morning of ſo glorious a day is ſprung up and opened upon us, ſuch encouragements to enliven Faith and Hope are before our eyes; this is ſad. The Saints that are gone to Heaven under the late and former troubles, were mighty wreſtlers with God in Prayer: They faſted and wept; they pleaded our cauſe heartily with God, wept and made ſupplication for the mercies we now enjoy, tho it was not their lot to ſee them: and ſhall we that are entred into the Fruits and Mercies they pray'd for, and are under ſuch ſignal encouragements, be now remiſs and cold?

Or ſhall we ingratefully overlook the beginnings of Mercy, as ſmall and inconſiderable things? Shall we ſay all this is nothing, becauſe we have not yet all that we would have? God forbid. When *Iſrael* was in *Egypt*, then a little Straw would have been eſteemed as a great Mercy; but afterwards *Quails* and *Mannah* were deſpiſed and ſlighted. Brethren, three or four years ago, you would have accounted it a ſpecial Mercy to have enjoyed an hour or two together in Prayer, or to have had a little Spiritual Bread handed to you behind your Enemies backs: And is it nothing in your eyes this day, to behold the Worſhip of God at liberty? yea, to ſee the ſucceſs of the Goſpel, in the bringing home of many Souls to Chriſt? the fears of Popery vaniſhed? the Witneſſes riſen, the tenth part of the City fallen, and ſuch a proſpect of far greater and more glorious things before your eyes? O let not the Conſolations of the Almighty ſeem ſmall.

If Wicked Men envy and grudg at our Mercies, and we our ſelves undervalue and ſlight them, then is there a grievous provocation given to the Lord, to turn his hand, and bring all our former Miſeries back again upon us.

## USE II.

Hath God brought us by a mighty hand out of Spiritual *Egypt*, by the Reformation, and hath now led us ſo many years thro the Wilderneſs, till he hath brought us at laſt almoſt in ſight of the good things he hath promiſed? then let us be exhorted to the Duties, and warned of the Dangers of our preſent State.

(1.) Take heed of provoking God in the way. *Moſes* die ſo, and for that was ſhut out of the good Land, *Numb.* 20. 12. his heedleſneſs of the Command deprived him of the good of the Promiſe. Unbelief, Murmuring, and Idolatry ſhut out many thouſands of them that came out of *Egypt*, and for thoſe Sins their Carcaſes fell in the Wilderneſs, 1 *Cor.* 10. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. And theſe are our Examples, not for imitation, but caution. When *Seamen* ſail along the Coaſt, where abundance of Wreck is floating, they ſail the more warily. You are not yet ſo ſecure and ſafe, but that you may quickly fall into as great Dangers and Miſeries as ever, if you provoke the

Lord in the way of Mercies. In the miſcarriage of others we get experience at a cheap rate. After great Deliverances, the greateſt Judgments are to be feared, if God be provoked by the abuſe of them. So *Joſhua* tells them, *Joſ.* 24. 20. *He will turn again, and do you hurt, after he hath done you good*; for one Mercy can never be pleaded as an Argument to obtain another, if it be abuſed and trampled under feet. So *Joſ.* 23. 15. and *Jude* 12.

(2.) Be not diſcouraged if you ſhould meet with ſome difficulties, even on the borders of the Land of Promiſe. After all their Wilderneſs-ſtraits, Deliverance at the Red Sea, encounters with the neighbouring Kings, there was a ſwelling *Jordan* at laſt betwixt them and the place of reſt and mercy; and ſo it may fall out with us; but let not our Faith be ſtagger'd, for look as the *Ark* of the Covenant ſtood in the midſt of *Jordan* to ſecure the *Tribes* in their paſſage thro it, *Joſ.* 3. 8. ſo doth the Promiſe ſtand this day in the midſt of Myſtical *Jordan*, I mean the Dangers and Troubles of the Church, to ſecure its paſſage through them all. Brethren, follow ye the Lord in the way of Duty, and you ſhall aſſuredly find that *Jordan* ſhall divide when you come to it; and that all Troubles, all Fears, all Difficulties do owe you a ſafe paſſage through them: the Covenant, yea, Chriſt the Mediator of the Covenant, ſtands in the midſt of them all to ſecure you.

(3.) Bleſs God for caſting the lot of your Nativity upon ſuch a happy and extraordinary period of time as this is. Many Saints have deſired to ſee the days you are likely to ſee in a little time, and have not ſeen them. The whole ſpace of time from the firſt to the ſecond coming of Chriſt, is by the Prophets called one day, *Zech.* 14. 7. and the greateſt part of this long day, very doubtful and changeable; neither light, nor dark, nor day, nor night; Peace and Trouble, Truth and Errors taking all along their alternate Courſes. *But at Evening time it ſhall be light:* And as the greateſt darkneſs is a little before the dawning of the Morning, ſo here, the blackeſt and gloomieſt part of the whole day is to be expected before this lightſom glorious Evening; ſuch tribulations immediately before the fall and ruin of *Antichriſt*, as Ages paſt never ſaw. *Lactantius* ſpeaking of this very time, ſays, *That a little before it, the State of Humane Affairs muſt ueceſſarily be changed, and all things grow worſe and worſe; ſo that theſe times of ours* (ſaith he) *in which iniquity is grown as one would think to the height, yet in comparison with thoſe days may even be called golden times; the Godly ſhall be every where diſtreſſed by the wicked, they ſhall flouriſh, and the righteous be in contempt: all Right and Law ſhall periſh and be confounded; no man ſhall poſſeſs any thing but what is ill gotten, or valiantly defended; there ſhall be no faithfulneſs in men; no peace, humanity, ſhame, or truth left: Wars ſhall rage every where; all Nations ſhall be in Arms; neighbouring Cities ſhall war upon each other; then ſhall ſlaughters be in all the World, mowing down all like an harveſt; of which confuſions and deſtructions, this ſhall be the cauſe: I tremble to ſpeak it, (but it muſt be ſpoken, for it ſhall ſurely come to paſs) that the* Roman *Name by which the World is now ruled, ſhall be taken away from the Earth.*

Theſe things in themſelves are exceeding dreadful, and yet I ſay, let the Saints rejoice in that God hath caſt their lot upon theſe times. For,

1. Theſe are the laſt Troubles the Church is like to feel from the hands of that Enemy, and there is much comfort in that. God never exerciſed ſo great Patience and Long-ſuffering towards any Enemy of his Church as he hath towards this. But the day is come to avenge the blood of the Saints upon *Babylon*, and deſtructions are come, even come to a perpetual End.

2. The Lord will take care of his People in all theſe Calamities, and National Confuſions. They ſhall be reſerved as a Seed to continue and inlarge the Church, which is to be the ſubject of all the promiſed Liberty and Glory.

(4.) Labour to get ſutable frames of ſpirit to thoſe good Times you expect. Carnal Hearts will not ſute them, or find any pleaſure in them. We look according to the promiſe for new Heavens, and a new Earth wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs; and ſeeing we look for ſuch things, O what manner of perſons ought we to be! 2 *Pet.* 3. 11. You that are Parents, how are you concerned not only for your ſelves, but for the Religious Education of your Children: If you live not to ſee thoſe good days, in all probability they will; the hopes of the next Generation depend much upon your religious and zealous Care and Diligence. Never were Children born in a more happy and encouraging time than yours is.

And for you young ones, I would leave one word of Counſel this day. Get Principles of Grace implanted in your hearts betime. For the days are coming in which the World will be no place of pleaſure for profane and carnal perſons. As ſerious Piety hath been hiſſed at and ridicul'd in theſe late debauched times, ſo will profaneneſs in future times. *Holineſs to the Lord ſhall be upon the bells of the Horſes*, Zech. 14. 20. that is, *Husbandmen* ſhall have their Hearts in Heaven, whilſt their Hands are on the Plow. *Merchants* and *Seamen* ſhall drive a trade for Heaven, as well as Earth, *Iſa.* 23. 18. *Iſa.* 60. 5. If you be profane and ungodly, you ſhall at once be the contempt of Heaven and Earth.

(5.) Laſtly, Bleſs God for thoſe Inſtruments by which you are brought out of Spiritual *Egypt* to the borders of *Canaan*.

You muſt not aſcribe more to Inſtruments than is due to them, nor lean and depend too much on them. Many benumb their own Arms, by leaning on them. But on the other ſide, beware of Ingratitude to the Inſtruments by which God works out your deliverances, and conveys to you ſuch excellent Mercies. Some know no other way of expreſſing their Joy but by drunken Healths and *Huzza*'s, a Sacrifice ſutable enough to *Bacchus*, but ſuch as God abhors, and his Vicegerent will not thank you for. There are other ways of expreſſing your joy in the Mercy, which will be highly acceptable both to God, and the King, *viz.*

(1.) Pray for your Rulers, that God would make Kings to be Nurſing Fathers, and Queens Nurſing Mothers to the Church, according to that promiſe, *Iſa.* 49. 23. That he would preſerve and ſecure the heart of the King by his Wiſdom and Fear from thoſe dangerous Temptations and Snares that ſurround the Throne: *That he may be juſt, ruling in the fear of God, and ſo be as the light of the morning when the Sun riſeth, even a morning* *without clouds; as the tender graſs ſpringing out of the earth, by clear ſhining after rain*, 2 Sam. 23, 3, 4. That the Zeal of God may inflame his Soul, and that he may be a ſecond *Hezekiah* in reſtoring and reforming the Worſhip of God: That God would lengthen the days of his life upon the Throne, for the peace and proſperity of his Church. In this you will anſwer the great things God hath done for you and his Church at this time.

(2.) Be Loyal, Peaceable and Obedient Subjects. Convince the World that Religion breeds the beſt Subjects. *Render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's, and to God the things that are God's*, Mark 12. 17. Where you enjoy Protection, you owe Allegiance. Be not *Murmurers*, as the ungrateful *Iſraelites* were, 1 *Cor.* 10. 10. Underſtand and value the Mercies you enjoy under the Government, and bleſs God for them; leſt he teach you by ſad Experience the difference betwixt his ſervice, and the ſervice of the Kingdoms of the Countries, as he did them, 2 *Chron.* 12. 8. Beware you exchange not the Golden Yoke of *Chriſt* for the Iron Yoke of *Antichriſt*.

(3.) Take heed to order your Converſations aright, let not your irreligious lives make the ſolemn Religious Duties of this day to bluſh. *Whoſo offereth praiſe, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his converſation aright, will I ſhew the ſalvation of God*, Pſal. 50. ult. And thus your preſent Mercies, how great and glorious ſoever they be in themſelves, ſhall be but as the dawning Light of a much more Glorious Day ſpringing up upon theſe Nations, and all the Churches of Chriſt after ſo long and gloomy a night of Afflictions and Sorrows; which the Father of Mercies grant for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

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**FINIS.**

# DIVINE CONDUCT:
## OR, THE
# Myſtery of Providence,
## Opened in a TREATISE
## Upon PSAL. LVII. ii.

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## To the Right Honourable *William*, Duke of *Bedford*, Lord *Ruſſel* of *Thornehaugh*, and Knight of the Moſt Noble Order of the *Garter*.

*My* LORD,

IT was a weighty and ſavoury Speech, which a Pious Pen once ſaved from your Lordſhip's Lips, *viz.* That *You accounted the Prayers of God's Miniſters and People, the beſt Walls about your Houſe.* He that ſo accounts, doubtleſs underſtands, that Prayer engageth Providence, *Iſa.* 45. 11. And Providence ſo engaged, is the ſureſt Munition, *Job* 1. 10.

Mr. *Iſaac Ambroſe* Epiſt. to his *Ultima.*

Many great Men encloſe their Dwellings with an high Wall, but the Foundation (as the Wiſeſt of Men obſerves) is laid in their own Conceits, *Prov.* 18. 11. Yea, in Sin, and crying Sin too, *Hab.* 2. 12. Of ſuch Walls we may ſay, as the *Oracle* to *Phocas*, ἐὰν ὑψοῖς τὰ τείχη ἕως οὐρανοῦ, ἔνδον τὸ κακόν. If the Building emulate the Skies, yet Sin being in the Bottom, all will totter.

'Tis a fond Vanity, to think of enſuring a Deſtiny that can controul the Stars, and endure the aſſaults of Fortune, (as they love to ſpeak) whilſt Providence is not engaged for them, no not ſo much as by a bare acknowledgment.

*My Lord*, It is not the vaſt Bulk of an Eſtate, nor the beſt humane Security in the World, but the vigilant Care of Divine Providence, that guards both It, and its Owners from the ſtroke of Ruine. 'Tis the fear of God within us, and the Providence of God round about us, which make the firm and ſolid Baſis of all ſanctified and durable Proſperity. It is beyond all Debate, that there is a Providence of God always enfolding thoſe in Everlaſting Arms, that bear his Image. The Impreſs of that Image upon you, and the Embraces of thoſe Arms about you, will advance you higher, and ſecure you better, than your Noble Birth or Eſtate could ever do.

*My Lord*, Providence hath molded you, *è meliori luto*, made you both the Off-ſpring and Head of an Illuſtrious Family, Planted you in a rich and pleaſant Soyl, cauſed many Noble Branches to Spring from you, drawn your Life even unto Old Age, through the Delights and Honours of this World. And now that you have tried all thoſe Things that make the faireſt Pretenſions to Happineſs: What have you found in all theſe painted Beauties, and falſe glozing Excellencies which have ſucceſſively courted you? Which of them all can you pronounce Self-deſirable? Which can you call *objectum par amori*? What is it to have the Fleſh indulged, Senſe gratified, Fancy tickled? What have you found in Meats and Drinks, in Stately Houſes and Pleaſant Gardens; in Gold and Silver, in Honour and Applauſe to match the Appetite of your Nobler Soul? Surely *(My Lord)* to turn from them all with a generous Diſdain, as one that knows where to find better Entertainment; is much more *Noble*, than wholly to immerſe, and loſe our Spirits in thoſe ſenſual Fruitions, as many do, alas, too many in our Days!

We are fallen into the dregs of Time; *Senſuality* runs every where into *Atheiſm*. *Providentia peperit divitias, ſed filia devoravit matrem.* The Largeſſes of Providence have ſo blinded, and perfectly ſtupified the Minds of ſome, that they neither own a Providence, nor a God who do σαρκοποιεῖν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὅλον, καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ταῖς τοῦ σώματος ἡδοναῖς κατασυβωτεῖν, as *Plutarch* both Wittily and Judiciouſly reply'd upon *Colotes* the *Epicurean*.

But bleſſed be God, there is a ſincere part, both of the *Nobles* and *Commons* of *England*, which this Gangrene hath not yet touched, and I hope, never ſhall.

*My Lord*, It is both your Honour and Intereſt to be ὅλως τοῦ κρείττονος, the entire and devoted Servant of Providence. It was once the wiſh of a good Man, *optarem id me eſſe Deo, quod eſt mihi manus mea.* This is the moſt Noble and Divine Life that can be, to live and Act in this World upon Eternal Deſigns. To look upon our ſelves and what we have, as things devoted to God; not to be content that Providence ſhould ſerve it ſelf of us, (for ſo it doth even of thoſe things which underſtand nothing of it) but to Study wherein we may ſerve Providence, and be inſtrumental in its Hand for the good of many; this is to be truly Honourable; *Quo magis quis Deo vivit, eo evadit nobilior, clarior, divinior.*

How much God hath honoured you in this Reſpect, the World will underſtand better, when your Lordſhip ſhall be gathered to your Fathers, and ſleep in the Duſt, then he that praiſeth, cannot be ſuſpected of Flattery; nor he that is praiſed, be moved with Vain-glory: But the Approbation of God, is infinitely better than the moſt glorious Name among Men, before, or after Death.

And as it is moſt *honourable* to *ſerve*, ſo you will find it moſt comfortable to *obſerve* the Ways of God in his Providence: To compoſe our ſelves to think of the *Conduct of Providence* through all the *Stages* of Life we have hitherto paſſed. To note the reſults of its profound Wiſdom, the Effects of its tender Care, the diſtinguiſhing Fruits of its ſpecial Bounty: To mark how Providences have gone along ſtep by ſtep with the Promiſes, and both with us till they have now brought us near to our Everlaſting Reſt, Oh! how delectable! how tranſporting are ſuch Meditations as theſe!

*My Lord*, It is the Deſign of this *Manual*, to aſſert the *Being* and *Efficacy* of Providence againſt the *Atheiſm* of the Times; and to diſplay the Wiſdom and Care of the Providence of God in all the Concerns of that People who are really his. 'Tis probable, if your Lordſhip will ſtoop to ſuch a Vulgar Compoſure, ſomewhat may occur of a grateful reliſh to your pious Mind. I confeſs, It is not accommodated, either in Exactneſs of Method, or Elegancy of Style, to gratifie the Curious; nor yet is it deſtitute of what may pleaſe and profit the truly gracious.

Should I here recite the Pleaſures and advantages reſulting from an humble and heedful eyeing of the Methods of Providence, it would look more like a *Book* in an *Epiſtle*, than an *Epiſtle* in a *Book*. One taſte of ſpiritual Senſe will ſatisfie you better, than all the accurate Deſcriptions and high *Encomiums* that the moſt Elegant Pen can beſtow upon it.

*My Lord*, It is not that Eminent Station that ſome Perſons retain (in Civil reſpects) above the Vulgar, that will Enable them to Penetrate the Myſteries, and Reliſh the Sweetneſs of Providence better than others; (for doubtleſs many that live immediately upon Providence for daily Bread, do thereby gain a nearer Acquaintance with it, than thoſe, whoſe outward enjoyments flow to them in a more Plentiful and Stated courſe) but thoſe that Excel in grace and experience, thoſe that walk and converſe with God in all his Diſpenſations towards them; theſe are the Perſons who are moſt fully and immediately capable of theſe high pleaſures of the Chriſtian Life. The daily flow and increaſe whereof in your Lordſhips Noble Perſon and Family, is the hearty Deſire of

From my Study
at *Dartmouth*,
*Aug.* 10. 1677.

*Your Lordſhip's moſt*
*Humble Servant*,
**JOHN FLAVELL.**

# To the Ingenuous READERS, thoſe eſpecially who are the Heedful *Obſervers* of the Ways of PROVIDENCE.

Reader,

THERE *are two ways whereby the bleſſed God condeſcends to manifeſt himſelf to Men,* His Word, *and his* Works. *Of the written Word we muſt ſay, No words like theſe were ever written ſince the beginning of Time, which can (as one ſpeaks) take life and root in the Soul, yea, doth it as really as the ſeed doth in the ground: and are fitted to be engraffed and naturalized there, ſo as no coalition in nature can be more real than this,* James 1.21. *This is the moſt tranſcendant and glorious* medium *of manifeſtation*; God hath magnified his word above all his name, *Pſal.* 138. 2.

*However, the manifeſtations of God by his Works, whether of* Creation *or* Providence *have their value, and glory: but the prime glory and excellency of his* Providential works *conſiſts in this, that they are the very fulfillings and real accompliſhments of his written word. By a wiſe and heedful attendance hereunto, we might learn that excellent Art, which is (not unfitly called by ſome* Scientia architectonica, *an Art to clear the Myſterious occurrences of Providence, by reducing them to the written word, and* there *lodge them as* Effects *in their proper* Cauſes. *And doubtleſs, this is one of the rareſt eſſays Men could purſue againſt* Atheiſm, *to ſhew, not only how Providences concurr in a moſt obvious tendency to confirm this great Concluſion,* Thy word is Truth; *but how it ſometimes extorts alſo the confeſſion of a* God, *and the truth of his* Word, *from thoſe very tongues which have boldly denyed it.* Æſchyles *the* Perſian *relating their diſcomfiture by the* Grecian *Army, makes this notable obſervation, “When the* Grecian *Forces hotly purſued us, (ſaith he) and we muſt needs venture over the great Water* Strymon, *then frozen, but beginning to thaw, when a hundred to one we had all dyed for it, with mine eyes I then ſaw many of thoſe* Gallants *whom I had heard before ſo boldly maintain,* there was no God, *every one upon their knees, with eyes and hands lifted up, begging hard for help and mercy, and entreating that the Ice might hold till they got over. Many thouſand ſeals hath Providence forced the very Enemies of God to ſet to his Truth, which greatly tends to our confirmation therein; but eſpecially, to ſee how the* Word *and* Providences *of God do enlighten each other; and how the Scriptures contain all thoſe Events, both great and ſmall, which are diſpoſed by Providence in their ſeaſons: And how not only the Promiſes of the Word, are in the general faithfully fulfilled to the Church in all her Exigences and Diſtreſſes; but in particular to every member of it; they being all furniſhed by Providence*

*Æſchilu in Trag*

*with multitudes of Experiences to this uſe and end. O how uſeful are ſuch obſervations!*

*And as the profit and uſe, ſo the delight and pleaſure reſulting from the obſervations of providence, is exceeding great. It will doubtleſs be a part of our entertainment in* Heaven, *to view with tranſporting delight, how the deſigns and methods were laid to bring us thither: and what will be a part of our bleſſedneſs in* Heaven, *may well be allowed to have a prime ingrediency into our* Heaven *upon Earth. To ſearch for pleaſure among the due Obſervations of Providence, is to ſearch for Water in the Ocean: for Providence doth not only, ultimately deſign to bring you to Heaven, but (as intermediate thereunto) to bring (by this means) much of Heaven into your ſouls in the way thither.*

*How great a pleaſure is it to diſcern how the moſt wiſe God is providentially ſteering all to the Port of his own Praiſe, and his peoples Happineſs, whilſt the whole world is buſily employed in managing the Sails, and tugging at the Oars, with a quite oppoſite deſign and purpoſe? To ſee how they* promote *his deſign by* oppoſing *it, and* fulfil *his Will by* reſiſting *it,* enlarge *his Church by* ſcattering *it, and make their reſt to come the more ſweet to their ſouls, by making their condition ſo reſtleſs in the world. This is pleaſant to obſerve in general: But to record and note its particular deſigns upon our ſelves; with what profound wiſdom, infinite tenderneſs, and inceſſant vigilancy it hath managed all that concerns us from firſt to laſt, is raviſhing and tranſporting.*

*O what an Hiſtory might we compile of our own Experiences, whilſt with a melting heart we trace the footſteps of Providence all along the way it hath led us to this day; and ſet our Remarques upon its more eminent performances for us in the ſeveral Stages of our Life!*

*Here it* prevented, *and there it* delivered: *Here it* directed, *and there it* corrected. *In this it* grieved, *and in that it* relieved. *Here was the* Poiſon, *and there the* Antidote. *This Providence* raiſed *a diſmal Cloud, and that* diſpelled *it again. This* ſtraitned, *and that* enlarged. *Here a* want, *and there a* ſupply. *This Relation* withered, *and that* ſpringing *up in its room. Words cannot expreſs the high delights and gratifications, a gracious heart may find in ſuch employment as this.*

*O what a world of rarities are to be found in Providence! The blind heedleſs world makes nothing of them: they cannot find* one ſweet bit, *where a gracious ſoul would make* a rich feaſt. Plutarch *relates very exactly, how* Timoleon *was miraculouſly delivered from the conſpiracy of two Murderers, by their meeting in the very nick of time a certain perſon, who to revenge the death of his Father, killed one of them, juſt as they were ready to give* Timoleon *the fatal blow, though he knew nothing of the buſineſs, and ſo* Timoleon *eſcaped the danger. And what did this wonderful work of Providence think you, yield the Relater? Why, though he was one of the moſt learned and ingenious among the* Heathen Sages; *yet all he made of it, was only this,* The Spectators *(ſaith he)* wondered greatly at the Artifice and contrivance which Fortune uſes. *This is all he could ſee in it. Had a ſpiritual and wiſe Chriſtian had the* diſſecting *and* Anatomizing *of ſuch a work of Providence, what glory would it have yielded to God! What comfort and encouragement to the Soul! The* Bee *makes a ſweeter meal upon one ſingle flower, than the Ox doth upon the whole Meadow, where thouſands of them grow.*

*O Reader, if thy heart be ſpiritual and well ſtock'd with experience, if thou haſt recorded the ways of Providence towards thee, and wilt but allow thy ſelf time to reflect upon them; what a life of pleaſure maiſt thou live! What an Heaven upon Earth doth this way lead thee into! I will not here tell thee, what I have met in this Path, leſt it ſhould ſeem to ſavour of too much Vanity;* non eſt religio ubi omnia patent. *There are ſome Delights and Enjoyments in the Chriſtian Life, which are and muſt be encloſed. But Try it thy ſelf, Taſte and See, and thou wilt need no other inducement; thine own Experience will be the moſt powerful Oratory to perſwade thee to the ſtudy and ſearch of Providence.*

*Hiſtories are uſually read with Delight: when once the fancy is catcht, a man knows not how to diſengage himſelf from it. I am greatly miſtaken, if the Hiſtory of our own Lives, if it were well drawn up, and deſtinctly peruſed, would not be the pleaſanteſt Hiſtory that ever we read in our Lives.*

*The enſuing Treatiſe is an Eſſay to that purpoſe, in which thou wilt find ſome remarques ſet upon Providence, in its paſſage through the ſeveral Stages of our life. But Reader, thou only art able to compile the Hiſtory of Providence for thy ſelf, becauſe the* memorials *that furniſh it, are only in thine own hands. However, here thou maiſt find a pattern, and general Rules to direct thee in that great and difficult work, which is the very end, and deſign of this* Manual.

*I have not had much regard to the dreſs, and ornament in which this Diſcourſe is to go abroad, for I am debtor both to the ſtrong and weak, the wiſe and fooliſh: and in all my obſervation I have not found, that ever God hath made much uſe of laboured periods, Rhetorical flowers, and Elegancies to improve the power of Religion in the world: Yea, I have obſerved, how Providence hath ſometimes rebuked good men, when upon other Subjects they have too much affected thoſe pedantick fooleries in withdrawing from them its uſual aids, and expoſing them to ſhame; and much more may it do ſo, when it ſelf is the Subject.*

*Reader, if thy ſtomach be nice and ſqueaſie, and nothing will reliſh with thee, but what is ſpruce and elegant, there are ſtore of ſuch compoſures in the World, upon which thou maieſt even ſurfeit thy curious fancy: mean time there will be found ſome that will bleſs God for what thou deſpiſeſt, and make many a ſweet Meal upon what thou loatheſt.*

*I will add no more, but my hearty prayers that Providence will direct this Treatiſe to ſuch hands, in ſuch ſeaſons, and ſo bleſs and proſper its deſign, that God may have glory, thou maiſt have benefit, and my ſelf comfort in the ſucceſs thereof, who am*

Thine and the Churches Servant, in
the Hand of Providence,

JOHN FLAVEL.

# PSAL. LVII. ii.

## *I will cry unto God moſt high, unto God that performeth all things for me.*

THE Greatneſs of God is a glorious, and unſearchable Myſtery. *The Lord moſt high is terrible; he is a great King over all the Earth*, Pſal 47. 2. The condeſcenſion of the moſt high God to Men is alſo a profound Myſtery. *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he reſpect unto the lowly*, Pſal. 138. 6. But when both theſe meet together (as they do in this Scripture) they make up a matchleſs Myſtery. Here we find the moſt High God performing all things for a poor diſtreſſed Creature.

It is the great ſupport and ſolace of the Saints in all the diſtreſſes that befall them here, that there is a Wiſe Spirit ſitting in all the wheels of motion, and governing the moſt excentrical Creatures and their moſt pernicious Deſigns to Bleſſed and Happy Iſſues. And indeed it were not worth while to live in a World κενῶ Θεȣ̃ ϗ̀ προνοίας, devoid of God and Providence.

How deeply we are concerned in this matter, will appear by that great Inſtance, which this *Pſalm* preſents us with.

It was compoſed (as the Title notes) by *David* Prayer-Wiſe, when he hid himſelf from *Saul* in the *Cave*: And is inſcribed with a double Title, *Altaſchith Michtam of David. Altaſchith* refers to the *ſcope, and Michtam* to the Dignity of the Subject matter.

The former ſignifies *deſtroy not*, or let there be no ſlaughter, and may either refer to *Saul*, concerning whom he gave charge to his Servants not to deſtroy him; or rather, it hath reference to God, to whom in this great exigence he poured out his Soul in this Pathetical Ejaculation, *Altaſchith* deſtroy not.

The latter Title *Michtam* ſignifies a Golden Ornament, and ſo is ſuited to the choice and excellent matter of the *Pſalm*, which much more deſerves ſuch a Title, than *Pythagoras* his Golden Verſes did.

**Altaſchith** *ne perdas, ſcil. vel* 1. **Saulem**; *repreſſit enim ſuos* **David** *qui incitabant ipſum ut* **Saulem** *perderet. Vel.* 2. *me ô Deus.* **Geirus in loc. Michtam** *ornamentum aureum vel aureolum carmen à* כתם *(i. e.) aurum optimum; quia Pſalmus hic precioſus eſt inſtar auri.* **Burgenſis.**

Three things are remarkable in the former part of the *Pſalm, Viz.* (1) His extream danger. (2) His earneſt addreſs to God in that extremity. (3) The Arguments he pleads with God in that Addreſs.

1. His extream danger, expreſſed both in the Title, and body of the *Pſalm*. The Title tells us, this *Pſalm* was compoſed by him when he hid himſelf from *Saul* in the *Cave*. This Cave was in the Wilderneſs of *Engedi* among the broken Rocks where the wild Goats inhabited, an obſcure and deſolate hole; yet even thither the Envy of *Saul* purſued him, 1 *Sam.* 24. 1, 2. And now he that had been ſo long hunted as a Partridge upon the Mountains, ſeems to be encloſed in the Net; for the place was begirt with his Enemies, and having in this place no out-let another way, and *Saul* himſelf entring into the mouth of this Cave, in the ſides and creeks whereof he and his Men lay hid, and ſaw him; judge to how great an extremity, and to what a deſperate ſtate things where now brought: Well might he ſay, as it is ver. 4. *My ſoul is among Lyons, and I lie even among them that are ſet on fire.* What hope now remained? What but immediate Deſtruction could be expected?

*Cùm autem locum in quo latebat cinctum eſſe ab exercitu Saulis videret, nec jam ullum effugium pateret, quod antea ſemper in ſimilibus periculis fecerat: nunc quoque ad deum confugit.* Molerus in loc.

2. Yet this frights him not out of his Faith and Duty, but betwixt the Jaws of Death he prays, and earneſtly addreſſes himſelf to God for Mercy, *v.* 1. *Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful unto me.* This excellent *Pſalm* was *compoſed* by him, when there was enough to *diſcompoſe* the beſt Man in the World. The Repetition notes both the extremity of the danger, and the ardency of the Supplicant. Mercy! Mercy! Nothing but Mercy, and that exerting it ſelf in an extraordinary way, can now ſave him from Ruine.

3. The Arguments he pleads for obtaining Mercy in this diſtreſs, are very conſiderable.

(1.) He pleads his reliance upon God as an Argument to move Mercy. *Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my Soul truſteth in thee; yea in the ſhadow of thy Wings will I make my refuge, until theſe Calamities be overpaſt*, ver. 1. This his Truſt and Dependance on God, though it be not Argumentative in Reſpect of the Dignity of the *Act*; yet it is ſo in Reſpect, both of the Nature of the *Object*, a compaſſionate God, who will not expoſe any that take ſhelter under his Wings; and in reſpect of the *Promiſe*, whereby Protection is aſſured to them that fly to him for Sanctuary, *Iſa.* 26. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſteth in thee.* Thus he encourages himſelf from the Conſideration of that God to whom he betakes himſelf.

(2.) He pleads former experiences of his help in paſt diſtreſſes, as an Argument encouraging hope under the preſent ſtrait, *ver.* 2. *I will cry unto God moſt high, unto God that performeth all things for me.*

In which Words I ſhall conſider Two Things.

1. The Duty reſolved upon.
2. The Encouragment to that Reſolution.

1. The Duty reſolved upon; *I will cry unto God.* Crying unto God, is an expreſſion that doth not only denote *Prayer*, but *intenſe* and *fervent* Prayer.

To *cry*, is to Pray in a Holy Paſſion; and ſuch are uſually ſpeeding Prayers, *Pſalm.* 18. 6. and *Heb.* 5. 7.

2. The Encouragements to this Reſolution, and theſe are Twofold.

1. Objective, taken from the Soveraignty of God.

2. Subjective, taken from the Experience he had of his *Providence.*

1. The Soveraignty of God, *I will cry unto God moſt High.* Upon this he Acts his Faith in Extremity of danger. *Saul* is high, but God the moſt high; and without his Permiſſion, he is aſſured *Saul* cannot touch him. He had none

to help; and if he had, he knew God muſt firſt help the helpers, or they cannot help him. He had no means of Defence or eſcape before him, but the Moſt High is not limited by means. This is a ſingular Prop to Faith, *Pſalm* 59. 9.

2. The Experience of his *Providence* hitherto: *Unto God that performeth all Things for me.*

גמר rfecit, fecit, ſiit, gnin. Buxtorf.

The word which we Tranſlate [*performeth*] comes from a root, that ſignifies both to *perfect*, and to *deſiſt* or *ceaſe*. For when a buſineſs is performed and perfected, the Agent then ceaſes and deſiſts from working: He puts to the laſt hand, when he finiſhes the Work. To ſuch an happy Iſſue the Lord hath brought all his doubtful and difficult Matters before; and this gives him Encouragement, that he will ſtill be gracious, and perfect that which concerneth him now, as he ſpeaks, Pſal. 138. 8. *The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.*

The *Septuagint* renders it by τὸν ἐυεργετήσοντά με who *profiteth*, or *benefiteth* me. And it is a certain Truth, that all the Reſults and Iſſues of Providence are profitable and beneficial to the Saints. But the Supplement in our Tranſlation well receives the importance of the place, *Who performeth all things*. And it involves the moſt ſtrict and proper notion of *Providence*, which is nothing elſe but the performance of God's gracious purpoſes, and promiſes to his People. And therefore *Vatablus* and *Muis* ſupply and fill up the room which the conciſeneſs of the Original leaves, with *quæ promiſit*, I will cry unto God moſt high, unto God that performeth *the Things which he hath promiſed.* Payment is the performance of Promiſes. Grace makes the Promiſe, and Providence the payment.

*Piſcator* fills it with *benignitatem & miſericordiam ſuam*, unto God that performeth *his Kindneſs and Mercy.* But ſtill it ſuppoſes the Mercy performed, to be contained in the Promiſe. Mercy is ſweet in the Promiſe, and much more ſo in the *Providential Performance* of it to us.

*Caſtalio*'s Supplement comes nearer to ours, *rerum mearum Tranſactorem*, I will cry unto God moſt High, unto God *the Tranſactor of my Affairs.*

But our *Engliſh*, making out the ſenſe by an univerſal particle, is moſt fully agreeable to the ſcope of the Text. For it cannot but be a great Encouragement to his Faith, that God had tranſacted *all things*, or performed *all things* for him; this *Providence* that never failed him in any of the ſtraits that ever he met with (and his Life was a Life of many ſtraits) he might well hope it would not now fail him, tho' this were an extraordinary and matchleſs one.

Bring we then our thoughts a little cloſer to this Scripture, and it will give us a fair and lovely proſpect of *Providence.*

In its 1. *Univerſal.* 2. *Effectual.* 3. *Beneficial.* 4. *Encouraging* Influence upon the Affairs and Concerns of the Saints.

1. The expreſſion imports the *Univerſal* Intereſt and Influence of *Providence* in and upon all the Concerns and Intereſts of the Saints. It hath not only its hand in this or that, but *in all* that concerns them. It hath its Eye upon every thing that relates to them throughout their Lives, from firſt to laſt. Not only great, and more important, but the moſt Minute and ordinary affairs of our Lives are tranſacted and managed by it. It touches all things that touch us, whether more nearly or remotely.

2. It diſplaies the *Efficacy* of *Providential Influences.* *Providence* doth not only undertake, but [performeth] and perfects what concerns us. It goes through with its deſigns, and accompliſhes what it begins. No difficulty ſo clogs it, no croſs accident falls in its way, but it carries its deſign through it. Its motions are irreſiſtible and uncontrollable, he *performs* it for us.

3. And (which is ſweet to conſider) all its Products and Iſſues are exceeding *beneficial* to the Saints. It performs all things [for them.] 'Tis true we often prejudge its works, and unjuſtly cenſure its deſigns, and under many of our ſtraits and troubles we ſay, *all theſe things are againſt us:* But indeed *Providence* neither doth, nor can do any thing that is really againſt the true Intereſt and good of the Saints. For what are the Works of *Providence*, but the Execution of God's Decree, and the fulfilling of his Word? And there can be no more in Providenee, than is in them. Now there is nothing but *good* to the *Saints* in God's *Purpoſes* and *Promiſes*; and therefore, whatever *Providence* doth in their Concernments, it muſt be (as the Text ſpeaks) *the Performance of all things for them.*

4. And if ſo, how chearing, *ſupporting, and encouraging* muſt the Conſideration of theſe things be in a Day of diſtreſs and trouble? What Life and Hope will it inſpire our Hearts and Prayers withal, when great preſſures lie upon us? It had ſuch a chearing Influence upon the *Pſalmiſt* at this time, when the State of his Affairs was to the eye of Senſe and Reaſon forlorn, and deſperate: There was now but a hairs breadth (as we ſay) betwixt him and ruin.

A potent, enraged, and implacable Enemy had driven him into the hole of a Rock, and was come after him into that hole, yet now whilſt *his Soul is among Lions*, whilſt he lies in a cranny of the *Rock*, expecting every moment to be drawn out to Death, the Reflections he had upon the gracious Performances of the Moſt High for him, from the beginning to that moment, ſupport his Soul and inſpire hope and Life into his Prayers, *I will cry unto God Moſt High, unto God that Performeth all things for me.*

The amount of all you have in this Doctrinal Concluſion.

Doct. *That it is the Duty of the Saints, eſpecially in Times of Straits, to Reflect upon the Performances of Providence for them in all the States, and through all the Stages of their Lives.*

The Church in all the Works of Mercy, owns the *hand of God*, Iſa. 26. 12. *Lord thou haſt wrought all our Works in* (or for) *us.* And ſtill it hath been the Pious, and conſtant Practice of the Saints in all Generations, to preſerve the Memory of the more Famous, and remarkable *Providences* that have befallen them in their times, as a precious Treaſure. *If thou be a Chriſtian indeed, I know thou haſt, if not in thy Book, yet certainly in thy Heart a great many precious Favours upon Record; the very remembrance and rehearſal of them is ſweet: How much more ſweet was the actual enjoyment?* Baxters Saints Reſt, p. 768. Thus *Moſes* by Divine Direction wrote a Memorial of that Victory obtained over *Amalek* as the fruit and return of Prayer, and built there an *Altar* with this Inſcription *Jehovah Niſſi, The Lord my Banner,* Exod. 17. 14, 15.

Thus *Mordecai* and *Heſter* took all care to perpetuate the Memory of that ſignal Deliverance from the Plot of *Haman*, by ordaining the Feaſt of *Purim*, as an *Anniverſary throughout every Generation, every Family, every Province, and every City, that theſe days of Purim ſhould not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them periſh from their Seed*, Eſth. 9. 28. For this end you find *Pſalms* indited, to bring to remembrance, *Pſal.* 70. the Title. Parents giving ſuitable Names to their Children, that every time they looked upon them, they might refreſh the memory of Gods Mercies, 1 *Sam.* 1. 20. The very places where eminent Providences have appeared, new named, upon no other deſign, but to perpetuate the Memorial of thoſe ſweet Providences which ſo refreſhed them there: Thence *Bethel* took its name, *Gen.* 28. 19. And that Well of Water where *Hagar* was ſeaſonably refreſhed by the Angel in her diſtreſs, *Beer-la-hai-roi*, the Well of him that liveth and looketh on me, *Gen.* 16. 14. Yea, the Saints have given, and God hath aſſumed to himſelf new Titles upon this very ſcore and account; *Abraham*'s *Jehovah jireh*, and *Gideon*'s *Jehovah ſhallum* were aſcribed to him upon this reaſon. And ſometimes you find the Lord ſtiles himſelf, The God that brought *Abraham* from *Ur* of the *Chaldees:* Then the Lord God that brought them out of *Egypt:* Then the Lord that gathered them out of the North Country: Still minding them of the gracious Providences which in all thoſe places he had wrought for them.

Now there is a twofold Reflection upon the *Providential Works of God.*

1. One entire and full, in the whole Complex and perfect frame thereof. This bleſſed ſight is reſerved for the perfect ſtate. It is in that Mount of God, where we ſhall ſee both the *Wilderneſs* and *Canaan:* The glorious Kingdom into which we are come, and the way through which we were led into it. There the Saints ſhall have a Raviſhing view of that Beautiful Frame, and every part ſhall be diſtinctly diſcerned, as it had its particular uſe, and as it was connected with the other parts, and how effectually and orderly they all wrought to bring about that bleſſed deſign of their Salvation, according to the Promiſe, *Rom.* 8. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God*, &c. For it is certain no Ship at Sea keeps more exactly by the Compaſs which directs its courſe, than *Providence* doth by that *Promiſe*, which is its *Cynoſura* and *Pole-ſtar*.

**When the Records of Eternity ſhall be expoſed to view, all the counſels and reſults of that profound wiſdom looked into; how will it tranſport when it ſhall be diſcerned! Lo, thus were the deſigns laid: Here were the apt junctures and admirable dependencies of things, which when acted upon the ſtage of Time, ſeem'd ſo perplext and intricate,** ***Howe's Bleſſedneſs*, p. 76.**

2. The other partial and imperfect in the way to Glory, where we only view it in its ſingle Acts, or at moſt, in ſome Branches and more obſervable courſe of Actions.

Betwixt theſe two is the ſame difference, as betwixt the ſight of the disjointed Wheels and ſcattered Pins of a Watch, and the ſight of the whole united in one Frame, and working in one orderly Motion: Or betwixt an ignorant Spectators viewing ſome more obſervable veſſel or joint of a diſſected Body; and the accurate *Anatomiſt*'s diſcerning the courſe of all the veins and arteries of the Body, as he follows the ſeveral Branches of them through the whole, and plainly ſees the proper Places, Figure, and uſe of each, with their mutual reſpect to one another.

O how Raviſhing and Delectable a ſight is that! to behold at one view the whole deſign of Providence, and the proper Place, and uſe of every ſingle Act, which we could not underſtand in this World: For what Chriſt ſaid to *Peter*, *John* 13. 7. is as applicable to ſome Providences in which we are now concerned, as it was to that particular Action; *What I do thou knoweſt not now, but hereafter thou ſhalt know it.* All the dark intricate puzzling Providences at which we were ſometimes ſo ſtumbled, and ſometimes amazed, which we could neither reconcile with the Promiſe, nor with each other; nay, which we ſo unjuſtly cenſured and bitterly bewailed, as if they had fallen out quite croſs to our happineſs: We ſhall then ſee to be unto us, as the difficult Paſſage through the Wilderneſs was unto *Iſrael*, *The right way to a City of Habitation*, Pſal. 107. 7.

And yet tho' our preſent Views and Reflections upon Providence be ſo ſhort and imperfect in compariſon of that in Heaven, yet ſuch as it is under all its preſent diſadvantages, it hath ſo much excellency and ſweetneſs in it, that I may call it a little Heaven, or as *Jacob* called his *Bethel*, *the Gate of Heaven.* 'Tis certainly an High-way of walking with God in this World, and as ſweet Communion may a Soul enjoy with him in his *Providences*, as in any of his *Ordinances*. How often have the Hearts of its obſervers been melted into Tears of Joy, at the beholding of its wiſe and unexpected Productions! How often hath it convinced them, upon, a ſober Recollection of the Events of their Lives, that if the Lord had left them to their own Counſels, they had as often been their own Tormentors, if not Executioners? Into what, and how many fatal miſchiefs had they precipitated themſelves, if Providence had been as ſhort ſighted as they? They have given it their hearty thanks, for conſidering their *Intereſt* more than their *Importunity*, and not ſuffering them to periſh by their own deſires.

**_Luther_ bold to preſcri to God, but at ſaid,** ***R haud d hanc ſap entiam D minus, dixit, D ſum, un ſequax.***

The Benefits of adverting the Works of Providence are manifold and unſpeakable; as in its place we ſhall ſhew you. But not to entangle the thread of the Diſcourſe, I ſhall caſt it into this Method.

*Firſt*, I ſhall prove, that the Concernments of the Saints in this World, are certainly conducted by the Wiſdom and care of ſpecial Providence.

*Secondly*, I will ſhew you, in what particular Concernments of theirs this Providential Care is evidently diſcovered.

*Thirdly*, That it is the Duty of Saints to advert, and heedfully obſerve theſe Performances of Providence for them in all their Concernments.

*Fourthly*, In what manner this Duty is to be performed by them.

*Fifthly*, What ſingular Benefits reſult to them from ſuch Obſervations.

And then apply the whole in ſuch Uſes, as offer themſelves from the Point.

### *The Firſt General Head.*

*Firſt*, I ſhall undertake the Proof and Defence of this great Truth, *That the Affairs of the Saints in this World are certainly conducted by the Wiſdom and Care of ſpecial Providence.*

And herein I addreſs my ſelf with chearfulneſs, to perform (as I am able) a ſervice for that Providence, which hath throughout my Life performed all things for me as the Text ſpeaks.

There is a twofold Conſideration of Providence according to its twofold Object, and Manner of Diſpenſation; the one is *general*, exercifed about all Creatures, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate; the other *ſpecial* and peculiar. Chriſt hath an univerſal Empire over all things, *Epheſ.* 1. 22. The Head of the whole World, by way of *Dominion*; but an Head to the Church, by way of *union* and *ſpecial influence*, Joh. 17. 2. *The Saviour of all Men, but eſpecially of them that believe*, 1 Tim. 4. 10. The Church is his *ſpecial* care and charge; he rules the World for its good, as an Head conſulting the welfare of the Body.

*Heathens* generally denied Providence, and no wonder, ſince they denied a God: For the ſame Arguments that prove one, will prove the other. *Ariſtotle* the Prince of *Heathen Philoſophers*, could not by the utmoſt ſearch of Reaſon, find out the Worlds Original, and therefore concludes, it was from Eternity. The *Epicureans* did in a ſort acknowledge a God but yet denied a Providence, and wholly excluded him from any Intereſt or Concern in the Affairs of the World, as being inconſiſtent with the Felicity and Tranquility of the Divine Being to be diverted and cumbered with the Care and Labour of Government. This aſſertion is ſo repugnant to Reaſon, that it is a wonder themſelves bluſht not at its abſurdity; but I gueſs at the deſign, and one of them ſpeaks it out in broad Language. *Itaque impoſuiſtis cervicibus noſtris ſempiternum dominum, quem dies & noctes timeremus. Quis enim non timeat omnia providentem, & cogitantem, & animadvertentem, & omnia ad ſe pertinere putantem, curioſum & plenum negotii Deum? Vell. apud Cicer. de Natura Deorum.* They foreſaw, that the Conceſſion of a Providence, would impoſe an Eternal Yoke upon their Necks, by making them accountable for all they did to an higher Tribunal: And that they muſt neceſſarily paſs the time of their ſojourning here in fear, whilſt all their *Thoughts*, *Words*, and *Ways* were ſtrictly Noted and Recorded, in order to an account by an All ſeeing and righteous God: And therefore laboured to perſwade themſelves that was not, which they had no mind ſhould be. But theſe Atheiſtical and fooliſh Conceits fall flat before the undeniable Evidence of this ſo great and clear a Truth. Now,

My Buſineſs here, is not ſo much to deal with profeſſed *Atheiſts*, who deny the Exiſtence of God; and conſequently deride all Evidences brought from Scripture, of the extraordinary Events, that fall out in favour of that People that are called His: But rather to convince thoſe, that profeſſedly own all this; yet never having taſted Religion by Experience, ſuſpect at leaſt, that all theſe things which we call *ſpecial Providences* to the Saints, are but *natural Events*, or meer *contingencies*: And thus whilſt they profeſs to own a God, and a Providence, (which Profeſſion is but the effect of their Education) they do in the mean Time live like *Atheiſts*; and both think and Act, as if there were no ſuch things: And really I doubt, this is the Caſe of the far greateſt part of the Men of this Generation.

But if it were indeed ſo, that the Affairs of the World in general, and more eſpecially thoſe of the Saints, were not conducted by Divine Providence, but (as they would perſwade us) by the ſteady courſe of natural Cauſes: Beſide which, if at any time we obſerve any event to fall out, it's meerly caſual and contingent, or that which proceeds from ſome hidden and ſecret cauſe in Nature: If this indeed were ſo, let them that are tempted to believe it, rationally ſatisfie the following demands.

### *Firſt Demand.*

How comes it to paſs that ſo many ſignal Mercies and Deliverances have befallen the People of God, above the Power, and againſt the Courſe of natural Cauſes: To make way for which, there hath been a ſenſible ſuſpenſion and ſtop put to the courſe of Nature? It is moſt evident, that no natural Effect can exceed the Power of its natural Cauſe. Nothing can give to another, more than it hath in it ſelf: And it is as clear, that whatſoever Acts naturally, Acts neceſſarily: Fire burns *ad ultimum ſui poſſe*, to the uttermoſt of its Power: Waters overflow, and drown all that they can. Lions and other rapacious and cruel Beaſts, eſpecially when hungry, Tear and Devour their Prey: And for *Arbitrary* and rational Agents, they alſo Act according to the Principles and Laws of their Natures. A wicked Man when his Heart is fully ſet in him and his will ſtands in a full bent of Reſolution, will certainly (if he have Power in his Hand, and opportunity to execute his conceived Miſchief) give it vent, and perpetrate the wicked Devices of his Heart: For having once conceived Miſchief, and *travailing in Pain with it* (according to the Courſe of Nature) he muſt *bring it forth*, as it is *Pſalm* 7. 14. But if any of theſe Inanimate, Brutal, or Rational Agents, when there is no Natural obſtacle or *remora*, have their Power ſuſpended, and that when the effect is near the Birth, and the deſign at the very Article of Execution, ſo that though they would yet cannot hurt; to what think you is this to be aſſigned and referred? Yet ſo it hath often been ſeen, were God's intereſt hath been immediately concerned in the danger and evil of the Event. The Sea divided it ſelf in its own Channel, and made a Wall of Water, on each ſide, to give Gods diſtreſſed *Iſrael* a ſafe paſſage, and that not in a calm, but when the Waves thereof roared; * as it is *Iſa.* 51. 15. The Fire when blown up to the moſt intenſe and vehement Flame, had no Power to ſinge one hair of Gods faithful Witneſſes, when at the ſame inſtant it had Power to deſtroy their intended *Executioners* at a greater diſtance, *Dan.* 3. 22. Yea, we find it hath ſome time been ſufficient to conſume, but not to torment the Body; as in that known inſtance of bleſſed *Bayneham*, who told his Enemies, the Flames were to him as a Bed of Roſes. The hungry Lions put off their natural fierceneſs, and became gentle and harmleſs, when *Daniel* was caſt among them for a prey. The like Account the Church Story gives us of *Polycarp*, and *Dionyſius Areopagita*,

* How hard was *Porphyry* put to it, when inſtead of a better this pretence muſt ſerve the turn, That *Moſes* taking the advantage of a low water unknown to the *Egyptians*, paſſed over the People thereat: As if *Moſes* a ſtranger, were better acquainted there, than the *Egyptian* Natives. *Acts and Mon.* Vol. 1. p. 55.

whom the Fire would not touch, but ſtood after the manner of a Ship-man's Sail filled with the Wind about them.

Are theſe things according to the Courſe and Law of Nature? To what ſecret natural Cauſe can they be aſcribed? In like manner, we find the vileſt and fierceſt of wicked Men, have been with-held by an inviſible hand of reſtraint from injuring the Lord's People. By what ſecret cauſe in Nature was *Jeroboam*'s hand dried up, and made inflexible at the ſame inſtant it was ſtretched out againſt the Man of God? 1 *Kings* 13. 4. No wild Beaſts rend and devour their Prey more greedily, than Wicked Men would deſtroy the People of God that dwell among them, were it not for this Providential reſtraint upon them. So the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſes his caſe in the words following my Text, *My Soul is among Lyons, and I lye among them that are ſet on fire.* The *Diſciples* were ſent forth as Sheep into the midſt of *Wolves*, *Mat.* 10. 16. It will not avail in this caſe to object, Thoſe miraculous Events depend only upon Scripture Teſtimony, which the *Atheiſt* is not concluded by: for beſide all that may be alledged for the Authority of that Teſtimony (which is needleſs to produce to Men that own it) what is it leſs that every eye ſees, or may ſee at this day? Do we not behold a weak defenceleſs handful of men, wonderfully, and (except this way) unaccountably preſerved from ruine in the midſt of potent, enraged and turbulent enemies, that fain would, but cannot deſtroy them; when as yet, no natural Impediment can be aſſigned why they cannot?

And if this poſe us, what ſhall we ſay, when we ſee events produced in the world for the good of God's choſen, by thoſe very hands and means which were intentionally imployed for their ruine? Theſe things are as much beſide the Intentions of their enemies, as they are above their own expectations; yet ſuch things are no rarities in the world. Was not the Envy of *Joſeph*'s Brethren, the curſed Plot of *Haman*, the Decree procured by the envy of the *Princes* againſt *Daniel*, with many more of the like nature, all turned by a ſecret and ſtrange hand of Providence, to their greater advancement and benefit? their Enemies lifted them up to all that honour and preferment they had.

### *Second Demand.*

*How is it* (if the Saints Concerns are not ordered by a ſpecial Divine Providence) *that natural cauſes unite and aſſociate themſelves for their relief and benefit in ſo ſtrange a manner as they are found to do?* It is undeniably evident that there are marvellous Coincidencies of Providence, confederating and agreeing as it were, to meet and unite themſelves to bring about the good of God's Choſen. There is a like face of things ſhewing it ſelf in divers places at that time, when any Work for the good of the Church is come upon the ſtage of the world. As when the *Meſſiah* the capital Mercy came to the *Temple*, then *Simeon* and *Anna* were brought thither by Providence, as Witneſſes to it. So in Reformation-work, when the Images were pulled down in *Holland*, one and the ſame Spirit of Zeal poſſeſſed them in every *City* and *Town*, that the work was done in a night. He that heedfully reads the *Hiſtory* of *Joſeph*'s advancement to be the Lord of *Egypt*, may number in that ſtory twelve remarkable acts or ſteps of Providence, by which he aſcended to that honour and authority: if but one of them had failed, in all likelyhood the Event had done ſo too: but every one fell in its order, exactly keeping its own time and place. So in the Churches deliverance from the Plot of *Haman*, we find no leſs than ſeven acts of Providence concurring ſtrangely to produce it, as if they had all met by appointment and conſent, to break that ſnare for them: one thing ſo aptly ſuiting with, and making way for another, that every heedful Obſerver muſt needs conclude, this cannot be the effect of *caſualty*, but wiſe *counſel*. Even as in viewing the accurate ſtructure of the body of a man, the figure, poſition, and mutual reſpects of the ſeveral members and veſſels, hath convinced ſome, (and is ſufficient to convince all) that it was the effect of divine Wiſdom and Power: in like manner, if the admirable adaptation of the means and inſtruments employed for mercy to the People of God be heedfully conſidered, who can but confeſs, that as there are tools of all ſorts and ſizes in the ſhop of Providence: ſo there is a moſt skilful hand that uſes them, and that they could no more produce ſuch effects of themſelves, than the Ax, Saw, or Chiſel can cut or carve a rude Log into a beautiful Figure, without the hand of a skilful Artificer.

We find by manifold Inſtances, that there certainly are ſtrong combinations, and prediſpoſitions of perſons and things, to bring about ſome iſſue and deſign for the benefit of the Church, which themſelves never thought of: they hold no Intelligence, communicate not their counſels to each other, yet meet together, and work together as if they did: which is, as if ten men ſhould all meet together at one place, and in one hour, about one and the ſame buſineſs, and that without any fore-appointment betwixt themſelves; can any queſtion, but ſuch a meeting of means and inſtruments is certainly, though ſecretly over-ruled by ſome Wiſe inviſible Agent?

### *Third Demand.*

If the Concerns of God's People be not governed by ſpecial Providence, *Whence is it, that the moſt apt and powerful means imployed to deſtroy them are rendered ineffectual, and weak contemptible means imployed for their defence and comfort, crowned with ſucceſs?* This could never be, if things were wholly ſwayed by the courſe of Nature. If we judge by that rule, we muſt conclude, the more apt and powerful the means are, the more ſucceſsful and proſperous they muſt needs be; and where they are inept, weak and contemptible, nothing can be expected from them: thus Reaſon lays it according to the rules of Nature; but Providence croſſes its hands, as *Jacob* did in bleſſing the Sons of *Joſeph*, and orders quite contrary iſſues and events. Such was the mighty power and deep policy uſed by *Pharaoh* to deſtroy God's *Iſrael*, that to the eye of Reaſon, it was as impoſſible to ſurvive it, as for crackling thorns to abide unconſumed amidſt devouring flames; by which Emblem, their miraculous preſervation is expreſt, *Exod.* 3. 2. the buſh was all in a flame, but no conſumption of it. The Heathen *Roman* Emperors, who made the World tremble, and ſubdu'd the Nations under them, have employ'd all their power and policy againſt the poor, naked, defenceleſs Church, to ruin it; yet could not accompliſh it, *Rev.* 12. 3, 4. O the Seas of blood that *Heathen Rome* ſhed in the ten perſecutions! yet the Church lives, and when the Dragon gave his power to the Beaſt, *Rev.* 13. 2. (*i.e.*) the State of *Rome* became Anti-Chriſtian, O what ſlaughters have been made by the Beaſt in all his dominions; ſo that the Holy Ghoſt repreſents him as drunken with the blood of the Saints, *Rev.* 17. 6. And yet all will not do: the gates, (*i. e.*) the powers and policies of Hell cannot prevail againſt it. How manifeſt is the care and power of Providence herein? Had half that power been employ'd againſt any other people, it had certainly ſwallow'd them up immediately, or in the hundredth part of the time worn them out. How ſoon was the *Perſian* Monarchy ſwallowed up by the *Grecian*, and that again by the *Roman*? *Diocleſian* and *Maximin* in the height of their perſecution found themſelves ſo baffl'd by Providence, that they both reſign'd the Government, and liv'd as private men. But in this wonderful preſervation God makes good that promiſe, Jer. 30. 11. *Though I make a full end of all Nations, yet will I not make a full end of Thee:* and that in Iſa. 54. 17. *No weapon form'd againſt thee ſhall proſper.*

*Acts and Mon* Vol. 3. p. 974.

On the contrary, how ſucceſsful have weak and contemptible means been made for the good of the Church? Thus in the firſt planting of Chriſtianity in the world, by what weak and improbable inſtruments was it done? Chriſt did not chuſe the eloquent *Orators*, or men of Authority in the Courts of *Kings* and *Emperors*, but twelve poor *Mechanicks*, and Fiſhermen; and theſe not ſent together in a troop, but ſome to take one Country to conquer it, and ſome another: the moſt ridiculous courſe (in appearance) for ſuch a deſign as could be imagin'd; and yet in how ſhort a time was the Goſpel ſpread, and the Churches planted by them in the ſeveral Kingdoms of the World? This the *Pſalmiſt* foreſaw by the Spirit of Prophecy, when he ſaid, *Out of the mouth of Babes and Sucklings haſt thou ordained ſtrength, to ſtill the Enemy and the Avenger*, Pſal. 8. 2. At the ſound of Rams horns *Jericho* is deliver'd into the hands of *Iſrael*: ſee *Joſh.* 6. 20. By three hundred men with their Pitchers and Lamps, the huge hoſt of *Midian* is diſcomfited, *Judges* 6. 19. The *Proteſtants* beſieg'd in *Beziers* in *France* are deliver'd by a drunken *Drummer*, who going to his Quarters at Midnight, rang the Alarm-Bell of the Town, not knowing what he did; and juſt then were their Enemies making their aſſault. And as weak and improbable means have been bleſſed with ſucceſs to the Church in general, ſo to the preſervation of its particular members alſo. A Spider by weaving her web over the mouth of an Oven ſhall hide a ſervant of Chriſt, *Du Moulin*, from his Enemies, who took refuge there in that bloody *Pariſian* Maſſacre. A Hen ſhall ſuſtain another many days at the ſame time, by lodging her egg every day, in the place where he had hid himſelf from the Cut-throats. Examples might be eaſily multiply'd in the caſe; but the truth is too plain and obvious to the obſervation of all ages to need them. And can we but acknowledge a divine and ſpecial Providence over-ruling theſe matters, when we ſee the moſt apt and potent means for the Churches ruin fruſtrated, and the moſt ſilly and contemptible means ſucceeded and proſper'd for its good?

### *Fourth Demand.*

If all things be govern'd by the courſe of nature, and force of natural cauſes, *How then comes it to paſs, that men are turned (like a bowl by a rub) out of the way of evil, unto which they were driving on with full ſpeed?* Good men have been engag'd in the way to their own ruin, and knew it not; but Providence hath met them in the way, and preſerv'd them by ſtrange diverſions, the meaning of which they underſtood not, till the Event diſcover'd it. *Paul* lay bound at *Cæſarea*, the *High Prieſt* and chief of the *Jews* requeſt *Feſtus*, that he might be brought bound to *Jeruſalem*, having laid wait in the way to kill him: but *Feſtus* (tho' ignorant of the plot) utterly refuſes it, but chuſes rather to go with them to *Cæſarea*, and judge him there: by this rub, their bloody deſign is fruſtrated, *Acts* 25. 3, 4.

*Poſſidonius* in the life of *Auguſtine*, tells us, that the good Father going to teach the People of a certain Town, took a Guide with him, to ſhew him the way; the Guide miſtook the uſual road, and ignorantly fell into a by-path, by which means he eſcap'd ruin by the hands of the bloody *Donatiſts*, who knowing his intention, way-laid him to kill him in the road.

*Poſſid. in vit. Aug. cap.* 15.

And as memorable and wonderful are thoſe rubs and diverſions wicked men have met with in the way of perpetrating the evils conceiv'd and intended in their own hearts. *Laban* and *Eſau* came againſt *Jacob* with miſchievous purpoſes; but no ſooner are they come nigh him, but the ſhackles of reſtraint are immediately clapt upon them both, ſo that their hands cannot perform their enterprizes. *Balaam* runs greedily for reward to curſe *Iſrael*; but meets with an unexpected check at his very out-ſet, and though that ſtopt him not, but he eſſay'd every way to do them miſchief, yet he ſtill finds himſelf fetter'd by an effectual bond of reſtraint, that he can no way ſhake off, *Numb.* 22. 25, 38. *Saul* the High-Prieſt's Blood-hound, breaths out threatnings againſt the Church, and goes with a bloody commiſſion towards *Damaſcus*, to hale the poor flock of Chriſt to the ſlaughter; but when he comes nigh the place, he meets an unexpected ſtop in the way, by which the miſchief is not only diverted, but himſelf converted to Chriſt, *Acts* 9. 1, 2, 3, 4. Who can but ſee the finger of God in theſe things?

*Gen.* 31. 24.

### *Fifth Demand.*

If there be not an over-ruling Providence ordering all things for the good of God's People; *How comes it to paſs, that the good and evil which is done to them in this World, is accordingly repaid into the Boſoms of them that are inſtrumental therein?*

1. How clear is it to every Man's Obſervation, that the Kindneſſes and Benefits any have done to the Lord's People, have been rewarded with full meaſure into their Boſoms? The *Egyptian Midwives* refuſ'd to obey *Pharaoh's* inhumane command, and ſav'd the Male Children of *Iſrael*: for this the Lord dealt well with them, and built them Houſes, *Exod.* 1. 21. The *Shunamite* was hoſpitable, and careful for *Eliſha*, and God recompenc'd it with the deſirable enjoyment of a Son, 2 *Kings* 4. 9, 17. *Rahab* hid the Spies, and was exempted from the common Deſtruction for it, *Heb.* 11. 31. *Publius*, the chief Man of the Iſland *Melita*, courteouſly receiv'd and lodg'd *Paul* after his Shipwrack: The Lord ſpeedily repaid him for that kindneſs, and heal'd his Father, who lay ſick at that time of a Bloody Flux and Fever, *Acts* 28. 7, 8.

*Si ab exordio mundi, ad noſtram uſque memoriam percurramus hiſtorias, inſignia divinæ ultionis in peccatores occurrent indicia.* Alſtedii Nat. Theol. p. 195.

In like manner, we find the Evils done to God's People have been repaid by a juſt Retribution to their Enemies.

*Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* were cruel Enemies to God's *Iſrael*, and deſign'd the ruin of their poor Innocent Babes; and God repaid it, in ſmiting all the firſt-born of *Egypt* in one night, *Exod.* 12. 19.

*Haman* erected a *Gallows* fifty Cubits high for Good *Mordecai*, and God ſo order'd it, that himſelf and his ten Sons were hang'd on it. And indeed it was but meet, that he ſhould eat the fruit of that tree which himſelf had planted, *Eſther* 7: 10.

*Achitophel* plots againſt *David*, and gives counſel like an *Oracle*, how to procure his fall; and that very counſel, like a ſurcharg'd Gun, recoils upon himſelf, and procures his ruin: for ſeeing his good counſel rejected (good politically, not morally) it was now eaſie for him, to gueſs at the iſſue, and ſo at his own fate, 2 *Sam.* 17. 23.

*Charles* the *Ninth*, moſt inhumanely made the very Canals of *Paris* to ſtream with Proteſtant blood, and ſoon after he dy'd miſerably, his blood ſtreaming from all parts of his body.

*Stephen Gardiner*, that burnt ſo many of Gods dear ſervants to aſhes, was himſelf ſo ſcorch'd up by a terrible inflammation, that his very tongue was black and hung out of his mouth, and in dreadful torments ended his wretched days.

*Maximinus* that cruel *Emperor*, who ſet forth his *Proclamation* engraven in Braſs, for the utter aboliſhing of the Chriſtian Religion, was ſpeedily ſmitten like *Herod*, with a dreadful judgment, ſwarms of Lice preying upon his Entrails, and cauſing ſuch a ſtench, that his Phyſicians could not endure to come nigh him, and for refuſing it were ſlain. Hundreds of like Inſtances might eaſily be produc'd, to confirm this Obſervation. And who can but ſee by theſe things, that *verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth.*

Yea, ſo exact have been the *retributions* of Providence to the Enemies of the Church, that not only the ſame perſons, but the ſame members that have been the *inſtruments* of *miſchief*, have been made the *ſubjects* of *wrath*.

*Euſeb. l.* 7. *cap.* 29.

The ſame *Arm* which *Jeroboam* ſtretch'd out to ſmite the Prophet, God ſmites. The Emperor *Aurelian* when he was ready to ſubſcribe the *Edict* for the perſecution of the *Chriſtians*, was ſuddenly crampt in his knuckles, that he could not write.

M. *Greenhil* in his Expoſition upon *Ezek.* 11. 13. tells his Auditory, that there was one then preſent in the Congregation, who was an eye-witneſs of a Woman ſcoffing at another for purity and holy walking, who had her tongue ſtricken immediately with the Palſie, and dy'd thereof within two days.

*Henry* the Second of *France* in a great rage againſt a *Proteſtant Counſellor*, committed him to the hands of one of his Nobles to be impriſon'd, and that with theſe words, that *he would ſee him burnt with his own Eyes*: but mark the righteous Providence of God, within a few days after, the ſame Nobleman, with a Lance put into his hands by the King, did at a *Tilting Match*, run the ſaid King into one of his Eyes, whereof he dy'd.

Yea, Providence hath made the very place of ſinning, the place of puniſhment, 1 *Kings* 21. 19. *In the place where Dogs lick'd the blood of* Naboth, *ſhall Dogs lick thy blood*: and it was exactly fulfill'd, 2 *Kings* 9. 26. Thus *Tophet* is made a burying for the Jews, till there was no room to bury; and that was the place where they had offer'd up their Sons to *Moloch*, *Jer.* 7. 31, 32. The Story of *Nightingale* is generally known which Mr. *Fox* relates, how he fell out of the Pulpit and brake his neck, whilſt he was abuſing that Scripture, 1 *John* 1. 10.

And thus the Scriptures are made good by Providence, whoſo diggeth a Pit ſhall fall therein, and he that rolleth a ſtone, it ſhall return upon him, *Prov.* 26. 27. and *Matth.* 7. 2. with what meaſure you mete, it ſhall be meaſur'd to you again.

If any ſhall yet ſay, *Theſe things may fall out caſually; That many thouſands of the Church's Enemies have dy'd in peace, and their end been like other Men.* Object.

We anſwer with *Auguſtine*, If no Sin were puniſh'd here, no Providence would be believ'd; and if every Sin ſhould be puniſhed here, no Judgment would be expected. But, that none may think theſe Events to be merely caſual and accidental, we yet further demand; Solut.

### *Sixth Demand.*

If theſe things be meerly caſual, *How is it that they ſquare and agree ſo exactly with the Scriptures in all particulars?*

We read, Amos 3. 3. *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* If two Men travel in one road, it's like they are agreed to go to the ſame place. Providences and Scriptures go all one way: and if they ſeem at any time to go divers or contrary ways; be ſure, they will meet at the journeys end. There is an agreement betwixt them ſo to do.

Doth God miraculouſly ſuſpend the power of natural Cauſes, as in the *firſt demand* was open'd? Why, this is no accidental thing, but what harmonizeth with the word, *Iſa.* 43. 2. *When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee. When thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.*

Do natural Cauſes unite and aſſociate themſelves for the good of God's people? Why, this is no more than what is contain'd in the Promiſes,

miſes, and is but the fulfilling of that Scripture, 1 Cor. 3. 22. *All is yours, for ye are Chriſts*; (*i. e.*) the uſe, benefit and ſervice of all the Creatures is for you, as your need ſhall require.

Are the moſt apt and powerful means employ'd for their ruin fruſtrated? Who can but ſee the Scriptures fulfill'd in, and expounded by ſuch Providences? See *Iſa.* 45. 15, 16, 17. and 8. 8, 9, 10. expounded by 2 *Kings* 18. 17. *& ſeq.*

See you at any time a rub of Providence diverting the courſe of good men from falling into evil, or wicked men from committing evil; how loudly do ſuch Providences proclaim the truth and certainty of the Scriptures, which tell us, *That the way of man is not in himſelf, neither is it in him that walks to direct his ſteps*, Jer. 10. 23. and that in Prov. 16. 9. *A mans heart deviſeth his way, but the Lord directeth his ſteps.*

Do you ſee adequate retributions made to thoſe that injure or befriend the people of God? Why, when you ſee all the kindneſs and love they have ſhown the Saints return'd with an overplus into their boſoms? how is it poſſible, but you muſt ſee the accompliſhment of theſe Scriptures in ſuch Providences? Iſa. 32. 8. 2 Cor. 9. 6. *The liberal ſoul deviſeth liberal things, and by liberal things he ſhall ſtand.*

And when you ſee the evils men have done, or intended to do to the Lord's people, recoiling upon themſelves; he is perfectly blind, that ſees not the harmony ſuch Providences bear with theſe Scriptures, *Pſal.* 140. 11, 12. *Pſal.* 7. 14, 15, 16. *Pſal.* 9. 16.

O what exact proportions do Providences and Scriptures hold! little do Men take notice of it. Why did *Cyrus*, contrary to all rules of State Policy, freely diſmiſs the Captives, but to fulfil that Scripture, *Iſa.* 45. 13. So that it was well obſerv'd by one, That as God hath ſtretch'd out the *Expanſum* or Firmament over the natural; ſo he hath ſtretch'd out his Word over the rational World. And as the Creatures on Earth are influenc'd by thoſe Heavenly Bodies, ſo are all Creatures in the World influenc'd by the Word, and do infallibly fulfil it, when they deſign to croſs it.

### *Seventh Demand.*

If theſe things be contingent, *How is it that they fall out in ſuch remarkable nicks and junctures of time, which makes them ſo greatly obſervable to all that conſider them.*

We find a multitude of Providences ſo tim'd to a minute, that had they faln out never ſo little ſooner or later, they had ſignify'd but little what now they do. Certainly, it cannot be caſually, but counſel, that ſo exactly nicks the opportunity. Contingencies keep to no rules.

*Contingen- tia rerum ſtimanda è cauſis oximis, cundis & rticula- bus, non cauſa pri- a, & u- verſali, ſpectu cu- s nihil ntingens* *eſt, ſed omnia neceſſaria, neceſſitate immutabilitatis non cauſæ.* Wendelin Theol. p. 13.

How remarkable to this purpoſe, was the tidings brought to *Saul*, that the *Philiſtines* had invaded the land? 1 *Sam.* 23. 27. juſt as he was ready to graſp the Prey. The Angel calls to *Abraham*, and ſhews him another Sacrifice, juſt when his hand was giving the fatal ſtroke to *Iſaac*, *Gen.* 22. 10, 11. A Well of Water is diſcover'd to *Hagar*, juſt when ſhe had left the Child, as not able to ſee its death, *Gen.* 21. 16, 19. *Rabſhakeh* meets with a blaſting Providence, hears a rumour that fruſtrated his Deſign, juſt when ready to give the ſhock againſt *Jeruſalem*, *Iſa.* 27. 7, 8. So when *Haman*'s Plot againſt the *Jews* was ripe, and all things ready for Execution; *On that night could not the King ſleep*, Eſth. 6. 1. When the horns are ready to gore *Judah*, immediately Carpenters are prepar'd to fray them away, *Zech.* 1. 18, 19, 20, 21. How remarkable was the Relief of *Rochel*, by a *Shoal* of *Fiſh* that came into the Harbour, when they were ready to periſh with Famine, ſuch as they never obſerv'd before, nor after that time. Mr. *Dod* could not go to Bed one night, but had a ſtrong impulſe to viſit, (though unſeaſonably) a Neighbour Gentleman, and juſt as he came, he meets him at his door, with an Halter in his Pocket, juſt going to hang himſelf. Dr. *Tate* and his Wife in the *Iriſh Rebellion*, flying through the Woods with a Sucking-Child, which was juſt ready to expire; the Mother going to reſt it upon a Rock, puts her hand upon a Bottle of warm Milk, by which it was preſerv'd. A good Woman (from whoſe Mouth I receiv'd it) being driven to a great Extremity, all ſupplies failing, was exceedingly plung'd into unbelieving doubts and fears, not ſeeing whence ſupplies ſhould come; when lo! in the nick of time, turning ſome things in a Cheſt, unexpectedly lights upon a piece of Gold, which ſupply'd her preſent wants, till God open'd another Door of ſupply. If theſe things fall out caſually, how is it, they obſerve the very nick of time ſo exactly? As that it is become Proverbial in Scripture, *Gen.* 22. 14. *In the Mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen.*

### *Eighth Demand.*

Laſtly, *Were theſe things caſual and contingent, how can it be, that they ſhould fall out ſo immediately upon, and conſonantly to the Prayers of the Saints? So that in many Providences, they are able to diſcern a very clear anſwer to their Prayers, and are ſure they have the Petitions they asked of him*, 1 John 5. 15.

Thus when the Sea divided it ſelf, juſt upon *Iſraels* cry to Heaven, *Exod.* 14. 10. When ſo ſignal a Victory is given to *Aſa*, immediately upon that Pathetical cry to Heaven, *Help us O Lord our God*, 2 Chron. 14. 11, 12. When *Abitophel* ſhall go and hang himſelf, juſt upon that Prayer of diſtreſſed *David*, 2 Sam. 15. 31. When *Haman* ſhall fall and his Plot be broken, juſt upon the Faſt kept by *Mordecai* and *Heſter*, Eſth. 4. 16. Our own *Speed*, in his Hiſtory of *Britain*, tells us, that *Richard* I. beſieged a Caſtle with his Army, they offer'd to ſurrender if he would ſave their Lives; he refuſes, and threatens to hang them all; upon this an *Arbalaſter* charg'd his Bow with a ſquare Arrow, making firſt his Prayer to God, that he would direct the ſhot, and deliver the Innocent from Oppreſſion; it ſtruck the King himſelf, whereof he dy'd, and they were deliver'd. *Abraham*'s Servant pray'd for ſucceſs; and ſee how it was anſwer'd, *Gen.* 24. 45. *Peter* was caſt into Priſon, and Prayer was made for him by the Church, and ſee the Event, *Acts* 12. 5, 6, 7, 12. I could eaſily add to theſe, the wonderful Examples of the return of Prayers which was obſerv'd in *Luther*, and Dr. *Winter* in *Ireland*, and many more; but I judge it needleſs, becauſe moſt Chriſtians have a ſtock of Experience of their own, and are well aſſur'd, that many of the Providences that befal them are, and can be no other than the return of their Prayers.

And now who can be diſſatiſfy'd in this Point, that wiſely conſider theſe things? Muſt we not conclude as it is, *Job* 36. 7. *He withdraweth not his eye from the righteous:* And as 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them whoſe heart is perfect towards him.* His Providences proclaim him to be a God hearing Prayers.

### *The Second General Head.*

Having prov'd, That the Concernments of the Saints in this World, are certainly conducted by the Wiſdom and Care of ſpecial Providence; my next Work is to ſhew you, *In what Affairs and Concerns of theirs, the Providence of God doth more eſpecially appear; or what are the moſt remarkable performances of Providence for them in this World.*

And here I am not led directly by my Text, to ſpeak of the moſt internal and ſpiritual Performances of Providence, immediately relating to the Souls of his People; though they all relate to their Souls mediately and eventually; but of the more viſible and external Performances of Providence for them: And it is not to be ſuppos'd, I ſhould touch all theſe neither; they are more than the Sands; but that which I aim at, is to Diſcourſe to you ſome more ſpecial and more obſervable performances of Providence for you. And we ſhall begin at the beginning.

### *The firſt Performance of Providence.*

*Providential Performances in our formation and protection in the womb.*

I. And *Firſt*, Let us conſider, how well Providence hath perform'd the firſt Work that ever it did for us, in our *Formation* and *Protection* in the *Womb*. Certainly this is a very glorious and admirable Performance; it's that the *Pſalmiſt* admires, *Pſalm* 139. 15. *My Subſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made in ſecret, and curiouſly wrought in the lower parts of the Earth.* 'The Womb is ſo call'd upon this account, becauſe as curious Artiſts, when they have ſome choice piece in hand, perfect it in private, and then bring it into the Light for all to gaze at; ſo it was here. And there are two things admirable in this performance of Providence for us.

*Metaphora ab acupictoribus in opere Phrygionico. Omnia operatus eſt dominus in pondere, numero & menſura.*

1. The rare Structure and excellent Compoſition of the Body; *I am wonderfully made*; that word *Ruchampti*—is very full. The Vulgar renders it, *painted as with a Needle*, (*i.e.*) richly embroider'd with Nerves and Veins. O the curious Workmanſhip that is in that one part the Eye! How hath it forc'd ſome to acknowledge a God upon the examination of it! Providence, when it went about this Work, had its model or pattern before it, according to which it molded every part, as it is, *Ver.* 16. *In thy Book were all my members written.* Haſt thou an integral perfection and fulneſs of Members? It is becauſe he wrote them all in his Book, or limned out thy Body, according to that exact model which he drew of thee in his own gracious purpoſe, before thou hadſt a Being: Had an Eye, an Ear, a Hand, a Foot been wanting in the Platform, thou hadſt now been ſadly ſenſible of the defect: This World had been but a Dungeon to thee, without thoſe Windows: Thou hadſt liv'd, as many do, an Object of Pity to others: If thou have low Thoughts of this Mercy, aſk the Blind, the Deaf, the Lame and the Dumb, the value and worth of thoſe Mercies, and they will tell thee. There is a world of coſt beſtow'd upon thy very Body. Thou mightſt have been caſt into another Mould, and created a Worm or a Toad. I remember *Luther* tells us of two Cardinals, riding in great pomp to the Council of *Conſtance*, and by the way they heard a Man in the Fields bitterly weeping and wailing: When they came to him, they found him intently viewing an ugly Toad; and aſking him, why he wept ſo bitterly, he told them, his Heart was melted with this Conſideration, that God had not made him ſuch a loathſom and deform'd Creature; *hoc eſt quod amare fleo*, ſaid he; Whereupon one of them crys out, well ſaid the Father, *Surgunt indocti, & rapient Cœlum*, the unlearned will riſe and take Heaven, and we with all our Learning ſhall be caſt into Hell. No part of the *common Lump* was ſo figur'd and poliſh'd as *Man* is. *Galen* gave *Epicurus* an hundred Years time to imagine a more commodious Situation, Configuration, or Compoſition of any one Member of a Human Body. And if all the *Angels* had ſtudy'd to this day, they could not have caſt the Body of *Man* into a more curious Mould.

*Luther in tertium Præcept.*

There are ſome members that are *radical*, as the Liver, Heart and Brain, in theſe are placed the natural, vital and animal Spirits; theſe Spirits are carried by the Veins, Arteries & Nerves. The Veins carry the natural Spirits from the Liver, the Arteries the vital Spirits from the Heart, the Nerves the animal Spirits from the Brain: Other members are *official*, as the hands and feet: The Superiour doth rule the Inferiour, and the Inferiour ſupport the Superiour. *In wiſdom haſt thou made them all.*

2. And yet all this is but the enamelling of the Caſe, or poliſhing the Caſket wherein the rare Jewel lies. Providence hath not only built the Houſe, but brought the Inhabitant (I mean the Soul) into the poſſeſſion of it. A glorious piece it is, that bears the very Image of God upon it, being all in all, and all in every part. How noble are its Faculties and Affections? How nimble, various and indefatigable are its Motions? How comprehenſive is its Capacity? Its a Companion for *Angels*, nay, capable of Eſpouſals to *Chriſt*, and eternal Communion with God. It's the Wonder of Earth, and the Envy of Hell.

Suppoſe now (and why ſhould you not ſuppoſe, what you ſo frequently behold in the world?) that Providenee had ſo permitted and order'd it, that thy Soul had entred into thy Body with one or two of its Faculties wounded and defective: Suppoſe its *Underſtanding* had been crack'd; what a miſerable life hadſt thou liv'd in this World? neither capable of *ſervice* nor *comfort*. And truly, when I have conſider'd thoſe works of Providence, in bringing into the world in all Countries and Ages ſome ſuch ſpectacles of pity; ſome depriv'd of the uſe of Reaſon, and differing from Beaſts in little more than ſhape and figure; and others, though ſound in their Underſtandings, yet deform'd or defective in their Bodies, monſtrous, miſhapen and loathſom creatures; I can reſolve the deſign of this Providence, into nothing beſide a demonſtration of his Sovereign power; except they be deſign'd as foils, to ſet off the beauty of other rare and exquiſite pieces, and intended to ſtand before your eyes, as Monitors of God's Mercy to you, that your hearts (as oft as you beheld them) might be melted into thankfulneſs for diſtinguiſhing favour to you.

Look then (but not proudly) upon thy outſide and inſide, ſee and admire what Providence hath done for thee, and how well it hath *perform'd* the firſt ſervice that ever it did for thee in this world. And yet, this was not all it did for thee, before thou ſaw'ſt this world. It preſerv'd thee, as well as form'd thee in the womb: elſe thou hadſt been as thoſe *Embryos Job* ſpeaks of, Job 3. 11, 12. *that never ſaw the light. Abortives* go for nothing in the world, and there are multitudes of them, ſome that never had a reaſonable ſoul breath'd into them; but only the rudiments and rough draught of body: theſe come not into the account of men, but periſh as the beaſt doth. Others that die in, or ſhortly after they come out of the womb: and though their life was but for a moment; yet that moment entails an Eternity upon them: and had this been your caſe, as it is the caſe of millions, then (ſuppoſing your ſalvation) yet had you been utterly unſerviceable to God in the world: None had been the better for you, nor you the better for any in the world. You had been utterly uncapable of all that good, which, throughout your life you have either done to others, or receiv'd from others.

And if we conſider the nature of that obſcure life we liv'd in the womb; how ſmall an accident (had it been permitted by Providence) had extinguiſh'd our life, like a Bird in the ſhell? We cannot therefore but admire the tender care of Providence over us, and ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 139. 13. *Thou haſt covered me in my Mother's womb*: and not only ſo, but as it is, Pſal. 22. 9. *Thou art he that took me out of my Mother's womb.* He preſerv'd thee there to the fulneſs of time, and when that time was come, brought thee ſafely through manifold hazards, into that place in the world which he from Eternity eſpy'd for thee. Which leads us to the ſecond Performance.

### *The Second Performance of Providence.*

Providential performances with reſpect to time and place of our Nativity.

II. *The Second great performance of Providence, for the People of God, reſpects the place, and time in which it order'd their Nativity to fall.* And truly, this is no ſmall concernment to every one of us, but of vaſt conſequence, either to our good or evil, tho' it be little minded by moſt men. I am perſuaded, the thoughts of few Chriſtians penetrate deep enough into this Providence, but ſlide too ſlightly and ſuperficially over an Abyſs of much Mercy, rich and manifold mercy wrapt up in this gracious *performance* of Providence for them.

Ah Friends! can you think it an indifferent thing, into what part of the world the womb of Nature had caſt you out? Is there no odds, upon what ſpot of the Creation, or in what Age of the world your lot had fall'n? It may be you have not ſeriouſly bethought your ſelves about this matter. And becauſe this point is ſo ſeldom touch'd, I will therefore dive a little more particularly and diſtinctly into it, and endeavour to warm your affections with a repreſentation of the many and rich benefits you owe to this one *performance* of *Providence* for you.

And we will conſider it under a double reſpect or relation, as it reſpects your preſent comfort in this world, and as it relates to your eternal happineſs in the world to come.

1. This performance of Providence for you doth very much concern your *preſent comfort* in this world. All the rooms in this great houſe are not alike pleaſant and commodious for the Inhabitants of it. You read *Pſal.* 74. 20. of *the dark places of the Earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty*: and many ſuch diſmal places are found in the habitable earth. What a vaſt tract of the world lies as a waſt wilderneſs?

Suppoſe your Mothers had brought you forth in *America* among the *Salvage Indians*, who herd together as brute beaſts; are ſcorch'd with heat, and ſtarv'd with cold; being naked, deſtitute and defenceleſs. How poor, miſerable, and unprovided of earthly comforts and accommodations, are many millions of the Inhabitants of this world? What mercies do you enjoy, in reſpect of the amenity, fertility, temperature and civility of the place of your habitation? What is it but a garden encloſ'd out of a wilderneſs? I may without partiality or vanity ſay, God hath (even upon temporal accounts) provided you with one of the healthfulleſt, pleaſanteſt, and in all reſpects, the beſt furniſh'd room in all the great houſe of this world. Hear what our own *Chronicler* ſaith of it; *It is the fortunate Iſland, the Paradiſe of pleaſure, the Garden of God; whoſe Vallies are like* Eden, *whoſe Hills are as* Lebanon, *whoſe Springs are as* Piſgah, *whoſe Rivers are as* Jordan, *whoſe Wall is the Ocean, and whoſe Defence is the* Lord Jehovah.

*Speed's Chron.*

You are here provided of neceſſary and comfortable accommodations for your bodies, that a great part of the world are unacquainted with. It is not with the pooreſt among us, as it is ſaid to be with the poor *Ruſſians*, whoſe poverty pinches and bites with ſuch ſharp teeth, that their poor cry at the doors, *Give me and cut me, give me and kill me.*

Say not, The barbarous Nations in this excel you: that they poſſeſs the *Mines* of Silver and Gold, which it may be you think enough to ſalve all other inconveniencies of life. Alas poor Creatures! better had it been for them, if their Country had brought forth *Bryers* and *Thorns*, inſtead of *Gold, Silver*, and *precious Stones*; for this hath been the occaſion of ruining all their other comforts in this world: this hath invited their cruel avaritious enemies among them, under whoſe ſervitude they groan, and die without mercy: and thouſands of them have choſen death rather than life, on the terms they enjoy'd it. And why might not your lot have fall'n there as well as where it is? Are not they made of the ſame clay, and endow'd with as good a nature as your ſelves? O what a diſtinction hath divine Mercy made, where Nature made none! Conſider ungrateful man, thou mighteſt have fall'n into ſome of thoſe Regions, where a tainted air frequently cloys the jaws of Death, where the Inhabitants differ very little from the Beaſts in the manner of their living: but God hath provided for thee, and given the pooreſt among us far better accommodations of life, than the greateſt among them are ordinarily provided with. O what hath Providence done for you?

But all that I have ſaid is very inconſiderable, in compariſon with the *ſpiritual mercies*, and advantages you here enjoy for your Souls.

Oh, this is ſuch an advantageous caſt of Providence for you, as obliges you to a thankful acknowledgment of it, to all Eternity. For let us here make but a few ſuppoſitions in the caſe before us, and the glory of Providence will ſhine like a Sun beam full in your faces.

(1.) Suppoſe it had been your Lot to have fall'n in any of thoſe vaſt *Continents* poſſeſs'd by *Pagans* and *Heathens* at this day, who bow down to the ſtock of a Tree, and worſhip the Hoſt of Heaven. This is the caſe of millions, and millions of millions: for *Pagan Idolaters* (as that ſearching Scholar Mr. *Brierwood* informs us) do not only fill the circumference of nine hundred miles in *Europe*, but almoſt the one half of *Africa*, more than the half of *Aſia*, and almoſt the whole of *America*.

*Brierwoods Enquiries*, chap 13. p.118,119

Oh how deplorable had thy caſe been, if a *Pagan Idolatreſs* had brought thee forth, and Idolatry had been ſuck'd in with thy Mother's milk! Then in all probability, thou hadſt been at this day worſhiping *Devils*, and poſting with full ſpeed in the direct road to Damnation: for theſe are the People of God's wrath, Jer. 10. 25. *Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that knew thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy name.* How dreadful is that imprecation againſt them? *Pſal.* 97. 7. which takes hold of them and all that's theirs, *Confounded be all they that ſerve graven Images, that boaſt themſelves of Idols.*

(2.) Or ſuppoſe your Lot had fall'n among *Mahometans*, who next to Pagans ſpread over the greateſt tract of the Earth, for though *Arabia* bred that unclean Bird, yet it was not that Cage, that could long contain him; for, not only the *Arabians*, but the *Perſians, Turks* and *Tartars*, do all bow down their backs under that grand Impoſtor. This poiſon hath diſpers'd itſelf through the veins of *Aſia*, over a great part of *Africk*, even the circumference of ſeven thouſand miles, and ſtops not there, but hath tainted a conſiderable part of *Europe* alſo.

Had your Lot fall'n here, O what unhappy men and women had you been, notwithſtanding the natural amenity and pleaſantneſs of your native ſoil? You had then ador'd a *grand Impoſtor*, and dy'd in a fools *Paradiſe*. Inſtead of God's lively *Oracles*, you had been (as they now are) deceiv'd to your eternal ruine with ſuch fond, mad and wild dreams, as whoſo conſiders, would think, the *Authors* had more need of manacles and fetters, than arguments or ſober anſwers.

(3.) Or if neither of theſe had been your Lot, but you had been empty'd by the womb of Nature into this little ſpot of the Earth which is *Chriſtianiz'd* by profeſſion, but nevertheleſs for the moſt part over-run by *Popiſh Idolatry*, and *Antichriſtian* deluſions; what unhappy men and women had you been, had you ſuck'd a Popiſh breaſt? For this people are to be the ſubjects of the *Vials* of Gods wrath to be poured out ſucceſſively upon them, as you may read *Rev.* 16. and the Scriptures in round and plain language tell us, what their fate muſt be, 2 Theſſ. 2. 11, 12. *And for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lye, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.*

Nay, you might have fall'n into the ſame *Land* in which your habitation now is, and yet have had no advantage by it as to ſalvation, if he that choſe the bounds of your habitations, had not alſo graciouſly determin'd the times for you, *Acts* 17. 26. For,

(4.) Suppoſe your Lot had fall'n where it is during the *Pagan* State of *England*, who for many hundred years were groſs and vile Idolaters. Thick darkneſs overſpread the people of this *Iſland*, and as in other Countries, the *Devil* was worſhipped, and his lying Oracles zealouſly attended upon.

The ſhaking of the top of *Jupiter*'s Oak in *Dodona*, the Caldron ſmitten with the rod in the hand of *Jupiter*'s Image, the *Laurel* and *Fountain* in *Daphne*: theſe were the Ordinances on which the poor deluded wretches waited. So in this Nation they worſhipped Idols alſo: the Sun and Moon were ador'd for Gods, with many other abominable Idols which our Anceſtors worſhipped, and whoſe memorials are not to this day quite obliterated among us.

*Vide Ve*
*ſtegan's*
*Britiſh*
tiquities

(5.) Or ſuppoſe our Lot had fall'n in thoſe later miſerable days, in which Q. *Mary* ſent ſo many hundreds to Heaven in a fiery Chariot, and the poor *Proteſtants* skulk'd up and down in holes and woods, to preſerve them from *Popiſh Inquiſitors*, who like Blood-hounds, hunted up and down through all the Cities, Towns and Villages of the Nation, to ſeek out the poor ſheep of Chriſt for a prey.

But ſuch hath the ſpecial care of Providence towards us been, that our turn to be brought upon the ſtage of this world was graciouſly reſerv'd for better days: ſo that if we had had our own option, we could not have choſen for our ſelves, as Providence hath. We are not only furniſh'd with the beſt room in this great houſe; but before we were put into it, it was ſwept with the beſom of National Reformation, from *Idolatry*, yea, and waſhed by the blood of *Martyrs* from Popiſh filthineſs; and adorn'd with Goſpel-lights, ſhining in as great luſtre in our days, as ever they did ſince the *Apoſtles* days. You might have been born in *England* for many Ages, and not have found a *Chriſtian* in it: yea, and ſince *Chriſtianity* was here own'd, and not have met a *Proteſtant* in it. O what an Obligation hath Providence laid you under, by ſuch a merciful performance as this for you?

*Obj.* If you ſay, *All this indeed is true; but what is this to eternal ſalvation; Do not multitudes that enjoy theſe privileges, eternally periſh notwithſtanding them? yea, and periſh with an aggravation of ſin and miſery beyond other ſinners?*

*Sol.* True, they do ſo; and it is of very ſad conſideration that it ſhould be ſo; but yet we cannot deny this to be a very choice and ſingular mercy, to be born in ſuch a Land, and at ſuch a time. For let us conſider what helps for ſalvation men here enjoy, beyond what they could enjoy, had their Lot fall'n according to the fore mention'd ſuppoſitions.

(1.) Here we enjoy the ordinary means of Salvation, which elſewhere Men are denyed and cut off from. So that if any among the *Heathens* be ſaved and brought to *Chriſt*, it muſt be in ſome miraculous or extraordinary way: for, *How ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how ſhall they hear with-*

*out a Preacher?* Rom. 10. 14. Alas! were there a deſire awakened in any of their hearts after a Goſpel diſcovery of Salvation, (which ordinarily is not, nor can be rationally ſuppoſed) yet, poor Creatures, they might travel from Sea to Sea, to hear the Word, and not find it: Whereas you can hardly miſs the opportunities of hearing the Goſpel: Sermons meet you frequently, ſo that you can ſcarcely ſhun or avoid the Ordinances and Inſtruments of your Salvation. And is this nothing? Chriſt even forces himſelf upon us,

(2.) Here in this Age of the World, the common prejudices againſt Chriſtianity are removed, by the advantage it hath of a publick profeſſion among the People and protection by the Laws of the Country. Whereas, were your habitation among *Jews*, *Mahometans*, or *Heathen Idolaters*, you would find *Chriſt* and *Chriſtianity* the common *odium* of the Country; every one deſying and deriding both name and thing; and ſuch your ſelves likely had been, if your birth and education had been among them. For you may obſerve, that whatever is πατροπαράδοτον traditionally delivered down from Father to Son, every one is fond of, and zealous in its defence. The *Jews*, *Heathens* and *Mahometans* are at this Day ſo Tenacious of their Errors, that with Spitting, Hiſſing, and Clapping of Hands and all other Signs of Indignation and Abhorrence they chaſe away all others from among them.

Mr. Pinke.

Is it not then a ſpecial mercy to you to be caſt into ſuch a Country and Age, where (as a learned Divine obſerves) the true Religion hath the ſame advantages over every falſe one, as in other Countreys they have over it? Here you have the preſence of precious Means, and the abſence of Soul-deſtroying prejudices, two ſignal Mercies.

(3.) Here, in this Age of the World, Chriſtianity beſpeaks you as ſoon as you are capable of any ſenſe, or impreſſions of Religion upon you? and ſo by an happy *Anticipation*, blocks up the paſſages, by which a falſe Religion would elſe certainly enter. Here you ſuck in the firſt notions and principles of Chriſtianity, even with the Mothers Milk: and certainly, ſuch a pre-poſſeſſion is a choice advantage. *Quo ſemel eſt imbuta recens ſervabit odorem Teſta diu. Train up a Child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, Prov. 22. 6.

(4.) Here you have, or may have the help and aſſiſtance of Chriſtians to direct your way, reſolve your doubts, ſupport your burthens, and help you through thoſe difficulties that attend the new birth. Alas! if a poor Soul had any beginnings or faint workings and ſtirrings after Chriſt and true Religion in many other Countries the hand of every man would preſently be againſt him, and none would be found to relieve, aſſiſt or encourage, as you may ſee in that Example of *Galeacius*; the neareſt relations would, in that caſe, prove the greateſt Enemies, the Countrey would quickly hoot at him as a Monſter, and cry Away with the *Heretick* to the Priſon or Stake.

Whether theſe eventually prove bleſſings to your Souls or no, certain I am, that in themſelves they are ſingular mercies, and helps to Salvation, that are deny'd to Millions beſides you. So that if *Plato* when he was near his Death, could bleſs God for three things, *viz.* That he was a Man and not a Beaſt: that he was born in *Greece*; and brought up in the time of *Socrates*: much more cauſe have you to admire Providence, that you are Men, and not Beaſts, that you were born in *England*, and brought up in Goſpel days here. This is a Land the Lord hath *Eſpied* for you, as the expreſſion is, *Ezek.* 20. 6. and concerning it, you have abundant cauſe to ſay, as in another caſe the *Pſalmiſt* doth, Pſal. 16. 6. *The lines are fallen to me in pleaſant places, and I have a goodly heritage.*

### *The Third Performance of Providence.*

Providential performances with reſpect to the Stock and Family out of which we ſprang.

*The next obſervable Performance of Providence, which muſt be heedfully adverted and weighed, is the deſignation of the ſtock and family out of which we ſhould ſpring and riſe.* And truly, this is of ſpecial conſideration, both as to our temporal and eternal good: For whether the Families in which we grew up, were great or ſmall in *Iſrael*; whether our Parents were of a higher or lower *Claſs*, and rank among Men, yet if they were ſuch as feared God and wrought righteouſneſs, if they took any care to Educate you Religiouſly, and trained you up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, you are bound to reckon it among your chief Mercies, that you ſprung from the Loins of ſuch Parents: For from this Spring a double Stream of Mercy riſes to you.

(1.) Temporal and external Mercies to your outward Man. You cannot but know, that as Godlineſs entails a Bleſſing, ſo Wickedneſs and Unrighteouſneſs a Curſe upon Poſterity. An inſtance of the former you have in *Gen.* 17. 18, 20. On the contrary, you have the threatning, *Zech.* 5. 4 and both together, Prov. 3. 33. *The Curſe of the Lord is in the houſe of the wicked, but he Bleſſeth the habitation of the juſt.* True it is, That both theſe imply the Childrens treading in the ſteps of their *Parents*, according to *Ezek.* 18. but how frequently is it ſeen, that wicked Men breed their Children vainly and wickedly; ſo that as it's ſaid of *Abijam*, 1 Kings 15. 3. *He walked in all the ſins of his father, which he had done before him*; and ſo the Curſe is entail'd from generation to generation. To eſcape this Curſe, is a choice Providence.

(2.) But eſpecially take notice, what a Stream of *Spiritual Bleſſings* and Mercies, flows from this Providence to the Inner Man. O it's no common Mercy, to deſcend from Pious Parents: ſome of us do not only owe our natural life to them, as Inſtruments of our Beings, but our Spiritual and Eternal life alſo. It was no ſmall Mercy to *Timothy*, to be deſcended from ſuch Progenitors, 2 *Tim.* 1. 5. nor to *Auguſtine*, that he had ſuch a Mother as *Monica* who planted in his mind the precepts of life with her Words, watered them with her Tears, and nouriſhed them with her Example. We will a little more particularly inſpect this Mercy, and in ſo doing, we ſhall find Manifold Mercies contained in it.

(1.) What a Mercy was it to us, to have Parents that prayed for us before they had us, as well as in our Infancy, when we could not pray for our ſelves? Thus did *Abra-*

*ham*, *Gen.* 15. 2. and *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 10, 11. and ſome here likely are the fruits and returns of their *Parents* Prayers. This was that holy courſe they continued all their days for you, carrying all your concerns, eſpecially your Eternal ones before the Lord with their own; and pouring out their Souls to God ſo affectionately for you, when their Eye-ſtrings and Heart-ſtrings were breaking. Oh put a value upon ſuch Mercies; for they are precious. It's a greater Mercy, to deſcend from praying Parents, than from the loyns of Nobles. See *Job*'s pious practice, *Job* 1. 5.

(2.) What a ſpecial Mercy was it to us, to have the excreſcencies of corruption nipt in the Bud by their pious and careful diſcipline? We now underſtand, what a Critical and Dangerous ſeaſon Youth is, the wonderful proclivity of that Age to every thing that is evil. Why elſe are they called Youthful luſts? 2 *Tim.* 2. 22. When *David* asketh, *Wherewith ſhall a young man cleanſe his way?* it's plainly enough implyed in the very Queſtion, that the way he takes lieth through the pollutions of the World in his Youth, *Pſal.* 119. 9 When you find a *David* praying, that God would *not remember the ſins of his youth*, Pſal. 25 7. and a *Job* bitterly complaining, that God *made him to poſſeſs the ſins of his youth*, Job 13. 26. Sure you cannot but reflect, with a very thankful heart, upon thoſe happy means, by which the corruption of your nature was happily prevented, or reſtrained in your Youth.

(3.) And how great a Mercy was it, that we had Parents, who carefully inſtilled the good Knowledge of God into our Souls in our tender Years? How careful was *Abraham* of this Duty? *Gen.* 18. 19. And *David*? 1 Chron. 28. 9. We have ſome of us had Parents, who might ſay to us, as the *Apoſtle*, Gal. 4. 19. *My little Children, of whom I travail again in Birth till Chriſt be formed in you.* As they longed for us before they had us, and rejoyced in us when they had us; ſo they could not endure to think, that when they could have us no more, the Devil ſhould. As they thought no Pains, Care or Coſt too much for our Bodies to Feed them, Cloath and Heal them; ſo did they think no Prayers, Counſels or Tears, too much for our Souls, that they might be ſaved. They knew a parting Time would come betwixt them and us, and did ſtrive to make it as eaſie and comfortable to them as they could, by leaving us in *Chriſt*, and within the bleſſed Bond of his Covenant.

They were not glad that we had Health, and indifferent whether we had Grace.

They as ſenſibly felt the Miſeries of our Souls as of our Bodies; and nothing was more deſirable to them, than that they might ſay in the great Day, Lord, here am I, and the Children which thou haſt given me.

(4.) And was it not a ſpecial Favour to us, to have *Parents* that went before us as Patterns of Holineſs, and beat the Path to Heaven for us by their Examples? Who could ſay to us, as *Phil.* 4. 9. *What Things ye have heard and ſeen in me, that do*; and as 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *Be ye followers of us, as we are of Chriſt.* The *Parents* Life is the *Child's* Copy. O 'tis no common Mercy, to have a fair Copy ſet before us, eſpecially in the moulding age: We ſaw what they did, as well as heard what they ſaid. It was *Abraham's* Commendation, that he commanded his Children, and his houſehold *after him*, to keep the way of the Lord. And ſuch Mercies ſome of us have had alſo.

Ah my Friends, let me beg you, that you will ſet ſpecial Remarks upon this Providence, which ſo graciouſly wrought for you: And that your Hearts may be more throughly warmed in the Senſe of it, compare your Condition with others, and ſeriouſly bethink your ſelves.

(1.) How many Children there be among us, that are drawn headlong to Hell by their cruel and ungodly Parents, who teach them to curſe and ſwear aſſoon as they can ſpeak? Many Families there are, wherein little other Language is heard, but what is the Dialect of Hell. Theſe, like the old Logs and ſmall ſpray, are preparing for the Fire of Hell, where they muſt burn together. Of ſuch Children, that Scripture, *Pſalm* 49. 19. will one day be verified, except they repent, *They ſhall go to the Generation of their Fathers, where they ſhall not ſee Light.*

(2.) And how many Families are there, though not ſo prophane, who yet breed up their Children vainly and ſenſually, as *Job* 21. 11, &c. take no care what becomes of their Souls, ſo they can but provide for their Bodies? If they can but teach them to carry their Bodies, no matter if the Devil Act their Souls: If they can but leave them Lands or Moneys, they think they have very fully diſcharged their Duties. O what will the Language be, wherewith ſuch Parents and Children ſhall greet each other at the Judgment-Seat, and in Hell for ever?

(3.) And how many be there, who are more *ſober*, and yet hate the leaſt appearances of Godlineſs in their *Children*? Who inſtead of cheriſhing, do all they can to break bruiſed Reeds, and quench ſmoaking Flax, to ſtifle and ſtrangle the firſt appearances, and offers they make towards Chriſt? Who had rather accompany them to their *Graves*, than to *Chriſt*, doing all that in them lies, *Herod* like, to kill *Chriſt* in the *Cradle*? Ah Sirs, ye little know, what a Mercy ye do or have enjoyed in Godly Parents, and what a good Lot Providence caſt for you in this Concernment of your Bodies and Souls.

*Obj.* If any ſhall ſay, *This was not their Caſe, they had little help Heaven-ward from their Parents:* To ſuch I ſhall only Reply three Things.

*Sol.* (1.) If you had little furtherance, yet own it as a ſpecial Providence, that you had no hinderance; or, if you had Oppoſition, yet

(2.) Admire the Grace of God, in plucking you out by a wonderful diſtinguiſhing Hand of Mercy from among them, and keeping alive the languiſhing ſparks of Grace amidſt the floods of oppoſition.

(3.) And learn from hence, if God give you a Poſterity of your own, to be ſo much the more ſtrict and careful of Relational Duties, by how much you have ſenſibly felt the want of it in your ſelves.

But ſeeing ſuch a train of Bleſſings, both as to this life, and that to come, follow upon an holy Education of Children; I will not diſmiſs the Point till I have diſcharged my Duty, in exhorting Parents and Children to their Duties.

And firſt for you that are *Parents*, or to whom the Education of Children is committed, I beſeech you mind, how concerning a Duty lies on you: And that I may effectually preſs it, conſider,

(1.) How near the Relation is betwixt you and your Children, and therefore how much you are concerned in their Happineſs or Miſery. Conſider but the Scripture account of the dearneſs of ſuch Relations, expreſſed, 1. By longings for them, as *Gen.* 15. 2. *Gen.* 30. 1. And, 2. By our joy when we have them, as Chriſt expreſſes it, *John* 16. 21. 3. The high value ſet on them, *Gen.* 42. 38. 4. The ſympathy with them in all their troubles, *Mark* 9. 22. And, 5. By our ſorrow at parting, *Gen.* 37. 35. Now ſhall all this be to no purpoſe? For to what purpoſe do we deſire them before we have them, rejoyce in them when we have them, value them ſo highly, ſympathize with them ſo tenderly, grieve for their Death ſo exceſſively; if in the mean time no care be taken what ſhall become of them to Eternity?

(2.) How God hath charged you with their Souls as well as Bodies: And this appears by two ſorts of Precepts. 1. Precepts directly laid upon you, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7. and *Eph.* 6. 4. 2. By Precepts laid on them to obey you, *Eph.* 6. 1. which plainly implies your Duty, as well as expreſſes theirs.

(3.) What ſhall comfort you at the parting time, if they die through your neglect in a Chriſtleſs condition? Oh this is the cutting Conſideration, My *Child* is in *Hell*, and I did nothing to prevent it; I helped him thither. Duty diſcharged, is the only root of comfort in that day.

(4.) If you neglect to inſtruct them in the way of *Holineſs*, will the Devil neglect to inſtruct them in the way of *Wickedneſs*? No, no, if you will not teach them to *Pray*, he will to *Curſe*, *Swear* and *Lye*. If ground be uncultivated weeds will ſpring.

(5.) If the Seaſon of their Youth be neglected, how little probability is there of any good Fruit afterwards? That is the Moulding Age, *Prov.* 22. 6. How few are converted in Old Age? A twig is brought to any form, but grown limbs will not bow.

(6.) You are inſtrumental Cauſes of all their ſpiritual miſery; and that, 1. By *Generation*: 2. *Imitation*, they lie ſpiritually dead of the Plague which you brought home among them, *Pſalm* 51. 5. *Behold, I was ſhapen in Iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive* ( or warm ) *me*.

(7.) There's none in the World ſo likely as you, to be inſtruments of their Eternal good. You have peculiar advantages that none other hath; as, 1. The intereſt you have in their Affections. 2. Your opportunities to inſtil the knowledge of Chriſt into them, being daily with them, *Deut.* 6. 7. 3. Your knowledge of their Tempers: If therefore you neglect, who ſhall help them?

(8.) The conſideration of the great Day, ſhould move your bowels of pity for them. O remember that Text, *Rev.* 20. 12, &c. *I ſaw the dead ſmall and great ſtand before God.* What a ſad thing will it be, to ſee your dear Children at Chriſt's left Hand? O Friends, do your utmoſt to prevent this miſery. *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we perſwade men.*

2. And you *Children*, eſpecially you that ſprang from religious *Parents*, I beſeech you, obey their Counſels; and tread in the ſteps of their pious Examples. To preſs this, I offer theſe Conſiderations.

(1.) Your diſobedience to them, is a reſiſting of God's Authority, *Epheſ.* 6. 1. *Children, obey your Parents in the Lord*: There's the Command: Your Rebellion therefore runs higher than you think. It is not Man, but God that you diſobey; and for your diſobedience God will puniſh you. It may be, their tenderneſs will not ſuffer them, or you are grown beyond their correction: All they can do, is to complain to God; and if ſo, he will handle you more ſeverely than they could do.

(2.) Your ſin is greater than the ſin of young *Heathens* and *Infidels*; and ſo will your account be alſo. O better (if a wicked Child) that thou hadſt been the Off ſpring of ſalvage *Indians*, nay, of Beaſts, than of ſuch Parents. So many Counſels diſobey'd, Hopes and Prayers fruſtrated, will turn to ſad Aggravations.

(3.) It's uſual with God, to retaliate Mens diſobedience to their Parents in kind: Commonly our own Children ſhall pay us home for it. I have read in a grave *Author*, of a wicked Wretch that dragg'd his Father along the Houſe: The Father begg'd him not to draw him beyond ſuch a Place; for, ſaid he, I dragg'd my Father no farther. O the ſad, but juſt Retributions of God!

And for you, in whoſe Hearts Grace hath been planted by the bleſſing of Education, I beſeech you to admire God's goodneſs to you in this *Providence*. O what an unhappy Lot hath God caſt for you! How few Children are Partakers of your Mercies?

See that you Honour ſuch Parents; the tie is double upon you ſo to do. Be you the Joy of their Hearts, and Comfort of their Lives, if living: If not, yet ſtill remember the Mercy while *you* live, and tread in their Pious Path; that you and they may both rejoyce together in the great Day, and bleſs God for each other to all Eternity.

### *The Fourth Performance of Providence.*

**Providential Performances about our Converſion to God.**

IV. *The next remarkable Performance of Providence for the People of God which I will inſtance, ſhall be with reſpect to its ordering the Occaſions, Inſtruments and Means of their Converſion.*

In nothing doth *Providence* ſhine forth more gloriouſly in this World, than it doth in this performance for the People of God. How curiouſly ſoever its hand had moulded your Bodies, how tenderly ſoever it had preſerved them, and how bountifully ſoever it had provided for them; if it had not alſo order'd ſome means or other for your Converſion, all the former Favours and Benefits it had done for you, had ſignified little. This, O this is the moſt excellent Benefit you ever received from its hand. You are more beholden to it for this, than for all your other Mercies. And in opening this Performance of Providence, I cannot but think your Hearts muſt be deeply affected. This is a ſubject which every gracious Heart loves to ſteep its Thoughts in. It's certainly the ſweeteſt Hiſtory that ever they repeated: They love to think and talk of it. The Places where, and Inſtruments by whom this Work was wrought, are exceedingly endear'd to them for the Works ſake: Yea, endear'd to that degree, that for many Years after their Hearts have melted, when they have but paſſed occaſionally by thoſe Places, or but ſeen the Faces of thoſe Perſons, that were uſed as Inſtruments in the Hand of Providence for their good. As no doubt, but *Jacob's Beth-el* was ever after that Night ſweet to his Thoughts: So other Saints have had their *Bethels* as well as he. O bleſſed Places, Times and Inſtruments! O the deep, the ſweet Impreſſions, never to be razed out of the Memory or Heart, that this Providence hath made upon thoſe on whom it wrought this bleſſed Effect at Years of Diſcretion, and in a more ſenſible way!

*Gen.* 48. 3.

But leſt any poor Soul ſhould be diſcourag'd under the diſplay of this Providence, becauſe he cannot remember the Time, Place, Inſtruments and Manner wherein, and by which Converſion work was wrought; I will therefore premiſe this neceſſary Diſtinction, to prevent injury to ſome, whilſt I deſign benefit to others.

Converſion, as to the ſubjects of it, may be conſider'd two ways; either as it is more ſenſibly wrought in Perſons of riper Years, who in their youthful days were more prophane and vile; or upon Perſons in their tender Years, into whoſe Hearts Grace was more inſenſibly and undiſcernably inſtill'd by God's Bleſſings upon pious Education. In the former ſort, the diſtinct Acts of the Spirit, as *illuminating, convincing, humbling, drawing* them to *Chriſt*, and *ſealing* them are more evident and diſcernable: In the latter, more obſcure and confuſed; they can remember, that God gave them an eſteem and liking of godly Perſons, Care of Duty, and Conſcience of Sin; but as to the Time, Place, Inſtruments and Manner of the Work, they can give but a ſlender account of them: However, if the Work be ſavingly wrought in them, there is no reaſon they ſhould be troubled, becauſe the Circumſtances of it are not ſo evident to them as they are to others. Let the ſubſtance and reality of the Work appear, and there is no Reaſon to afflict your ſelves, becauſe of the inevidence of ſuch Circumſtances.

But yet where the Circumſtances as well as Subſtance are clear to a Man: When we can call to remembrance, the Time when, the Place where, the Inſtrument by whom that Work was wrought, it muſt needs be exceeding ſweet: And they cannot but yield a freſh Delight to the Soul every Time they are reflected upon.

There are many of the following Occaſions, which it may be, we took for *ſtraglers* when they firſt befel us: But they proved *ſcouts* ſent out from the main Body of Providence, which they make way for.

Now there be divers things in thoſe Providences, that are verſant about this Work, which are exceeding ſweet, and taking: as namely,

1. The wonderful *ſtrangeneſs* and unaccountableneſs of this Work of Providence, in caſting us into the way, and ordering the occaſions, yea, the minuteſt Circumſtances about this Work. Thus you find in *Acts* 8. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, &c The *Eunuch* at that very inſtant when he was reading the Prophet *Iſaiah*, hath an Interpreter, one among a Thouſand, that joins his Chariot, juſt as his Mind was by a fit occaſion prepared to receive the firſt Light of the Knowledge of *Chriſt*.

And how ſtrange was that Change (how far ſoever it went) upon *Naaman* the *Syrian*? recorded 2 *Kings* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. That the *Syrians* in their incurſion ſhould bring away this Girl (likely her Beauty was the inducement) and ſhe muſt be preſented to *Naaman*'s Wife, and relate to her the Power of *God* that accompany'd the *Prophet*; though you find in that particular Caſe there had never been an inſtance given before, *Luke* 4. 27. Doubtleſs, the whole of this Affair was guided by the ſignal Direction of Providence.

So for the Converſion of the *Samaritans*, it's obſerv'd *John* 4. 4. Chriſt muſt need go that way, (*i. e.*) it lay juſt in the Road betwixt *Judea* and *Galilee*, and at the ſixth hour (*i. e.*) high Noon, he reſts himſelf upon *Jacob*'s Well, ſtill ſeeming to have no other deſign, but his own refreſhment, by ſitting and drinking there: But O what a Train of Bleſſed Providences follow this, which ſeem'd but an accidental thing! Firſt the Woman of *Samaria*, and then many more in that City are brought to believe in *Chriſt*, as you find *Verſe* 29 and 41.

It is noted by *Melchior Adams* in the Life of *Junius*, how very an *Atheiſt* he was grown in his younger Years; but in order to his Converſion to God, firſt, a wonderful preſervation of his Life in a publick Tumult at *Lyons* in *France* muſt make way, which forces from him the acknowledgment of a Deity. Then his Father ſends for him home, and with much gentleneſs perſwades him to read the Scriptures; he lights upon the firſt of *John*, and with it he ſenſibly feels a Divine Supernatural Majeſty and Power ſeizing his Soul, which brought him over by a compleat Converſion to *Jeſus Chriſt*. Thus, as the Woman of *Tekoa* told *David*, *doth God deviſe means to bring back his baniſhed.*

*Melch A*
*dams Vi*
*Theol.Po*
2. *p.* 194

*Lavater* tells us, that many *Spaniſh* Soldiers, going into the Wars of *Germany*, were there Converted to Chriſt, by falling into the Cities and Towns, where Godly Miniſters and Chriſtians were.

Mr. *Robert Bolton*, though an excellent Scholar, yet in his younger Years he was a very irreligious Perſon, and a Jeerer of Holy Men; but being caſt into the Company of Godly Mr. *Peacock*, was by him brought to Repentance, and proved a famous Inſtrument in the Church of Chriſt.

A ſcrap of Paper accidentally coming to view, hath been uſed as an occaſion of Converſion. This was the Caſe of a Miniſter in *Wales*, who had two Livings, but took little care of either. He being at a Fair, bought ſomething at a Pedler's Standing, and rent off a Leaf of Mr. *Perkin's* Catechiſm to wrap it in, and reading a Line or two in it, God ſet it home, ſo as it did the Work.

See *Fr*
*min's Ri*
*Chriſtia*
*p.* 119.

The Marriage of a Godly Man into a Carnal Family, hath been ordered by Providence, for the Converſion and Salvation of many therein. Thus we read, in the Life of that Renown'd Engliſh Worthy Mr. *John Bruen*, that in his ſecond Match it was agreed, that he ſhould have one Years Diet in his Mother-in Law's Houſe: During his abode there that Year (ſaith Mr. *Clark*) the Lord was pleas'd by his Means, graciouſly to work upon her Soul, as alſo upon his Wife's Siſter, and half Siſter, their Brothers, Mr. *William* and Mr. *Thomas Fox*, with one or two of the Servants in that Family.

*Sleydan's Comment.* p. 476.

The reading of a good Book, hath been the means of bringing others to Chriſt. And thus we find many of the *German* Divines Converted by reading *Luther*'s Books: Yea, and what is more ſtrange, Mr. *Sleydan* in his Commentary tells us, that *Vergerius*, though he were preſent an Eye and Ear-witneſs to that doleful Caſe of *Spira*, which one would think ſhould move a Stone, yet ſtill continu'd ſo firm to the Pope's Intereſt, that when he fell into ſome ſuſpicion among the Cardinals, he reſolv'd to purge himſelf, by writing a Book againſt the *German Apoſtates*: But whilſt he read the *Proteſtant* Books, out of no other deſign but to Confute 'em; whilſt he is weighing the Arguments, is himſelf convinc'd and brought to *Chriſt*. He finding himſelf thus overcome by the Truth, imparts his Conviction to his *Brother*, a zealous *Papiſt* alſo: This *Brother* deplores the miſery of his caſe, and ſeeks to reclaim him; but *Vergerius* entreating him to weigh well the *Proteſtant* Arguments, he alſo yields; and ſo both immediately betook themſelves to preach Juſtification by the Free Grace of God through the Blood of Chriſt.

*Poſſidonius in vita Auguſtini cap.* 15.

Yea, not only the reading of a Book, or hearing a Miniſter, but (which is moſt remarkable) the very miſtake or forgetfulneſs of a Miniſter, hath been improv'd by *Providence* for this end and purpoſe. *Auguſtine* once Preaching to his Congregation, forgot the Argument which firſt he propos'd, and fell upon the Error of the *Manichees*, beſide his firſt Intention; by which Diſcourſe he Converted one *Firmus* his *Auditor*; who fell down at his Feet weeping, and Confeſſing he had liv'd a *Manichee* many Years. Another I knew, who going to Preach, took up another *Bible* than than that he deſign'd, in which, not only miſſing his *Notes*, but the *Chapter* alſo in which his *Text* lay, was put to ſome loſs thereby: But after a ſhort pauſe, he reſolv'd to ſpeak to any other Scripture that might be preſented to him, and accordingly read that Text, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his Promiſe, &c.* And tho' he had nothing prepar'd, yet the Lord help'd him to ſpeak both methodically and pertinently from it: By which Diſcourſe, a gracious change was wrought upon one in the Congregation, who hath ſince given good Evidence of a ſound Converſion, and acknowledg'd this Sermon to be the firſt and only means thereof.

The accompanying of others in a Neighbourly civil Viſit, hath been over-rul'd to the ſame end. Thus many of the *Jews* accompany'd *Mary* unto *Bethany* (deſigning only to maniſeſt their civil Reſpect) but there they met Chriſt, ſaw the things which he did, and believed on him, *John* 11. 45.

Mr. *Firmin*, in his *Real Chriſtian*, Pag. 97, 98. tells us of one, who had liv'd many Years in a *Town* where *Chriſt* had been as clearly, and as long Preached, as in any *Town* in *England*. This Man when he was about ſeventy ſix Years of Age, went to viſit a ſick Neighbour. 'A Chriſtian Friend of mine (ſaith mine Author) came to ſee him alſo, and finding this Old Man there; whom he judged to be one that liv'd upon his own Stock, Civility, Good Works, *&c.* he purpoſely fell into that Diſcourſe, to ſhew how many Perſons liv'd upon their Duties, but never came to *Chriſt*. The Old Man ſitting by the Bed ſide, heard him; and God was pleaſed to convince him, that he was ſuch a Perſon, who had liv'd upon himſelf without Chriſt to that day; and would ſay afterwards, had I dy'd before threeſcore and ſixteen, I had periſh'd, for I knew not Chriſt.

The committing of a Godly Man to *Priſon*, hath been the method of Providence, to ſave the Soul of a poor Keeper. So *Paul*, *Acts* 16. 27. was made a *Priſoner*, to make his Keeper a ſpiritual *Freeman*. The like ſucceſs had Dr. *Barns* in Q. *Mary*'s days, who afterwards celebrated the *Lords Supper* in Priſon with his Converted Keeper.

The ſcattering of *Miniſters* and *Chriſtians* by Perſecution from *Cities* and *Towns*, into the ignorant and barbarous parts of the Countrey, hath been the way of Providence, to find out and bring home ſome loſt Sheep that were found there, to Jeſus Chriſt, *Acts* 8. 1, 4. The like ſignal Event hath ſince follow'd upon the like ſcattering of Godly *Miniſters*, whereof are many pregnant Inſtances at this day.

A *Servant* running away from his Maſter, (likely upon no other Deſign but to live an idle Life) yet falling into ſuch Places and Companies, as Providence order'd (in a Deſign to him unknown) hath thereby been brought to be the Servant of *Chriſt*. This was the very caſe of *Oneſimus*, who run away from his Maſter *Philemon*, to *Rome*; where by a ſtrange Providence (poſſibly a meer curioſity to ſee the Priſoners) he there falls into *Paul*'s hands, who begat him to Chriſt in his Bonds, *Philemon*, *ver.* 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

Going to hear a Sermon in Jeſt, hath proved ſome Mens Converſion in Earneſt. The above-named Mr. *Firmin*, in the fore-cited Book, tells us of a notorious *Drunkard*, whom the Drunkards call'd *Father*, that one day would needs go to hear what *Wilſon* ſaid, out of no other deſign it ſeems, but to ſcoff at that Holy Man: But in the Prayer before Sermon, his Heart began to thaw; and when he read his Text, which was *John* 5. 14. *Sin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee*: He could not contain; and in that Sermon the Lord changed his Heart, though ſo bitter an Enemy, that the Miniſter on Lecture-days was afraid to go to Church before his Shop-door. *Lo, theſe are parts of his ways, but how ſmall a Portion is known of him?*

The dropping of ſome grave and weighty Word accidentally in the preſence of vain carnal Perſons, the Death of an Husband, Wife, or Child, a fit of Sickneſs, with a thouſand other ſuch like occaſions, have been thus improv'd by Providence to the Converſion of Souls.

And no leſs remarkable and wonderful are the deſigns of Providence in ordering the *Removes*, and governing the *Motions* of Miniſters, from Place to Place in order unto the Converſion of Souls. Thus oftentimes it carries them to Places where they intended not to go; God having (unknown to them) ſome Elect Veſſels there, who muſt be call'd by the Goſpel.

Thus *Paul* and *Timothy* (a ſweet and lovely Pair) when they were Travelling thro' *Phrygia* and *Galatia*, were forbid to Preach the Word in *Aſia*, to which probably their minds inclin'd, *Acts* 16. 6. And when they eſſay'd to go into *Bithynia*, the Spirit ſuffer'd them not, *Verſe* 7. But a Man of *Macedonia* (*i. e.* an *Angel* in the ſhape or habit of a Man of that *Country*) appear'd to *Paul* in a Viſion, and pray'd him, ſaying, *Come over into* Macedonia, *and help us*, ver. 9. and there did God open the Heart of *Lydia*.

I knew a pious *Miniſter* now with God, who falling in his Study upon a very rouſing Subject, intended for his own Congregation, was ſtrongly moved, when he had finiſhed it, to go to a rude, vile, prophane People, about five miles off, and firſt Preach it to them; after many wreſtlings with himſelf, not being willing to quench any motion that might be ſuppoſed to come from the Spirit of God, he obey'd, and went to this People, who had then no Miniſter of their own, and few durſt come among them. And there did the Lord, beyond all expectation, open a door, and ſeveral prophane ones received *Chriſt* in that Place, and engaged this *Miniſter* to a Weekly Lecture among them, in which many Souls were won to God.

The ſame Holy Man, at another time, being upon a Journey, paſt by a Company of vain Perſons, who were wreſtling upon a Green near the Road: And juſt as he came againſt the place, one of them had thrown his *Antagoniſt*, and ſtood Triumphing in his Strength and Activity. This good Man rode up to them, and turning his Speech to this Perſon; told him, Friend, I ſee you are a ſtrong Man; but yet let not the ſtrong Man glory in his Strength: You muſt know, that you are not to wreſtle with Fleſh and Blood, but with Principalities and Powers, and Spiritual Wickedneſſes: How ſad will it be, that *Satan* ſhould at laſt trip up the Heels of your Hope, and give you an Eternal overthrow? And after about a quarter of an Hours ſerious Diſcourſe upon this ſubject, he left them, and went on his Journey: But this Diſcourſe made ſuch an Impreſſion, that the Perſon had no reſt, till he opened his trouble to a Godly Miniſter, who wiſely following the work upon his Soul, ſaw at laſt the bleſſed Iſſue thereof in the gracious change of the Perſon, whereof he afterwards gave the *Miniſter* a joyful Account. O how unſearchable are the Methods of Providence in this Matter!

Nay, what is yet more wonderful, the Providence of God hath ſometimes ordered the very malice of *Satan*, and wickedneſs of Men, as an occaſion of Eternal good to their ſouls. A very memorable Example whereof, I ſhall here give the Reader, faithfully relating what not many Years paſt fell out in my own obſervation in this place, to the aſtoniſhment of many ſpectators.

In the Year 1673, there came in this *Port* a Ship of *Pool*, in her return from *Virginia*; in which Ship was one of that place, a luſty young man of twenty three years of age, who was *Chirurgeon* in the Ship. This perſon in the Voyage fell into a deep melancholy, which the *Devil* greatly improved to ſerve his own deſign for the ruin of this poor man; however, it pleaſed the Lord to reſtrain him from any attempts upon his own Life, until he arrived here. But ſhortly after his arrival, upon the Lords day early in the morning (being in bed with his Brother) he took a Knife prepared for that purpoſe, and cut his own throat, and withal leapt out of the bed, and though the wound was deep and large, yet thinking it might not ſoon enough diſpatch his wretched life, deſperately thruſt it into his ſtomach, and ſo lay wallowing in his own blood, till his *Brother* awaking, made a cry for help: hereupon a *Phyſician* and a *Chirurgeon* coming in found the wound in his throat mortal; and all they could do at preſent, was only to ſtitch it and apply a plaiſter, with deſign, rather to enable him to ſpeak for a little while, than with any expectation of cure; for before that, he breathed through the wound, and his voice was inarticulate.

In this condition I found him that morning, and apprehending him to be within a few minutes of Eternity, I laboured to work upon his heart the ſenſe of his condition, telling him, I had but little time to do any thing for him, and therefore deſired him to let me know, what his own apprehenſions of his preſent condition were: He told me, he hoped in God for Eternal Life; I replied, that I feared his hopes were ungrounded, for that the Scripture tells us, *No Murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*, but this was ſelf-murther, the groſſeſt of all murthers: and inſiſting upon the aggravation and heinouſneſs of the fact, I perceived his vain confidence began to fall, and ſome meltings of heart appeared in him. He then began to lament with many tears his ſin and miſery, and asked me, if there might yet be hope for one that had deſtroyed himſelf, and ſhed his own blood. I replied, the ſin indeed is great, but not unpardonable; and if the Lord gave him repentance unto life, and faith to apply *Jeſus Chriſt*, it ſhould be certainly pardoned to him: and finding him unacquainted with theſe things, I opened to him the nature and neceſſity of faith and repentance, which he greedily ſuckt in, and with great vehemency cried to God, that he would work them upon his ſoul, and intreated me alſo to pray with him and for him, that it might be ſo. I pray'd with him, and the Lord thawed his heart exceedingly in that duty: loth he was to part with me; but the duties of the day neceſſitating me to leave him, I briefly ſummed up what was moſt neceſſary in my parting counſel to him, and took my leave, never expecting to ſee him more in this world. But beyond my own and all mens expectation, he continued all that day, and panted moſt ardently after *Jeſus Chriſt*: no diſcourſes pleaſed him but *Chriſt* and Faith; and in this frame I found him in the evening. He rejoiced greatly to ſee me again, and intreated me to continue my diſcourſes upon theſe ſubjects; and after all told me, Sir, the Lord hath given me repentance for this ſin; yea, and for every other ſin. I ſee the evil of ſin now, ſo as I never ſaw it before. O! I loath my ſelf; I am a vile creature in my own eyes. I do alſo believe; *Lord help my unbelief.* I am heartily willing to take Chriſt upon his own terms. One thing only troubles me, I doubt this bloody ſin will not be pardoned. Will Jeſus Chriſt (ſaid he) apply his blood to me, that have ſhed my own blood? I told him, Chriſt ſhed his blood even for them that with wicked hand had ſhed the blood of Chriſt; and that was a ſin of deeper guilt than his. Well, (ſaith he) I will caſt my ſelf upon Chriſt; let him do by me what he will. And ſo I parted with him that night.

Next morning the wounds were to be opened; and then the opinion of the *Chirurgeons* was, he would immediately expire.

Accordingly, at his deſire, I came that morning and found him in a moſt ſerious frame. I prayed with him, and then the wound in his ſtomach was opened, but by this time the *Ventricle* it ſelf was ſwoln out of the *orifice* of the wound, and lay like a livid diſcoloured *Tripe* upon his body, and was alſo cut through, ſo that all concluded, it was impoſſible for him to live; however they ſtitcht the wound in the ſtomach, enlarged the orifice, and fomented it, and wrought it again into his body, and ſo ſtitching up the skin, left him to the diſpoſe of Providence.

But ſo it was, that both the deep wound in his throat, and this in his ſtomach healed: and the more dangerous wound *ſin* had made upon his *ſoul*, was, I truſt, effectually healed alſo. I ſpent many hours with him in that ſickneſs; and after his return home, received this account from Mr. *Samuel Hardy*, a Miniſter in that Town. Part whereof I ſhall tranſcribe.

Dear Sir,

*I was much troubled at the ſad Providence in your Town; but did much rejoice, that he fell into ſuch hands for his body and ſoul. You have taken much pains with him, and I hope to good purpoſe. I think, if ever a great and thorough work were done* ſuch a way, *it is now; and if never the like, I am perſwaded now it is. Never grow weary of ſuch good works. One ſuch Inſtance is (methinks) enough to make you to abound in the work of the Lord all your days,* &c.

O how unſearchable are the ways of Providence, in leading men to Chriſt! Let none be encouraged by this to ſin, that grace may abound. Theſe are rare and ſingular Inſtances of the mercy of God, and ſuch as no preſumptuous ſinner can expect to find. Its only recited here, to the honour of Providence, which works for the recovery of ſinners in ways that we underſtand not. O what a fetch hath Providence beyond our underſtandings!

2. And as it orders very ſtrange occaſions to awaken and rouſe ſouls at firſt, ſo it works no leſs wonderfully in carrying on the work to perfection; and this it doth two ways.

(1.) By quickning and reviving dying convictions and troubles for ſin. Souls after their firſt awakening, are apt to loſe the ſenſe and impreſſion of their firſt troubles for ſin; but Providence is vigilant to prevent it; and doth effectually prevent it ſometimes, by *directing the Miniſter* to ſome diſcourſe or paſſage, that ſhall fall as pat, as if the caſe of ſuch a perſon had been ſtudy'd by him, and deſignedly ſpoken to. How often have I found this in the caſes of many ſouls, who have profeſſed they have ſtood amazed, to hear the very thoughts of their hearts diſcovered by the Preacher, who knew nothing of them? Sometimes by directing them to ſome proper rouſing Scripture, that ſuits their preſent caſe. And ſometimes by ſuffering them to fall into ſome new ſin, which ſhall awaken all their former troubles again, and put a new efficacy and activity into the Conſcience. The World is full of Inſtances in all theſe caſes, and becauſe moſt Chriſtians have experience of theſe things in themſelves, it will be needleſs to recite them here. Search but a few Years back, and you may remember, that according to this Account (at leaſt in ſome particulars) Providence order'd the matter with you. Have you not found ſome rod or other prepar'd by Providence, to rouze you out of your ſecurity? Why, this is ſo common a thing with Chriſtians, that they many times preſage an affliction coming from the frames they find their own hearts in.

(2.) It gives alſo great aſſiſtance to the work of the Spirit upon the ſoul, by ordering, ſupporting, relieving and cheering means, to prop up and comfort the ſoul, when it is overburthen'd, and ready to ſink in the deeps of troubles. I remember Mr. *Bolton* gives us one Inſtance, which fits both theſe caſes, the *reviving of convictions*, and *ſeaſonable ſupports in the deeps of troubles.* And it is of a Perſon that by convictions had been fetcht off from his wicked companions, and entred into a reform'd courſe of life; but after this, through the enticement of his old companions, the ſubtilty of Satan, and corruption of his own heart, did again relapſe into the ways of ſin. Then was Providentially brought to his view that Scripture, *Prov.* 1. 24, 25, 26, *&c.* this renew'd his trouble; yea, aggravated it to a greater height than ever: inſomuch that he could ſcarcely think (as it ſeems by the relation) his ſin could be pardon'd. But in this plunge, that Text, *Luke* 17. 4. was preſented to him, which ſweetly ſettled him in a ſure and glorious peace.

Nor can we here forget that miraculous work of Providence, in a time of great extremity, which was wrought for that good Gentlewoman Mrs. *Honeywood* (and is ſomewhere mention'd by the ſame Author) who under a deep and ſad deſertion, refus'd and put off all comfort, ſeeming to deſpair utterly of the grace and mercy of God. A worthy Miniſter being one day with her, and reaſoning againſt her deſperate concluſions, ſhe took a *Venice-glaſs* from the Table, and ſaid, *Sir, I am as ſure to be damn'd, as this Glaſs is to be broken*; and therewith threw it forcibly to the ground: but to the aſtoniſhment of both, the Glaſs remain'd whole and ſound, which the Miniſter taking up with admiration, rebuk'd her preſumption, and ſhew'd her what a wonder Providence had wrought for her ſatisfaction, and it greatly alter'd the temper of her mind. O how unſearchable are his ways!

and his Paths paſt finding out! Lo, theſe are part of his Ways; but how ſmall a Portion do we know of him?

And now ſuffer me to expoſtulate a little with thy Soul. Reader, haſt thou been duly ſenſible of thy Obligation to Providence, for this ineſtimable Favour? O what hath it done for thee! there are divers kinds of mercies conveyed to men by the hand of Providence, but none like this: in all the Treaſury of its benefits, none is found like this. Did it caſt thee into the way of Converſion, and order the means and occaſions of it for thee, when thou little thoughteſt of any ſuch thing? How dear and ſweet ſhould the remembrance of it be to thy Soul! Methinks it ſhould aſtoniſh and melt you every time you reflect upon it. Such Mercies ſhould never grow ſtale, or look like common things to you: for do but ſeriouſly conſider the following particulars.

1. How *ſurprizing* the mercy was, which it performed for you in that day. Providence had a deſign upon you, for your eternal good, which you underſtood not. The time of mercy was now fully come; the Decree was now ready to bring forth that mercy, with which it had gone big from Eternity, and its gracious deſign muſt be executed by the hand of Providence, ſo far as concerned the external means and Inſtruments: and how aptly did it cauſe all things to fall in with that deſign, though you knew not the meaning of it (Look over all the before-mentioned Examples, and you ſhall ſee the bleſſed work of Converſion begun upon thoſe Souls, when they minded it no more, than *Saul* did a Kingdom, that morning he went out to ſeek his *Father's Aſſes*, 1 *Sam.* 9. 3. 20.) Providence might truly have ſaid to you in that Day, as Chriſt ſaid to *Peter*, John 13. 7. *What I do thou knoweſt not now, but hereafter thou ſhalt know it. Gods thoughts are not as our thoughts; but as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, ſo are his thoughts higher than ours, and his ways than our ways.* Little did *Zacheus* think, when he climbed up into the *Sycamore*-tree, to ſee *Chriſt* as he paſſed that way, what a deſign of mercy *Chriſt* had upon him, who took thence the occaſion of becoming both his *Gueſt* and *Saviour*, Luke 19. 5, 6, 7, 8. And as little did ſome of you think, what the aim of Providence was when you went (ſome out of cuſtom, others out of curioſity, if not worſe ends) to hear ſuch a Sermon. O how ſtupendious are the ways of God!

2. What a diſtinguiſhing and ſeaſonable mercy was uſher'd in by Providence in that day. It brought you to the means of Salvation in a good hour. At that very nick of time, when the *Angel* troubled the Waters, you were brought to the *Pool*, to allude to that, *John* 5. 4. Now the accepted day was come, the *Spirit* was in the Ordinance, or Providence that converted you, and you were ſet in the way of it. It my be you had heard many hundred Sermons before, but nothing would ſtick till now, becauſe the hour was not come. The Lord did, as it were, call in the Word for ſuch a Man, ſuch a Woman; and Providence ſaid, Lord, here he is, I have brought him before thee. There were many others under that Sermon, that received no ſuch mercy. You your ſelves had heard many before, but not to that advantage, as it is ſaid, Luke 4. 27. *There were many Lepers in Iſrael in the days of Elizeus, but to none of them was the Prophet ſent, ſave unto Naaman the Syrian.* So there were many poor unconverted Souls beſide you under the Word that day, and it may be, to none of them was Salvation ſent that day, but to you. O bleſſed Providence, that ſet you in the way of mercy at that time!

What a weighty and important mercy was Providentially directed to your Souls that day. Theſe are mercies of all ſizes and kinds in the hands of Providence to diſpenſe to the Sons of Men: It's left hand is full of bleſſings, as well as its right. It hath health and riches, honours and pleaſures, as well as Chriſt and Salvation to diſpenſe. The world is full of its *left hand* favours; but the bleſſings of its *right hand* are invaluably precious, and few there be that receive them. It doth thouſands of kind offices for Men; but among them all, this is the chiefeſt, to lead and direct them to Chriſt. For conſider.

(1.) Of all mercies, this comes through moſt and greateſt difficulties, *Eph.* 1. 19, 20.

(2.) This is a ſpiritual mercy, excelling in dignity of nature all others, more than *gold* excels the *dirt* under your feet, *Rev.* 3. 18. One ſuch gift, is worth thouſands of other mercies.

(3.) This is a mercy immediately flowing out of the fountain of Gods *electing love*, a mercy never dropt into any, but an elect Veſſel, 1 *Theſ.* 1. 4, 5.

(4.) This is a mercy, that infallibly ſecures Salvation; for as we may argue from Converſion to Election, looking back, ſo from Converſion to Salvation, looking forward, *Heb.* 6. 9.

(5.) Laſtly, This is an Eternal mercy, that which will ſtick by you, when Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Eſtate, Honours, Health and Life ſhall fail thee, *John* 4. 14.

O therefore ſet a ſpecial Mark upon that Providence, that ſet you in the way of this mercy. It hath performed that for thee, which all the Miniſters on Earth, and Angels in Heaven could never have performed. This is a Mercy, that puts weight and value into the ſmalleſt Circumſtance that relates to it.

### *The Fifth Performance of Providence.*

V. Thus you hear, how inſtrumental Providence hath been, in ordering the Means and Occaſions of the greateſt Mercies for your Souls. Let us now take into conſideration, another excellent Performance of Providence reſpecting the good of your Bodies and Souls too, *in reſpect of that Imployment and Calling it ordered for you in this world*; for it hath not only an Eye upon your well being in the *world to come*, but upon your well being in *this world* alſo, and that very much depends upon the Station and Vocation to which it calls you.

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Now the Providence of God with reſpect to our civil Callings, may be diſplayed very takingly in the following particulars.

1. In directing you to a Calling in your Youth, and not ſuffering you to live an idle, uſeleſs and ſinful life, as many do, who are but burthens to the Earth; *fruges conſumere nati*, the Wens of the body politick, ſerving only to diſfigure and dreſs it, to eat what others

earn. Sin brought in ſweat, *Gen.* 3. 19. but now, not to ſweat increaſeth ſin, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 12. He that lives *idly*, cannot live *honeſtly*; as is plainly enough intimated, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 11, 12. But when God puts men into a lawful Calling, wherein the labours of their hands or heads is ſufficient for them, it is a very valuable mercy: for thereby they *eat their own bread*, 2 Theſſ. 3. 12. Many a ſad Temptation is happily prevented; and they are ordinarily furniſhed by it, for works of mercy to others, and ſurely it is more bleſſed to give, than to receive.

2. In ordering you to ſuch *Callings* and *Imployments* in the world, as are, not only *lawful* in themſelves, but moſt *ſuitable* to you. There be many perſons imployed in *ſinful* Trades and Arts, meerly to furniſh other mens luſts: they do not only ſin in their Imployments; but their very Imployments are ſinful: they trade for Hell, and are Factors for the Devil. *Demetrius* and the Craſts-men at *Epheſus*, got their Eſtates by making *Shrines* for *Diana*, Acts 19. 24, 25. (*i. e.*) little caſes, or boxes with folding leaves, within which the *Image* of that *Idol* ſate enſhrined. Theſe were carried about by the People in Proceſſion, in honour of their Idol. And at this day how many wicked Arts and Imployments are there invented, (and multitudes of perſons maintained by them) meerly to gratifie the pride and wantonneſs of a debauched age?

Now to have an honeſt lawful imployment, wherein you do not diſhonour God in benefiting your ſelves, is no ſmall mercy.

But if it be not only lawful in it ſelf, but ſuited to your *genius* and ſtrength, there is a double mercy in it. Some poor Creatures are engaged in Callings, that eat up their time and ſtrength, and make their lives very uncomfortable to them: they have not only *ſpending* and waſting Imployments in the world; but ſuch as allow them little or no time for their *general Calling*: and yet all this doth but keep them and theirs alive. Oh therefore, if God have fitted you with an honeſt Imployment, wherein you have leſs toil than others, and more time for Heavenly Exerciſes, aſcribe this benefit to the ſpecial care of Providence for you.

3. In ſetling you in ſuch an *Imployment* and Calling in the world, as poſſibly neither your ſelves nor *Parents* could ever expect you ſhould arrive to. There are among us ſuch perſons, as on this account are ſignally obliged to Divine Providence. God hath put them into ſuch a way, as neither they nor their Parents ever projected. For, look as the *Flower-de-luce* in the Compaſs, turns now this way, then that way, and never ceaſes moving, till it ſettle to the *North-point*; juſt ſo it is in our ſettlement in the World. A Child is now deſigned for this, then for that, but at laſt ſettles in that way of Imployment which Providence deſigned him to. How ſtrangely are things wheeled about by Providence! not what we, or our Parents, but what God deſigned ſhall take place. *Amos* was very meanly employed at firſt, but God deſigned him for a more honourable and comfortable Calling, *Amos* 7. 14, 15. *David* followed the Ewes, and likely never raiſed his thoughts to higher things in the days of his youth; but God made him the Royal Shepherd of a better flock, *Pſalm* 78. 70, 71. *Peter* and *Andrew* were imployed as Fiſher-men, but *Chriſt* calls them from that to an higher Calling, *Matth* 4. 18, 19. to be fiſhers of men. *Pareus* when he was fourteen years old, was by the inſtigation of his *Step-mother*, placed with an *Apothecary*; but Providence ſo wrought, that he was taken off from that, and fitted for the Miniſtery; wherein he became a fruitful and eminent Inſtrument to the Church. *James Andreas* was by reaſon of his Father's inability to keep him at School, deſigned for a *Carpenter*; but was afterwards by the perſwaſion of friends, and aſſiſtance of the Church-ſtock ſent to *Stutgard*, and thence to the Univerſity, and ſo arrived to a very Eminent Station of ſervice to the Church. A Maſter builder *Oecolampadius*, was by his *Father* deſigned for a *Merchant*; but his *Mother* by earneſt entreaties, prevailed to keep him at School: and this Man was a bleſſed Inſtrument in the reformation of Religion. I might eaſily cite multitudes of ſuch inſtances; but a taſte may ſuffice.

4. In ſecuring your Eſtates from ruine, Job 1. 10. *Haſt thou not made an hedge about him, and all that he hath?* This is the Encloſure of Providence, which ſecures to us, what by its favour we acquire in the way of honeſt induſtry.

5. In making your Calling ſufficient for you. It was the Prayer of *Moſes* for the Tribe of *Judah*, Exod. 33. 7. *Let his hands be ſufficient for him*; and it is no ſmall mercy, if yours be ſo to you. Some there be that have work, but not ſtrength to go through with it; others have ſtrength, but no imployment for it. Some have hands, and work for them; but it's not ſufficient for them and theirs. If God bleſs your labours, ſo as to give you and yours neceſſary ſupports and comfort in the World by it, it's a choice Providence, and with all thankfulneſs to be acknowledged.

Object. 1. If any that fear God ſhall complain, *That although they have a Calling, yet it is an hard laborious one, which takes up too much of their time, which they would gladly imploy in other, and better work.* I anſwer,

Solut. (1.) It's like, the Wiſdom of Providence foreſaw this to be the moſt ſuitable and proper Imployment for you; and if you had more eaſe and reſt, you might have more temptations than now you have: the ſtrength and time which is now taken up in your daily labours, wherein you ſerve God, might otherways have been ſpent upon ſuch luſts wherein you might have ſerved the Devil.

(2.) Hereby it may be, your health is the better preſerved, and natural refreſhments made the ſweeter to you, Eccleſ. 5. 12. *The ſleep of a labouring man is ſweet to him, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich, will not ſuffer him to ſleep.*

(3.) And as to the ſervice of God, if your hearts be ſpiritual, you may enjoy much Communion with God in your very Imployments, and you have ſome intervals and reſpits for that purpoſe. Have you not more ſpare hours, than you imploy to that end?

Object. 2. *But all my labours will ſcarcely ſuffice, to procure me and mine the Neceſſaries of life. I am kept ſhort and low to what others are; and this is a ſad affliction.*

Though

*Sol.* Though the Wiſdom of Providence hath ordered you a lower, and poorer condition than others, yet (1.) Conſider how many there be that are lower than you in the world: you have but little of the world, yet others have leſs. Read the deſcription of thoſe perſons, *Job* 30. 4, *&c.* (2.) If God have given you but a ſmall portion of the world; yet if you be godly, he hath promis'd never to forſake you, *Heb.* 13. 5. (3.) Providence hath order'd that condition for you, which is really beſt for your eternal good. If you had more of the world than you have, your heads and hearts might not be able to manage it to your advantage. A ſmall *Boat* muſt have but a narrow *Sail.* You have not wanted hitherto the neceſſaries of life, and are commanded, *having food and rayment* (though none of the fineſt) *to be therewith content. A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked,* Pſal. 37. 16. better in the *Acquiſition,* ſweeter in the *Fruition,* and more comfortable in the *Account.*

Well then, if Providence hath ſo diſpos'd of you all, that you can eat your own bread, and ſo advantageouſly directed ſome of you to imployments, that afford not only neceſſaries for your ſelves and Families, but an overplus for works of mercy to others, and all this brought about for you in a way you did not project; let God be own'd, and honour'd in this Providence. Will you not henceforth call him, *My Father, the Guide of my youth?* as it is *Jer.* 3. 4. Surely it was the Lord that guided you to ſettle as you did in thoſe days of your youth: You reap at this day, and may to your laſt day, the fruits of thoſe early Providences in your youth.

Now ſee that you walk anſwerable to the obligations of Providence in this particular; and ſee to it in the fear of God, that you abuſe not any of thoſe things to *his diſhonour,* which he hath wrought for *your comfort.* To prevent which, I will here drop a few needful Cautions, and ſhut up this particular.

1 *Caution.* Be not ſlothful and idle in your *Vocations.* It's ſaid, *Auguſtus* built an *Apragapolis,* a City void of Buſineſs; but I am ſure God never erected any City, Town or Family to that end. The Command to *Adam, Gen.* 3. 19. no doubt reaches all his Poſterity: and Goſpel-Commands back and ſecond it upon Chriſtians, *Rom.* 12. 11. and 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 11. If you be negligent, you cannot be innocent. And yet,

2 *Caution.* Be not ſo intent upon your *particular* Callings, as to make them interfere with your *general* Calling. Beware you loſe not your God in the crowd and hurry of Earthly buſineſs. Mind that ſolemn warning, 1 Tim. 6. 9. *But they that will be rich fall into Temptation, and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition.* The Inhabitants of *OEnoe,* a dry Iſland near *Athens,* beſtow'd much labour to draw in a River to water it, and make it fruitful, but when the Sluces were open'd, the waters flow'd ſo abundantly, that it overflow'd the Iſland and drown'd the Inhabitants. The Application is obvious. It was an excellent ſaying of *Seneca, rebus non me trado, ſed commodo,* I don't give, but lend my ſelf to buſineſs.

3 *Caution.* Remember always the ſucceſs of your Callings and earthly Employments is by Divine Bleſſing, not humane Diligence alone, *Deut.* 8. 18. *Thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that gave thee Power to get Wealth.* The Devil himſelf was ſo far Orthodox, as to acknowledge it, *Job* 1. 10. *Haſt not thou made an hedge about him, and about his houſe, and about all that he hath on every ſide? Thou haſt bleſſed the work of his hands,* &c. Recommend therefore your Affairs to God by Prayer, according to Pſalm 37. 4, 5. *Delight thy ſelf alſo in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the deſires of thine Heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs.* And touch not with that which you cannot recommend to God by Prayer for a Bleſſing.

4 *Cauti* Be well ſatisfied in that Station and Employment in which Providence hath plac'd you, and do not ſo much as wiſh your ſelves in another, 1 *Cor.* 7. 20. *Let every Man abide in the ſame Calling, wherein he was called.* Providence is wiſer than you, and you may be confident hath ſuited all things better to your Eternal Good, than you could do, had you been left to your own Option.

### *The Sixth Performance of Providence.*

VI. Thus you ſee, the Care Providence hath had over you in your Youth, in reſpect of that Civil Employment to which it guided us in thoſe days.

Provide tial Pe formanc with re ſpect to our Civ Relation We will in the next Place conſider it *as our Guide, and the Orderer of our Relations for us.* That Providence hath a ſpecial Hand in this Matter, is evident both from Scripture Aſſertions, and the acknowledgments of Holy Men, who in that great Concernment of their Lives, have ſtill owned, and acknowledg'd the directing Hand of Providence. Take an Inſtance of both. The Scripture plainly aſſerts the Dominion of Providence over this Affair in *Prov.* 19. 14. *A Prudent Wife is from the Lord:* And *Prov.* 18. 22. *Whoſo findeth a Wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.* So for Children, ſee *Pſalm* 127. 3. *Lo, Children are an Heritage of the Lord; and the Fruit of the Womb is his Reward.*

And it hath ever been the Practiſe of Holy Men, to ſeek the Lord for Direction and Counſel, when they have been upon the change of their Condition. No doubt but *Abraham*'s encouragement in that caſe was the Fruit of Prayer, *Gen.* 24. 7. His Pious Servant alſo, who was employ'd in that Affair, did both earneſtly ſeek Counſel of God, *Gen.* 24. 12. and thankfully acknowledge his gracious Providence in guiding it, *Ver.* 26, 27.

The ſame we may obſerve in Children, the Fruit of Marriage, 1 *Sam.* 1. 20. *Luke* 1. 13, 14. Now the Providence of God may be divers ways diſplay'd, for the engaging of our Hearts in Love to the God of our Mercies.

(1.) There is very much of Providence ſeen in appointing the Parties each for other. In this, the Lord goes oftentimes beyond our Thoughts and Projections; yea, and oftentimes croſſes Mens deſires and deſigns to their great Advantage. Not what they fancy; but what his Infinite Wiſdom judges beſt, and moſt beneficial for them takes place. Hence it is, that probabilities are ſo often daſh'd; and things remote and utterly improbable are brought about in very ſtrange and unaccountable methods of Providence.

(2.) There is much of Providence ſeen in the harmony and agreeableneſs of tempers and diſpoſitions; from whence a very great part of the tranquility and comforts of our Lives reſults: or at leaſt, though natural Tempers and Educations did not ſo much harmonize before, yet they do ſo after they come under the Ordinance of God, *Gen.* 2. 24. *They two ſhall be one Fleſh,* not one only in reſpect of God's *Inſtitution,* but one in reſpect of Love and *Affection,* that thoſe who ſo lately were meer ſtrangers to each other, are now endear'd to a degree beyond the neareſt Relations in Blood. *Ubi ſupra, For this cauſe ſhall a Man leave Father and Mother, and ſhall cleave to his Wife, and they two ſhall be one Fleſh.*

(3.) But eſpecially, Providence is remarkable, in making one inſtrumental to the Eternal Good of the other, 1 *Cor.* 7. 16. *How knoweſt thou, O Wife, but thou mayſt ſave thy Huſband? Or how knoweſt thou, O Man, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy Wife?* Hence is that grave Exhortation to the Wives of unbelieving Huſbands, 1 *Pet.* 3. 1. to win them by their Converſation, which ſhould be to them inſtead of an Ordinance.

Or if both be gracious, then what ſingular aſſiſtance and mutual help is hereby gained to the furtherance of their Eternal Good? Whilſt they live together *as Heirs of the Grace of Life,* 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. O bleſſed Providence! that directed ſuch into ſo intimate Relation on Earth, who ſhall inherit together the *common Salvation* in Heaven!

(4.) How much of Providence is ſeen in *Children* the Fruit of *Marriage*? To have any Poſterity in the Earth, and not be left altogether as a dry Tree: To have Comfort and Joy in them, is a ſpecial Providence, importing a ſpecial Mercy to us. To have the breaches made upon our Families repair'd, is a Providence to be own'd with a thankful Heart. When God ſhall ſay to a Man, as he ſpeaks in another Caſe to the *Church,* Iſa. 49. 20. *The Children which thou ſhalt have after thou haſt loſt the other, ſhall ſay again in thine Ears, the Place is too ſtrait for me,* &c.

And theſe Providences will appear more affectingly ſweet and lovely to you, if you but compare its allotments to you, with what it hath allotted to many others in the World. For do but look abroad, and you ſhall find,

(1.) Multitudes unequally yoked, to the imbittering of their Lives, whoſe Relations are clogs and hindrances both in Temporals and Spirituals. Yea, we find an account in Scripture of gracious Perſons, a great part of whoſe comfort in this World hath been ſplit upon this Rock. *Abigal* was a *diſcreet* and *vertuous* Woman, but very unſuitably match'd to a *churliſh Nabal,* ſee 1 *Sam* 25. 25. What a Temptation to the neglect of a known Duty, prevail'd upon the renown'd *Moſes*, by the means of *Zipporah* his Wife? *Exod.* 4. 24, 25. *David* had his ſcoffing *Michal*, 2 *Sam.* 6. 20. And patient *Job* no ſmall Addition to all his other Afflictions, from the Wife of his Boſom, who ſhould have been a ſupport to him in the Day of his Trouble, *Job* 19. 17.

No doubt, but God ſanctifies ſuch Rods to his Peoples Good. If *Socrates* knew how to improve his Affliction in his *Zantippe,* to the increaſe of his Patience; much more will they who converſe with God under all Providences, whether ſweet or bitter. Nevertheleſs this muſt be acknowledg'd to be a ſad ſtroke upon any Perſon, and ſuch as maims them upon the working Hand, by unfitting them for Duty, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. and cuts off much of the Comfort of Life alſo.

(2.) How many are there, who never enjoy the comfortable Fruits of Marriage? But are deny'd the ſight, at leaſt, the enjoyment of Children, *Jer.* 22. 30. *Thus ſaith the Lord, write this Man Childleſs,* &c. or if they have Children, yet cannot enjoy them, *Hoſea* 9. 12. *Though they bring up Children, yet will I bereave them, that there ſhall not be a Man left;* who only bear for the Grave, and have their Expectations rais'd for a greater Affliction to themſelves.

(3.) And it is no rare or unuſual thing to ſee Children and near Relations the greateſt Inſtruments of Affliction to their Parents and Friends: So that after all their other Sorrows and Troubles in the World, neareſt Relations bring up the Rear of Sorrows (as one ſpeaks) and prove greater griefs than any other. O how many *Parents* have complain'd with the Tree in the Fable, that their very Hearts have been riv'd aſunder with thoſe Wedges that were cut out of their own Bodies? What a grief was *Eſau* to *Iſaac* and *Rebeckah*? Gen. 26. 34, 35. What a ſcourge were *Abſalom* and *Amnon* to *David*?

Mr. *T. C.* in his *Iſagoge.*

Well then, if God have ſet *the ſolitary in Families,* as it is *Pſalm* 68. 6. Built an Houſe for the deſolate, given you comfortable Relations, which are ſprings of daily Comfort and Refreſhment to you, you are upon many accounts engag'd to walk anſwerably to theſe gracious Providences. And that you may underſtand wherein that *decorum* and agreeable Comportment with theſe Providences conſiſts, take up the Senſe of your Duty in theſe brief hints.

(1.) Aſcribe to God the Glory of all thoſe Providential works which yield you comfort. You ſee a wiſe, directing, governing Providence, which hath diſpos'd and order'd all things beyond your own projections and deſigns. *The way of Man is not in himſelf, nor is it in him that walketh to direct his own ſteps,* Jer. 10. 23. Not what you projected, but what an higher counſel than yours determin'd, is come to paſs. Good *Jacob* when God had made him the Father of a Family, admir'd God in the Mercy, Gen. 32. 10. *With my ſtaff* (ſaid he) *I paſſed over this Jordan, and now I am become two Bands.* And how doth this Mercy humble and melt him? *I am not worthy of the leaſt of all the Mercies, and of all the Truth, which thou haſt ſhew'd unto thy Servant.*

Be exact in diſcharging the Duties of thoſe Relations which ſo gracious a Providence hath led you into. Abuſe not the effects of ſo much Mercy and Love to you. The Lord expects Praiſe wherever you have Comfort. This aggravated *David*'s Sin, that he ſhould dare to abuſe ſo great Love and Mercy, as God had ſhewn him in his Family Relations, 2 *Sam.* 12. 7, 8, 9.

(3.) Improve Relations to the end Providence deſign'd them. Walk together as Co-heirs of the Grace of Life: Study to be mutual Bleſſings to each other: So walk in your Relations, that the parting Day may be ſweet. Death will ſhortly break up the Family; and then nothing but the Senſe of Duty Diſcharged, or the neglects Pardoned, will give Comfort.

*The Seventh Performance of Providence.*

**Providential Proſion for us and ours.**

VII. You have heard how well Providence hath performed its Part for you, in planting you into Families, who once were ſolitary. Now let us in the next Place view another gracious Performance of Providence for us, *in making Proviſion from Time to Time for us and our Families.* I the rather put theſe Providences together in this Place, becauſe I find the Scripture doth ſo, *Pſalm* 107. 41. *He ſetteth the Poor on high from Affliction, and maketh him Families like a Flock.*

You know the Promiſes God hath made to his People, *Pſalm* 34. 10. *The young Lions ſhall lack, and ſuffer hunger; but they that ſeek the Lord, ſhall not want any good thing.* And have you not alſo ſeen the conſtant performance of it? Cannot you give the ſame anſwer, if the ſame queſtion were propounded to you that the Diſciples did, *Luke* 22. 35. *Since I ſent you forth, lacked ye any thing? and they ſaid, nothing.* Can ye not with *Jacob*, call him, *the God that fed you all your Life long?* Gen. 48. 15. Surely *he hath given Bread to them that fear him, and been ever mindful of his Covenant*, Pſal. 111. 5.

To diſplay this Providence, we will conſider it in the following Particulars.

(1.) The *aſſiduity* and *conſtancy* of the Care of Providence for the Saints, *Lam.* 3. 23. *His Mercies are new every Morning.* It is not the ſupply of one or two preſſing needs, but all your wants, as they grow from day to day through all your Days, *Gen.* 48. 15. *The God that fed me all my Life long.* The care of Providence runs parallel with the line of Life. See *Iſa.* 46. 3, 4. *Hearken unto me, O Houſe of Jacob, and all the remnant of the Houſe of Iſrael, which are born by me from the Belly, which are carried from the Womb: And even to your old Age I am he, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry, and will deliver you.* So that as God bid *Iſrael*, Micah 6. 5. *To remember from* Shittim *unto* Gilgal, *that they might know the faithfulneſs of the Lord*; ſo would I perſwade thee, Reader, to record the ways of Providence, from firſt to laſt, throughout thy whole courſe to this Day, that thou maiſt ſee what a God he hath been to thee.

(2.) The ſeaſonableneſs, and opportuneneſs of its Proviſions for them: For ſo runs the Promiſe, *Iſa.* 41. 17. *When the Poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their Tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not forſake them*; and ſo hath the Performance of it been. And this hath been made good to diſtreſſed Saints ſometimes in a more *ordinary way*, God ſecretly Bleſſing a little, and making it ſufficient for us and ours: *Job* tells us of *the ſecret of God upon his Tabernacle*, Job 29. 4. (*i. e.*) his ſecret Bleſſing is in their *Tabernacles*; by Reaſon whereof it is that they ſubſiſt; but it is in an unaccountable way that they do ſo. And ſometimes in an *extraordinary* way it breaks forth for their ſupply. So you find in 2 *Kings* 17. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. The Cruſe and Barrel fail not.

Clark's Lives, Vo 1. p. 34

Mr. *Samuel Clark*, in the Life of that painful and humble Servant of Chriſt Mr. *John Fox*, records a memorable Inſtance of Providence, and it is this, That towards the end of King *Henry* the Eighth his Reign he went to *London*, where he quickly ſpent that little his Friends had given him, or he had acquired by his own Diligence, and began to be in great want. As one Day he ſate in *Paul's Church*, ſpent with long Faſting, his Countenance thin, and his Eyes hollow, after the ghaſtly manner of Dying Men, every one ſhuning a Spectacle of ſo much horror: There came one to him, whom he had never ſeen before, and thruſt an untold Summ of Money into his Hand, bidding him be of good Cheer, and accept that ſmall Gift in good part from his Country-man; and that he ſhould make much of himſelf, for that within a few days new hopes were at hand, and a more certain condition of livelihood. Three days after the *Dutcheſs* of *Richmond* ſent for him to live in her Houſe, and be *Tutor* to the *Earl* of *Surry*'s Children, then under her care.

Mr. *Iſaac Ambroſe* a worthy Divine, whoſe labours have made him acceptable to his Generation, in his Epiſtle to the *Earl of Bedford* prefixed to his *Laſt Things*, gives a pregnant Inſtance in his own Caſe; his Words are theſe; *For mine own Part* (ſaith he) *however the Lord hath ſeen Cauſe to give me but a Poor pittance of outward Things, for which I bleſs his name; yet in the income thereof, I have many times obſerved ſo much of his peculiar Providence, that thereby they have been very much ſweetned, and my Heart hath been raiſed to admire his Grace. When of late under an hard Diſpenſation (which I judge not meet to mention) wherein I ſuffered conſcientiouſly, all Streams of wonted Supplies being ſtopt, the Waters of Relief for my ſelf and Family did run low: I went to Bed with ſome ſtaggerings and doubtings of the Fountains letting out it ſelf for our refreſhing; but e're I did awake in the Morning, a Letter was brought to my Bed ſide, which was Signed by a a choice Friend Mr.* Anthony Aſh, *which reported ſome unexpected breakings out of God's Goodneſs for my Comfort. Theſe are ſome of his Lines—— Your God who hath given you an heart thankfully to Record your Experiences of his Goodneſs, doth renew Experiences for your Encouragement. Now I ſhall Report one, which will raiſe your Spirit toward the God of your Mercies.* Whereupon he ſweetly concludes, *One Morſel of God's Proviſion, eſpecially when it comes in unexpected, and upon Prayer, when wants are moſt, will be more ſweet to ſpiritual reliſh, than all former Enjoyments were.*

(3.) The Wiſdom of Providence in our Proviſions. And this is diſcovered in two Things: (1.) In proportioning the quantity, not ſatisfying our extravagant *wiſhes*, but anſwering our real *needs*; conſulting our *wants*, not our *wantonneſs*, Phil. 4. 19. *My God ſhall ſupply all your wants*; and this hath exactly ſuited the wiſhes of the beſt and wiſeſt Men, who deſired no more at its hand. So *Jacob*, *Gen.* 28. 20. and *Agur*, *Prov.* 30. 8, 9. Wiſe Providence conſiders our Condition as *Pilgrims* and

*Strangers*, and ſo allots the *Viaticum* Proviſion, that is needful for our Paſſage home. It knows the miſchievous influence of fulneſs and redundancy upon moſt Men, though ſanctified; and how apt it is to make them remiſs, and forgetful of God, *Deut.* 6. 12. That their Hearts, like the *Moon*, ſuffers an Eclipſe when it is at the full; and ſo ſuits and orders all to their beſt advantage. (2.) Its Wiſdom is much diſcovered in the manner of diſpenſing our Portion to us. It many times ſuffers our wants to pinch hard, and many Fears to ariſe, out of deſign to magnifie the Care and Love of God in the ſupply, *Deut.* 8. 3. Providence ſo orders the Caſe, that Faith and Prayer coming betwixt our wants and ſupplies, the Goodneſs of God may be the more magnified in our Eyes thereby.

And now let me beg you to conſider the good Hand of Providence that hath provided for, and ſuitably ſupplyed you and yours all your Days, and never failed you hitherto: And labour to walk ſuitably to your Experiences of ſuch Mercies. In order whereunto, let me preſs a few ſuitable Cautions upon you.

1. Beware, that you forget not the Care and kindneſs of Providence which your Eyes have ſeen in ſo many Fruits and Experiences thereof. It was God's charge againſt *Iſrael*, *Pſal.* 106. 3. *That they ſoon forgat his wondrous Works.* A bad Heart and a ſlippery Memory, deprive Men of the Comfort of many Mercies, and defraud God of the Glory due for them.

2. Do not diſtruſt Providence in future exigencies. Thus they did, *Pſalm* 78. 20. *Behold, he ſmote the Rock, that the Waters guſhed out, and the Streams overflowed: can he give Bread alſo? can he provide fleſh for his People?* How unreaſonable and abſurd are theſe queries of unbelief, eſpecially after their Eyes had ſeen the Power of God in ſuch extraordinary Effects?

3. Do not murmur and regret under new ſtraits. This is a vile temper; and yet how incident to us, when wants preſs hard upon us! Ah! did we rightly underſtand what the demerit of Sin is, we would rather admire the bounty of God, than complain of the ſtrait-handedneſs of Providence. And if we did but conſider, that there lies upon God no obligation of Juſtice or Gratitude to reward any of our Duties, it would cure our murmurs, *Gen.* 32. 20.

4. Do not ſhew the leaſt Diſcontent at the Lot and Portion Providence carves out to you: O that you would be well pleaſed and ſatisfied with all its appointments. Say as *Pſal.* 16. 6. *The lines are fallen unto me in pleaſant Places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.* Surely that is beſt for you, which Providence hath appointed, and one Day you your ſelves will judge it ſo to be.

5. Do not neglect Prayer when ſtraits befal you. You ſee it's Providence diſpenſes all, you live upon it; therefore apply your ſelves to God in the Times of need. This is evidently included in the *Promiſe*, *Iſa.* 41. 17. as well as expreſſed in the Command, *Phil.* 4. 6. Remember God, and he will not forget you.

6. Do not diſtract your Hearts with ſinful Cares, *Matth.* 6. 25, 26. Conſider *the fowls of the Air*, (ſaith Chriſt) not the Fowls at the *Door*, that are daily fed by Hand; but thoſe of the *Air*, that know not where to have the next meal; and yet God provides for them. Remember your Relation to Chriſt, and his Engagements by Promiſe to you, and by theſe things work your Hearts to Satisfaction and Content with all the allotments of Providence.

### *The Eighth Performance of Providence.*

Providential Performances in our Preſervation from the Power of Temptation.

VIII. The next great Advantage and Mercy the Saints receive from the Hand of Providence, is *in their Preſervation from the Snares, and Temptations of Sin, by its preventing Care over them.* That Providence wards off many a deadly ſtroke of Temptation, and puts by many a mortal thruſt which Satan makes at our Souls, is a Truth as manifeſt as the Light that ſhineth. This is included in that Promiſe, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. God will *with the Temptation make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* Providence gives an out-let for the Souls eſcape, when it is ſhut up into the dangerous ſtraits of Temptation. There are two eminent ways whereby the force and efficacy of Temptation is broken in Believers. One is by the Operation of internal Grace, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The Spirit luſteth againſt the Fleſh*; ſo that ye cannot do the Things that ye would (*i. e.*) Sanctification gives Sin a miſcarrying Womb after it hath conceived in the Soul. The other way, is by the external working of Providence; and of this I am here engaged to ſpeak.

The Providence of God is the great *Obex* and hinderance to a World of Sin, which elſe would break forth like an overflowing Flood from our corrupt Natures. It prevents abundance of Sin, which elſe wicked Men would commit, *Gen.* 19. 11. The *Sodomites* were greedily purſuing their Luſts: God providentially hinders it by ſmiting them blind. *Jeroboam* intends to ſmite the *Prophet*; Providence interpos'd, and wither'd his arm, 1 *Kings* 13. 4. Thus you ſee, when wicked Men have contrived, and are ready to execute their wickedneſs, Providence claps on its Manacles, *That their Hands cannot perform their enterprizes* as it is *Job* 5. 12.

And ſo much Corruption there remains on good Men that they would certainly plunge themſelves under much more guilt than they do, if Providence did not take greater care of them than they do of themſelves: For though they make Conſcience of keeping themſelves, and daily watch their Hearts and ways, yet ſuch is the deceitfulneſs of ſin, that, if Providence did not lay blocks in their way, it would (more frequently than it doth) entangle and defile them. And this it doth divers Ways.

(1.) Sometimes by ſtirring up others to interpoſe with ſeaſonable Counſels, which effectually diſſwaded them from proſecuting an evil deſign. Thus *Abigail* meets *David* in the nick of Time, and diſſwades him from his evil Purpoſe, 1 *Sam.* 25. 34.

And I find it recorded (as on another account was noted before) of that Holy Man Mr. *Dod*, that being late at Night in his Study he was ſtrongly moved (though at an unſeaſonable Hour) to viſit a *Gentleman* of his Acquaintance; and not knowing what might be the deſign of Providence therein, he obeyed and went; when he came to the Houſe, after a few knocks at the Door, the *Gentleman* himſelf came to him and askt him, whether he had any Buſineſs to him: Mr. *Dod* anſwered, no; but that he could not be quiet till he had ſeen him, O Sir, reply'd the *Gentleman*,) you are ſent of God at this Hour, for juſt now (and with that, takes the Halter out of his Pocket) I was going to deſtroy my ſelf. And thus was the miſchief prevented.

(2.) Sometimes by hindering the Means and Inſtruments, whereby the Evil it ſelf is prevented. Thus, when good *Jehoſaphat* had joined himſelf with that wicked King *Ahaziah*, to build Ships at *Ezion-Gaber* to go to *Tarſhiſh*, God prevents the Deſign, by breaking the Ships with a Storm, as you read, 2 *Chron.* 20. 35, 36, 37.

We find alſo in the Life of Mr. *Bolton*, written by Mr. *Bagſhaw*, That whilſt he was in *Oxford*, he had familiar acquaintance with Mr. *Anderton*, a good Scholar, but a ſtrong *Papiſt*, who knowing Mr. *Bolton*'s good Parts, and perceiving that he was in ſome outward wants, took this advantage, and uſed many Arguments to perſwade him to be reconciled to the Chuch of *Rome*, and to go over with him to the *Engliſh Seminary*, aſſuring him he ſhould be furniſhed with all neceſſaries, and have gold enough. M. *Bolton* being at that time, poor in Mind and Purſe, accepted the Motion, and a Day and Place was appointed in *Lancaſhire*, where they ſhould meet and take ſhipping and be gone: But Mr. *Anderton* came not, and ſo he eſcaped the ſnare.

**Some afflictions are *τιμωρίαι*, puniſhments others are *παιδεῖαι*, chaſtiſements, and theſe are both *δοκιμασίαι*, tryals of grace, and *προφυλάκτικα*, preſervatives from Sin.**

(3.) Sometimes by laying ſome ſtrong affliction upon the Body, to prevent a worſe Evil. And this is the Meaning of *Hoſea* 2. 6. *I will hedge up her Way with Thorns.* Thus *Baſil* was a long time exerciſed with a violent Headach, which (as he obſerved) was uſed by Providence to prevent Luſt. *Paul* had a Thorn in the Fleſh a Meſſenger of Satan ſent to Buffet him: And this Affliction, whatever it was, was ordained to prevent Pride in him, 2 *Cor.* 13. 7.

(4.) Sometimes Sin is prevented in the Saints, by the better Information of their Minds at the Sacred *Oracles* of God. Thus, when ſinful Motions began to riſe in *David*'s mind, from the Proſperity of the Wicked, and his own Afflicted State, and grew to that height, that he began to think, all he had done in the way of Religion, was little better than loſt labour; he is ſet right again, and the Temptation diſſolved, by going into the *Sanctuary*, where God ſhewed him how to take new Meaſures of Perſons and Things; to judge them by their Ends and Iſſues, not their preſent appearances, *Pſalm* 73. 12, 13, 17.

(5.) And ſometimes the Providence of God prevents the Sins of his People, by removing them out of the Way of Temptations by Death. In which ſenſe we may underſtand that Text, *Iſa.* 57. 1. *The Righteous is taken away from the Evil to come*; the evil of *Sin* as well as *Sufferings*. When the Lord ſees his People low ſpirited, and not able to grapple with ſtrong Tryals and Temptations which are drawing on, it is with reſpect to them a merciful Providence, to be diſbanded by Death, and ſet out of *harms* way.

Now conſider, and admire the Providence of God, O ye Saints, who hath had more Care of your Souls, than ever ye had of them. Had not the Providence of God thus wrought for you in a way of Prevention, it may be you had this Day been ſo many *Magor Miſſabibs*. How was the Heart of *David* melted under that preventing Providence fore-mentioned in 1 *Sam.* 25. 34. He bleſſes the Lord, the Inſtrument, and that Counſel by which his Soul was preſerved from Sin. Do but ſeriouſly bethink your ſelves of a few Particulars about this Caſe. As,

(1.) How your corrupt Natures have often impetuouſly hurried you on towards Sin, ſo that all the inherent Grace you had, could not withſtand its force, if Providence had not prevented it in ſome ſuch Method as you have heard, *Jam.* 1. 14. *Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſts, and enticed.* You found your ſelves but Feathers in the Wind of Temptation.

(2.) How near you have been brought to the brink of ſin, and yet ſaved by a merciful hand of Providence. May you not ſay with him in Prov. 5. 14. *I was almoſt in the midſt of all evil*: or as Pſal. 73. 2. *My feet were almoſt gone, my ſteps had well nigh ſlidden.* O merciful Providence! that ſteps in ſo opportunely to your Relief.

(3). How many have been ſuffered to fall by the hand of Temptations to the reproach of Religion, and wounding of their own Conſciences to that degree, that they have never recovered former Peace again; but lived in the World devoid of Comfort to their dying Day?

(4.) How woeful your caſe had been, if the Lord had not mercifully ſaved you from many thouſand Temptations, that have aſſaulted you? I tell you, you cannot eſtimate the Mercies you poſſeſs by means of ſuch Providences. Are your Names ſweet, and your Conſciences peaceful, two Mercies as dear to you as your two Eyes? Why ſurely, you owe them, if not wholly, yet in great meaſure, to the Aids and Aſſiſtances Providence hath given you all along the way you have paſſed through the dangerous tempting World to this Day.

Walk therefore ſuitably to this Obligation of Providence alſo: And ſee,

(1.) That you thankfully own it. Don't impute your Eſcapes from Sin to Accidents, or to your own Watchfulneſs or Wiſdom.

(2.) See that you tempt not Providence on the other Hand, by an irregular Reliance upon its care over you, without taking all due care of your ſelves. *Keep your ſelves in the Love of God*, Jude 21. *Keep your Hearts with all Diligence*, Prov. 4. 23. Though Providence keep you, yet it is in the way of your Duty.

### *The Ninth Performance of Providence.*

**Providential Preventions of bodily dangers *Pſal.* 17.8.**

Thus you ſee what care Providence hath had over your Souls, *in preventing the ſpiritual dangers and miſeries that elſe would have befallen you in the way of Temptations*: In the next

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*Thou keepeſt me as the apple of thine eye.* The Eye hath five Tunick to guard it againſt Danger. (1.) *Aranea tunica*, like a Spider Web. (2.) *Retiformis*, like a Net. (3.) *Uvea*, like a Berry. (4.) *Cornea*, like an Horn. (5.) *Adnata tunica*, the cover or of the Eye: Here is Guard upon Guard, reſembling the vario ways Providence hath to ſecure us from Ruine.

Place I will ſhew you, that it hath been *no leſs careful for your Bodies, and with how great tenderneſs it hath carry'd them in its Arms through innumerable hazards and dangers alſo.* He is call'd *the keeper of Iſrael that never ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth,* Pſal. 121. 4. *The Preſerver of Men,* Job 7. 20. To diſplay the Glory of this Providence before you, let us take into Conſideration, the perils into which the beſt of Men ſometimes fall, and the way and means by which Providence preſerves them in thoſe Dangers.

There are manifold hazards into which we are often caſt in this World. The Apoſtle *Paul* gives us a general account of his Dangers in 2 *Cor.* 11. 26. And how great a wonder is it, that our Life hath not been extinguiſh'd in ſome of thoſe Dangers we have been in? For,

(1.) Have not ſome of us faln, and that often, into very dangerous Sickneſſes and Diſeaſes, in which we have approach'd to the very brink of the Grave? and have or might have ſaid with *Hezekiah,* Iſa. 38. 10. *I ſaid in the cutting off of my Days, I ſhall go to the Gates of the Grave: I am depriv'd of the reſidue of my Years.* Have we not often had the Sentence of Death in our ſelves? And our Bodies at that time been like a leaky Ship in a Storm (as one aptly reſembles it) that hath taken in water on every ſide, till it was ready to ſink? Yet hath God preſerv'd, careen'd and launch'd us out again as well as ever. Oh what a wonder is it, that ſuch a crazy Body ſhould be preſerv'd for ſo many Years, and ſurvive ſo many Dangers! Surely, it is not more admirable to ſee a *Venice-glaſs* paſs from hand to hand in continual uſe for forty or fifty Years, and ſtill to remain whole, notwithſtanding many knocks and falls it hath had. If you enjoy Health or recover out of Sickneſſes, it is becauſe *he puts none of theſe Diſeaſes upon thee,* or becauſe he is the *Lord thy Phyſician,* Exod. 15. 26.

See *Job* 33. 18, 19, 20, 21, & 28.

Mr. *Tho. Goodwin* in his Aggravation of ſin againſt mercy, p. 30.

The Eye is but a ſmall part of the Body, yet Phyſicians reckon no leſs than thirty diſeaſes incident to it. *Naſcuntur in eo leucoma, glaucoma, lippitudo, xerophthalmia, ficus, lithiaſis, epiphora & triginta id genus vitia.*

(2.) And how many deadly Dangers hath his Hand reſcu'd ſome of you from, in thoſe Years of Confuſion and publick Calamity, when the Sword was bath'd in blood, and made horrid ſlaughter, when it may be, your lives were often given you for a prey? This *David* put a ſpecial remark upon, Pſal. 140. 7. *O God the Lord, the ſtrength of my ſalvation; thou haſt covered my Head in the day of Battle.*

*Beza* being in *France* in the firſt *Civil War,* and there toſs'd up and down for twenty two months; recorded ſix hundred Deliverances from dangers in that ſpace, for which he ſolemnly gave God thanks in his laſt Teſtament. If the Sword deſtroy'd you not, it was becauſe God did not give it a Commiſſion ſo to do.

(3.) Many of you have ſeen wonders of ſalvation upon the deeps, where the hand of God hath been ſignally ſtretch'd forth for your reſcue and deliverance. This is elegantly expreſs'd in *Pſal.* 107. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. (which I have elſewhere open'd at large) concerning which, you may ſay in a *proper* ſenſe what the *Pſalmiſt* doth *metaphorically,* Pſal. 124. 1. & 4. *If it had not been the Lord who was on our ſide, then the waters had overwhelmed us, the ſtream had gone over our ſoul.* To ſee men that have ſpent ſo many years upon the Seas (where your lives have continually hung in ſuſpenſe before you) attain to your years, when you could neither be reckon'd among the *living* nor the *dead* (as Seamen are not:) Oh, what cauſe have you to adore your great Preſerver! Many thouſands of your Companions are gone down, and you yet here to praiſe the Lord among the Living. You have border'd nearer to Eternity all your days than others, and often been in eminent perils upon the Seas, ſurely ſuch and ſo many Salvations call aloud upon you for moſt thankful acknowledgment.

See my *Seaman's Companion* p. 1.

(4.) To conclude, how innumerable hazards and accidents (the leaſt of which hath cut off others) hath God carry'd us all through! I think I may ſafely ſay, your privitive and poſitive mercies of this kind are more in number than the hairs of your heads. Many thouſands of theſe dangers we never ſaw, nor were made particularly ſenſible of; but though we ſaw them not, our God did, and brought us out of *danger,* before he brought us into *fear.* Some have been evident to us, and thoſe ſo remarkable, that we cannot think, or ſpeak of them to this day, but our Souls are freſhly affected with thoſe Mercies.

It is recorded of our famous *Jewel,* that about the beginning of Q. *Mary*'s Reign, the Inquiſition taking hold of him in *Oxford,* he fled to *London* by night; but providentially loſing the Road, he eſcap'd the *Inquiſitors,* who purſu'd him: however, he fell that night into another imminent hazard of life; for, wandering up and down in the ſnow, he fainted, and lay ſtarving in the way, panting and labouring for Life, at which time Mr. *Latimer*'s Servant found and ſaved him.

*Clarke's Lives,* p. 262.

It were eaſie to multiply Examples in this kind, Hiſtories abounding with them; but I think there are few of us, but are furniſh'd out of our own experience abundantly; ſo that I ſhall rather chuſe to preſs home the ſenſe of theſe Providences upon you, in order to a ſuitable return to the God of your Mercies for them, than add more Inſtances of this kind. To this purpoſe, I deſire you ſeriouſly to weigh the following particulars.

(1.) Conſider what you owe to Providence for your Protection, by which your Life hath been protracted unto this day, with the uſefulneſs and comfort thereof. Look abroad in the World, and you may daily ſee ſome in every place, who are Objects of Pity, bereav'd by ſad accidents of all the Comforts of Life, whilſt in the mean time Providence hath tenderly preſerv'd you, *keeping all your Bones, ſo that not one of them is broken, Pſalm* 34. 20. Is not the elegant and comely Structure of thy Body ſpoil'd, thy Members diſtorted, or made ſo many Seats of Torment, the uſefulneſs of any part deprived? Why, this is becauſe Providence never quitted its hand of thee ſince thou cameſt out of the Womb, but with a watchful Eye and tender Hand hath guarded thee in every place, and kept thee as its Charge.

(2.) Conſider, how every Member which hath been ſo tenderly kept, hath nevertheleſs been an inſtrument of Sin againſt the Lord: and that, not only in the days of your unregeneracy, when *ye yielded your Members as Inſtru-*

The learned *Alſted* ſets himſelf to enumerate the manifold hazards thro' which the life of man is carried in the hand of Providence, in *Theol. Catechet.* p. 191, 192, &c. and piouſly concludes in theſe Words, *Denique, quod ab innumeris malis, quæ ab omnibus creaturis omni tempore tibi impendent, mirabiliter liberaris; in his omnibus, inquam, quo ſcimus crebro evenire ſolita, ac proinde itá ſe habent, ut nobis quoque poſſint evenire, ſolam Dei providentiam debes ſuſpicere & prædicare.*

*ments of Unrighteouſneſs unto Sin* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in *Rom.* 6. 13) but even ſince you gave them up in Covenant unto the Lord, as dedicated Inſtruments to his Service: And yet how tender hath Providence been over them! You have often provok'd him to afflict you in every part, and lay *Penal* Evil upon every Member that hath been inſtrumental in *moral* Evil; but O how great have his Compaſſions been towards you, and his Patience admirable!

(3.) Conſider, what is the aim of Providence in all the tender care it hath manifeſted for you? Why doth it protect you ſo aſſiduouſly, and ſuffer no Evil to beſal you? Is it not that you ſhould employ your Bodies for God, and cheerfully apply your ſelves to that ſervice he hath call'd you to? Doubtleſs, this is the end and level of theſe Mercies; for elſe to what purpoſe are they afforded you? Your Bodies are a part of Chriſts purchaſe, as well as your Souls, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. They are committed to the Charge and Tutelage of Angels, *Heb.* 1. 14. who have perform'd many Services for them. They are dedicated by your ſelves to the Lord, and that upon the higheſt account, *Rom.* 12. 1. They have already been the Subjects of manifold Mercies in this World, *Pſal.* 35. 10. and ſhall partake of ſingular Glory and Happineſs in the World to come, *Phil.* 3. 21. And ſhall they not then be employ'd, yea, cheerfully worn out in his Service? How reaſonable is it they ſhould be ſo? Why are they ſo tenderly preſerv'd by God, if they muſt not be us'd for God?

### *The Tenth Performance of Providence.*

**Providential Aſſiſtances in the Work of Mortification.**

X. You have heard many and great things perform'd for you by Divine Providence, in the former particulars; but there is an eminent favour it beſtows on the Saints, which hath not yet been conſider'd, and indeed is too little minded by us, and that is, *The aid and aſſiſtance it gives the People of God in the great work of Mortification.*

Mortification of our ſinful Affections and Paſſions, is the one half of our Sanctification, Rom 6. 11. *Dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God.*

It's the great Evidence of our Intereſt in Chriſt. See *Gal.* 5. 24. *Rom.* 6. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

It's our ſafety in the hour of Temptation. The corruptions in the world are through luſt, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4.

Our inſtrumental fitneſs for ſervice, depends much upon it, 2 *Tim.* 2. 21. *John* 15. 2. How great a ſervice to our ſouls therefore muſt that be, by which this bleſſed work is carried on upon them?

Now there are two means or inſtruments employ'd in this work. The *Spirit*, who effects it *internally*, *Rom.* 8. 13. And *Providence* which aſſiſts it *externally*. The *Spirit* indeed is the principal Agent, upon whoſe operation the ſucceſs of this work depends; and all the Providences in the world can never effect it without him. But theſe are ſecondary and ſubordinate means, which by the bleſſing of the Spirit upon them, have a great ſtroke in the work. How they are ſo ſerviceable to this end and purpoſe, I ſhall open in the following account.

(1.) More generally. The moſt wiſe God orders the diſpenſations of Providence in a bleſſed ſubordination to the work of his Spirit. There is a ſweet harmony betwixt them in their diſtinct workings. They all meet in that one bleſſed iſſue which God hath by the counſel of his Will directed them to, *Eph.* 1. 11. *Rom.* 8. 28. Hence it is, that the Spirit is ſaid to be in, and order the motions of the wheels of Providence, *Ezek.* 1. 20. and ſo they move together by conſent. Now, one great part of the Spirit's internal work, being to deſtroy ſin in the People of God; ſee how conformable to his deſign, external Providences are ſteer'd and order'd in the following particulars.

(1.) There is in all the regenerate a ſtrong propenſion and inclination to ſin, and in that lies a principal part of the power of ſin. Of this *Paul* ſadly complains, Rom. 7. 23. *But I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members*: and every believer daily finds it to his grief. O it's hard, it's hard to forbear thoſe things that grieve God. God hath made an hedge about us, and fenc'd us againſt ſin by his Laws; but there is a proneneſs in nature to break over the hedge, and that againſt the very reluctations of the Spirit of God in us. Now, ſee in this caſe, the concurrence and aſſiſtance of Providence for the prevention of ſin; look, as the Spirit internally reſiſts thoſe ſinful inclinations, ſo Providence externally lays bars and blocks in our way to hinder and prevent ſin: and this is the meaning of thoſe places lately cited, *Hoſea* 2. 6. & 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. ſo *Job* 33. 17, 18, 19. There is many a bodily diſtemper inflicted on this very ſcore, to be a clog to prevent ſin: O bear them patiently upon this conſideration. *Baſil* was ſorely griev'd with an inveterate headach, he earneſtly prays it might be remov'd; God remov'd it: but no ſooner was he freed of this clog, but he felt the inordinate motions of luſt; which made him pray for his headach again. So it might be with many of us, if our clogs were off.

Qu

A Queſtion may be mov'd here, *Whether it be the genius and property of a gracious Spirit, to forbear Sin, becauſe of the rod of Affliction?* They have ſurely higher motives and nobler principles than theſe. This is the temper of a carnal and ſlaviſh ſpirit.

Sol.

Indeed it is ſo, when this is the ſole or principal reſtraint from ſin: when a man abhors not ſin, becauſe of the intrinſick *filth*, but only becauſe of the troubleſome *conſequents* and *effects*. But this is vaſtly different from the caſe of the Saints under ſanctify'd afflictions? for as they have *higher* motives and *nobler* principles, ſo they have *lower* and more *ſenſible* ones too; and theſe are, in their kind and place, very uſeful to them. (2.) Beſides, you muſt know, that afflictions work in another way upon gracious hearts to reſtrain them from ſin, or warn them againſt ſin, than they do upon others. It is not ſo much the ſmart of the rod which they feel, as the tokens of God's diſpleaſure, which affright and ſcare them, Job 10. 17. *Thou reneweſt thy witneſſes againſt me*, &c. and this is that which principally affects them. See Pſal. 6. 1. *O Lord rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chaſten me in thy hot diſpleaſure*: and

Jer. 10. 24. *O Lord, correct me, but with Judgment, not in thy anger, leſt thou bring me to nothing:* and ſurely this is no low and common argument.

(2.) Notwithſtanding this double fence of Gods command, and preventive afflictions, yet ſin is too hard for the beſt of Men: their corruptions carry them through all to ſin. And when it is ſo, not only doth the *Spirit* work internally, but *Providence* alſo works externally, in order to their *reduction*. The ways of ſin are not only made bitter unto them, by the remorſe of Conſcience, but by thoſe afflictive rods upon the outward man, with which God alſo follows it; and in both theſe reſpects, I find that place expounded Eccleſ. 10. 8. *Whoſo breaketh an hedge, a Serpent ſhall bite him.* If, as ſome expound it, the *hedge* be the *Law* of God, then the *Serpent* is the *emorſe* of Conſcience, and the ſharp teeth of *affliction*, which he ſhall quickly feel, if he be one that belongs to God.

The deſign and aim of theſe afflictive Providences, is to purge and cleanſe them from that pollution into which temptations have plunged them, Iſa. 27. 9. *By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be Purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his ſin.* To the ſame purpoſe is that place, Pſal. 119. 67. *Before I was afflicted I went aſtray, but now have I kept thy word.* Theſe afflictions have the ſame uſe and end to our ſouls, that froſty weather hath upon thoſe clothes that are laid a bleaching; they alter the hue, and make it whiter, Dan. 11. 35. *And ſome of them of underſtanding ſhall fall to try them, and to purge, and to make them white.*

And here it may be queried, *Upon what account afflictions are ſaid to purge away the iniquities of the Saints. Is it not unwarrantable, and very diſhonourable to Chriſt, to attribute that to affliction, which is the peculiar honour of his blood?*

It is confeſſed, that the blood of Chriſt is the only *Lavatory*, or Fountain opened for ſin, and that no afflictions how many, or ſtrong, or continual ſoever they be, can in themſelves purge away the pollution of ſin, as we ſee in wicked men, who are afflicted and afflicted, and again afflicted; and yet, nevertheleſs ſinful: and the Torments of Hell, how extream, univerſal and continual ſoever they are, yet ſhall never fetch out the ſtain of one ſin.

But yet, this hinders not, but that a ſanctified affliction, may in the efficacy and vertue of *Chriſt*'s blood, produce ſuch bleſſed effects upon the Soul. Though a *Croſs* without a *Chriſt*, never did any Man good, yet thouſands have been beholden to the *Croſs*, as it hath wrought in the vertue of his death for their good. And this is the caſe of thoſe Souls that this diſcourſe is concerned about.

(3.) We find the beſt hearts, if God beſtow any comfortable enjoyment upon them, too apt to be over-heated in their affections towards it, and to be too much taken up with theſe outward comforts. This alſo ſheweth the great power and ſtrength of corruption in the people of God, and muſt by ſome means or other be mortified in them.

This was the caſe of *Hezekiah*, his heart was too much affected with his treaſures; ſo that he could not hide a vain-glorious Temper, as you find *Iſa.* 39. 2. and ſo good *David*, *Pſal.* 30. 7. he thought his Mountain, (*i. e.* his Kingdom, and the ſplendor and glory of his preſent ſtate) had ſtood ſo faſt, that it ſhould never be moved.

The ſame good man, how did he let out his heart and affections upon his beautiful Son *Abſalom*; as appears by the doleful lamentation he made at his death, prizing him above his own life, which was a thouſand times more worth than he.

So *Jonah*, when God raiſed up a *Gourd* for him to ſhelter him from the Sun, how exceſſively was he taken with it, and was exceedingly glad of it?

But will God ſuffer things to lie thus? Shall the Creature purloin, and draw away our affections from him? No, this is our corruption, and God will purge it. And to this end he ſends forth Providence to ſmite thoſe Creatures, on which our affections are either inordinately or exceſſively let out, or elſe to turn them into rods, and ſmite us by them.

Is *Hezekiah* too much puffed up with his full Exchequer? Why, thoſe very *Babylonians* to whom he boaſted of it, ſhall empty it, and make a prey of it, *Iſa.* 39. 6.

Is *David* hugging himſelf in a fond conceit of the ſtability of his Earthly Splendor? Lo, how ſoon God beclouds all, *Pſal.* 30. 7. Is *Abſalom* doted on, and crept too far into his good Fathers heart? this ſhall be the Son of his ſorrow, that ſhall ſeek after his Fathers life.

Is *Jonah* ſo tranſported with his *Gourd*? God will prepare a Worm to ſmite it, *Jonah* 4. 6, 7.

How many Husbands, Wives and Children hath Providence ſmitten upon this very account? It might have ſpared them longer, if they had been loved more regularly, and moderately. This hath blaſted many an Eſtate, and hopeful project; and it is a merciful diſpenſation for our good.

(4.) The ſtrength of our unmortified Corruption ſhews it ſelf in our pride, and the ſwelling vanity of our hearts when we have a name and eſteem among men? when we are applauded and honoured, when we are admired for any gift or excellency that is in us, this draws forth the pride of the Heart, and ſhews the vanity that is in it. So you read, Prov. 27. 21. *As the fining pot for ſilver, and the furnace for gold, ſo is a man to his praiſe:* (*i. e.*) as the furnace will diſcover what droſs is in the metal when it is melted, ſo will praiſe and commendations diſcover what pride is in the heart of him that receives them. This made a good man ſay, *He that praiſes me, wounds me.* And which is more ſtrange, this corruption may be felt in the Heart, even when the laſt breath is ready to expire. It was the ſaying of one of the *German Divines*, when thoſe about him recounted for his encouragement the many ſervices he had done for God, *auferte ignem* (ſaith he) *adhuc enim paleas habeo. Take away the fire, for there is ſtill the chaff of pride in me.* To crucifie this corruption Providence takes off the bridle of reſtraint from ungodly men, and ſometimes permits them to traduce the names of Gods ſervants, as *Shimei* did *David*'s. Yea, they ſhall fall into diſeſteem among their friends, as *Paul* did among the *Corinthians*; and all this to keep down the ſwelling of their ſpirits at the ſenſe of thoſe excellencies that are in them: The deſign of theſe Providences being nothing elſe, but to *hide Pride from man*. Yea, it deſerves a ſpecial remarque, that when ſome good men have been engaged in a publick and eminent work, and have therein, it may be, too much ſought their own applauſe, God hath withheld uſual aſſiſtance at ſuch times from them, and cauſed them to falter ſo in their work, that they have come off with ſhame and pity at ſuch times, how ready and preſential ſoever they have been at other times. It were eaſie to give divers remarkable examples to confirm this Obſervation. But I paſs on.

(5.) The corruption of the heart ſhews it ſelf, in raiſing up great expectations to our ſelves from the Creature, and projecting abundance of felicity and contentment from ſome promiſing and hopeful enjoyments we have in the world. This we find to have been the caſe of holy *Job* in the days of his proſperity, Job 28. 19. *Then I ſaid, I ſhall dye in my neſt, I ſhall multiply my days as the ſand.* But how ſoon were all theſe expectations daſht by a gloomy Providence that benighted him in the Noon-tide of his proſperity: and all this for his good, to take off his heart more fully from creature expectations. We often find the beſt men to over-reckon themſelves in worldly things, and over-act their confidences about them. They that have great and well-grounded expectations from *Heaven*, may have too great and ungrounded expectations from the *Earth*. But when it is ſo, it's very uſual for Providence to undermine their Earthly hopes, and convince them by experience how vain they are. Thus *Haggai* 2. 9. the peoples hearts were intently ſet upon proſperous Providences, full Harveſts, and great Increaſe; whilſt in the mean while no regard was had to the Worſhip of God, and the things of his Houſe; therefore Providence blaſts their hopes, and brings them to little.

(6.) Corruption diſcovers it ſelf in dependance upon Creature comforts and ſenſible props. Oh how apt are the beſt men, to lean upon thoſe things, and ſtay themſelves upon them! Thus did *Iſrael* ſtay themſelves upon *Egypt*, as a feeble man would lean upon his ſtaff; but God ſuffered it both to fail them, and wound them, *Ezek.* 29. 6, 7. 8. So for ſingle perſons, how apt are they to depend upon their ſenſible ſupports? Thus we lean on our Relations, and the inward thoughts of our hearts are, that they ſhall be to us ſo many ſprings of comfort to refreſh us throughout our lives; but God will ſhew us by his Providence our miſtake and error in theſe things. Thus an Husband is ſmitten, to draw the ſoul of a Wife nearer to God in dependence upon him, 1 *Tim.* 5. 5. So for Children, we are apt to ſay of this or that *Child*, as *Lamech* of *Noah*, Gen. 5. 29. *This ſame ſhall comfort us*; but the wind paſſes over theſe flowers and they are withered, to teach us, that our happineſs is not bound up in theſe enjoyments. So for our *Eſtates*, when the world ſmiles upon us, and we have got a warm neſt, how do we propheſie of reſt and peace in thoſe acquiſitions, minding with good *Baruch*, great things for our ſelves; but Providence by a particular or general calamity overturns our projects, as *Jer.* 45. 4, 5. and all this to reduce our hearts from the Creature, to God, our only reſt.

(7.) Corruption diſcovers its ſtrength in good men, by their *adherence* to things below, and lothneſs to go hence. This often proceeds from the engaging enjoyments, and pleaſant fruitions we have here below. Providence mortifies this Inclination in the Saints, (1.) By killing thoſe enſnaring comforts before-hand, making all or moſt of our pleaſant things to die before us. (2.) By imbittering this world to us, by the troubles of it. (3.) By making life undeſirable, through the pains and infirmities we feel in the body and ſo looſing our root, in order to our more eaſie fall by the fatal ſtroke.

And thus I have finiſhed the Second General Head; but before I paſs from this, I cannot but make a pauſe, and deſire you with me, to ſtand in an holy amazement, and wonder at the dealings of God with ſuch poor worms as we are! Surely God deals familiarly with men! his condeſcenſions to his own clay are aſtoniſhing! All that I ſhall note at preſent about it, ſhall be under theſe three heads, wherein I find the matter of my preſent meditations ſummed up by the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 144. 3. *Lord what is man, that thou takeſt knowledge of him? or the ſon of man, that thou makeſt account of him?* And in this Scripture you have repreſented,

1. The immenſe and tranſcendent greatneſs of God, who is infinitely above us and all our thoughts, Job 11. 7, 8, 9. *Canſt thou by ſearching, find out God? canſt thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as Heaven; what canſt thou do? deeper than Hell, what canſt thou know? The meaſure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.* 2 Chron. 2. 6. *The Heaven and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him.* Exod. 15. 11. *He is glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, doing wonders.* When the Scripture ſpeaks of him comparatively, ſee how it expreſſes his greatneſs, Iſa. 40. 15, 19, 17. *Behold the Nations are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the balance: behold he taketh up the Iſles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not ſufficient to burn, nor the Beaſts thereof ſufficient for a burnt-offering. All Nations before him are as nothing, and they are accounted to him leſs than nothing and vanity.* When the holieſt men have addreſt themſelves to him, ſee with what humility and deep adoration they have ſpoken of him and to him! Iſa. 6. 5. *Wo is me for I am undone, becauſe I am a man of unclean lips, and I will dwell in the midſt of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have ſeen the King the Lord of Hoſts.* Nay, what reſpects the very Angels of Heaven have of that glorious Majeſty, you may ſee, Ver. 2. 3. *Each one had ſix wings, with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did flye And one cryed unto another, and ſaid, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hoſts; the whole Earth is full of his glory.*

The baſeneſs, vileneſs and utter unworthineſs of Man, yea, the holieſt and beſt of men before God, Pſal. 39. 5. *Verily every man, at his beſt eſtate, is altogether vanity.* Every man, take where you will: and every man *in his beſt eſtate*, or ſtanding in his freſheſt glory, is, not only *vanity*, but *altogether* vanity. *Col Adam col Hebel*, every man is every vanity. For do but conſider the beſt of men in their *Extraction*, in their *Conſtitution*, and in their outward *Condition*.

(1.) In their *Extraction*, Eph. 2. 3. *By nature*

*ture Children of wrath even as others.* The blood that runs in our veins, is as much tainted as theirs in Hell.

(3.) Conſider them in their *Conſtitution* and natural temper, and it is no better, yea in many a worſe temper than in Reprobates: and though grace depoſe ſin in them from the Throne; yet Oh what offenſive and God provoking corruptions daily break out of the beſt hearts;

(3.) Conſider them in their *outward Condition*, and they are inferiour (for the moſt part) to others, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26, 27, 28, *&c.* and *Matth.* 11. 25. *I thank thee, O Father* (ſaith Chriſt) *that thou haſt hid theſe things from the Wiſe and Prudent, and haſt revealed them unto Babes.*

And now let us conſider and admire, that ever this great and bleſſed God ſhould be ſo much concerned as you have heard he is in all his Providences about ſuch vile deſpicable Worms as we are! He needs us not, but is perfectly bleſſed and happy in himſelf without us. We can add nothing to him, Job 22. 2. *Can a man be profitable to God?* No, the holieſt of men add nothing to him; yet, ſee how great account he makes of us. For,

1. Doth not his eternal electing love beſpeak the dear account he made of us, *Eph.* 1. 4, 5. How ancient, how free, and how aſtoniſhing is this act of grace! This is that deſign which all Providences are in purſuit of, and will not reſt till they have executed.

2. Doth not the gift of his *only Son* out of his boſom ſpeak this truth, That God makes great account of this vile thing Man? Never was man ſo magnified before. If *David* could ſay, Pſal. 8. 3. *When I conſider the Heavens the work of thy hands, the Moon and Stars which thou haſt ordained, Lord, what is man?* How much more may we ſay? when we conſider thy *Son*, that lay in thy boſom, his infinite excellency, and unſpeakable dearneſs to thee; Lord, what is man, that ſuch a *Chriſt* ſhould be delivered to death for him! for *him*, and not for fallen *Angels*! Heb. 2. 19. for *him* when in a ſtate of enmity with God! *Rom.* 5. 8.

3. Doth not the aſſiduity of his Providential care for us, ſpeak his eſteem of us? Iſa. 27. 3. *Leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. He withdraweth not his eye from the righteous*, Job 36. 7. no, not a moment all their days; for did he ſo, a thouſand miſchiefs in that moment would ruſh in upon him, and ruine him.

4. Doth not the tenderneſs of his Providence ſpeak his eſteem of us? Iſa. 66. 13. *as one whom his Mother comforteth, ſo will I comfort you.* He comforts his (*viz* by refreſhing Providences) as an indulgent Mother her tender Child. So Iſa. 31. 5. *As birds flying, viz.* to their neſts, when their young are in danger, *ſo he defends his.* No στοργὴ tenderneſs in the Creature can ſhadow forth the tender bowels of the Creator.

5. Doth not the variety of the fruits of his Providence ſpeak it? Lam. 3. 23. *Our mercies are new every morning.* See *Pſal.* 40. 5. It is a fountain from which do ſtream forth ſpiritual & temporal, ordinary and extraordinary, publick and perſonal mercies, mercies without number.

6. Doth not the miniſtration of *Angels* in the Providential Kingdom ſpeak it? Heb. 1. ult. *Are they not all miniſtring ſpirits ſent forth*, &c.

7. Doth not the Providence, which this day calls us to celebrate the memory of, beſpeak the great account God hath for his people? O if not ſo, why had we not been given up as a prey to their teeth? See *Pſal.* 124. If the Lord had not been on our ſide then wicked men, there compar'd to fire, water, wild beaſts, had devoured us. O bleſſed be God for that teeming Providence that hath already brought forth more than ſeventy years liberty and peace to the Church of God. I ſhall move in behalf of this Providence, that you would do by it, as the Jews by their *Purim*, *Eſth.* 9. 27, 28. and the rather, becauſe we ſeem now to be as near danger by the ſame Enemy as ever ſince that time: and if ſuch a mercy as this be forgotten, God may ſay as *Judges* 10. 13. *I will deliver you no more.*

Preached *Novemb.* v.

### *The Third General Head.*

Having proved the Concernments of the people of God to be conducted by the care of ſpecial Providence, and given Inſtances in the laſt ten named Heads, what influence Providence hath upon thoſe Intereſts and concerns of theirs among the reſt; we come in the next place, to prove it to be the duty of the people of God, to reflect upon theſe performances of Providence for them, at all times; but eſpecially in times of ſtraits and troubles.

This I will evidence to be your unqueſtionable duty, by the following particulars.

1. This is our duty, becauſe God hath expreſly commanded it, and called his people to make the moſt ſerious reflections, and animadverſions upon his works, whether of mercy or Judgement. So when that dreadfulleſt of all Judgments was executed upon his profeſſing people for their Apoſtaſie from God, and God had removed the Symbols of his preſence from among them, the reſt are bid to go, (*i. e.*) by their meditations, (to ſend at leaſt their thoughts) to *Shiloh*, and *ſee what God did to it*, Jer. 7. 12. So for mercies, God calls us to conſider and review them, Micah 6. 5. *Remember O my people from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the faithfulneſs of the Lord*: *q. d.* if you reflect not upon that ſignal Providence, my faithfulneſs will be covered, and your unfaithfulneſs diſcovered. So for Gods works of Providence about the Creatures, we are called to conſider them, that we may prop up our faith by thoſe conſiderations for our own ſupplies, *Matth.* 6. 28. conſider the Fowls and Lilies.

2. It's plain, that this is our duty, becauſe the neglect of it is every where in Scripture condemned as a ſin. To be of an heedleſs inobſervant temper is very diſpleaſing to God; and ſo much appears by that Scripture. Iſa. 26. 11. *Lord when thy hand is lifted up they will not ſee.* Nay, it is a ſin, which God threatens and denounces woe againſt in his Word, *Pſal.* 28. 4, 5. and *Iſa.* 5. 12, 13. Yea, God not only threatens, but ſmites men with viſible Judgments for this ſin, *Job* 34. 26, 27.

And for this end and purpoſe it is, that the Holy Ghoſt hath affixed thoſe notes of attention to the narratives of the works of Providence in *Scripture*, all which do invite and call men to a due and dear obſervation of them. So in that great and celebrated work of Providence, in delivering *Iſrael* out of *Egyptian* bondage, you find a note of *attention* twice affixed to it, *Exod.* 3. 2, 9. So when that daring Enemy *Rabſheka* (that put *Hezekiah* and all the people into ſuch a conſternation) was defeated by Providence, there is a note of *attention* prefixt to that Providence, 2 Kings 19. 7. *Behold, I will ſend a blaſt upon him*, &c. So when God glorifies his wiſdom and power, in delivering his people from their Enemies, and enſnaring them in the works of their own hands, a double note of *attention* is affixed to that double work of Providence, *Pſal.* 9. 16. *Higgaion ſelah.* So at the opening of every ſeal which contains a remarkable ſeries or branch of Providence, how particularly is attention commanded to every one of them, Rev. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *Come and ſee, come and ſee.* All theſe are very uſeleſs and ſuperfluous additions in Scripture, if no ſuch duty lies upon us. See *Pſal.* 66. 5.

4. Without due obſervation of the work of Providence, no praiſe can be rendered to God for any of them. Praiſe and thankſgiving for mercies depend upon this act of obſervation of them, and cannot be performed without it. *Pſalm* 107. is ſpent in narratives of Gods Providential care of men. To his people in ſtraits, *Ver.* 4, 5, 6. To priſoners in their bonds, *Ver.* 10, 11, 12. To men that lie languiſhing upon beds of ſickneſs, *Ver.* 17, 18, 19. To Seamen upon the ſtormy Ocean, *Ver.* 23, *&c.* To men in times of famine, *Ver.* 33. to *Ver.* 40. Yea, his Providence is diſplayed in all thoſe changes that fall out in the world, debaſing the high, and exalting the low, *Ver.* 40, 41. and at every paragraph men are ſtill called upon to praiſe God for each of theſe Providences: but *Ver. ult.* ſhews you what a neceſſary ingredient to that duty, obſervation is, *Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things; even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord.* So that of neceſſity, God muſt be defrauded of his praiſe, if this duty be neglected.

5. Without this, we loſe the uſefulneſs and benefit of all the works of God for us or others, which would be an unſpeakable loſs indeed to us. This is the food our faith lives upon in days of diſtreſs, Pſal. 74. 14. *Thou brakeſt the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gaveſt him to be meat to the People inhabiting the Wilderneſs*; *(i. e.)* food to their faith. From Providences paſt, Saints uſe to argue to freſh and new ones to come. So *David*, 1 Sam. 17. 37. *The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the Lyon, and out of the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philiſtin.* So *Paul*, 2 Cor. 1. 10. *Who hath delivered, and in whom alſo we truſt, that he will yet deliver.* If theſe be forgotten or not conſidered, the hands of faith hang down. See Matth. 16. 9. *How is it that ye do not remember, neither conſider?* This is a *Topick* from which the Saints had uſed to draw their Arguments in prayer for new mercies. As *Moſes*, Numb. 14. 19. when he prays for continued or new pardons for the people, he argues from what was paſt, *As thou haſt forgiven them from Egypt until now.* So the Church, *Iſa.* 51. 9, 10. argues for new Providences; upon the ſame ground *Moſes* pleaded for new pardons.

It is a vile ſlighting of God, not to obſerve what of himſelf he manifeſts in his Providences. For in all Providences, eſpecially in ſome, he comes nigh to us. He doth ſo in his Judgments, Mal. 3. 5. *I will come nigh to you in judgment.* He comes nigh in mercies alſo, Pſal. 145. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him*, &c. Yea, he is ſaid to viſit us by his Providence when he corrects, *Hoſea* 9. 7 and when he ſaves and delivers, *Pſal.* 106. 4. Theſe viſitations of God preſerve our ſpirits, *Job* 10. 12. And it is a wonderful condeſcenſion in the great God to viſit us ſo often. Job 7. 18. *every morning and every moment.* But not to take notice of it, is a vile and brutiſh contempt of God, *Iſa.* 1. 3. *Zeph.* 3. 2. You would not do ſo by a man for whom you have any reſpect. It's the Character of the wicked, not to regard Gods favours, *Iſa.* 26. 10. or frowns, *Jer.* 5. 3.

7. In a word, Men can never order their addreſſes to God in prayer, ſuitable to their conditions, without due *obſervation* of his Providences. Your prayers are to be ſuitable to your conditions: ſometimes we are called to praiſe, ſometimes to humiliation. In the way of his Judgments you are to wait for him, *Iſa.* 26. 8. to prepare to meet him, *Zeph.* 2. 1, 2. *Amos* 4. 12. Now your buſineſs is, to turn away his anger which you ſee approaching. And ſometimes you are called to praiſe him for mercies received, *Iſa* 12. 1, 2. but then you muſt firſt obſerve them.

Thus you find the matter of *David*'s Pſalms ſtill varied, according to the Providences that befell him: but an inobſervant heedleſs ſpirit can never do it. And thus you have the grounds of the Duty briefly repreſented; we paſs on to

### *The Fourth General Head.*

Let us next (according to our method propoſed) proceed to ſhew in what manner we are to reflect upon the *Performances of Providence* for us. And certainly it is not every ſlight and tranſient glance, nor every cold hiſtorical, unaffecting rehearſal, or recognition of his Providences towards you, that will paſs with God for a diſcharge of this great duty. No, no, it is another manner of Buſineſs than the moſt of Men underſtand it to be. O that we were but acquainted with this heavenly ſpiritual exerciſe! how ſweet would it make our lives! how light would it make our burdens! Ah Sirs! you live eſtranged from the pleaſure of the Chriſtian life, while you live in the ignorance or neglect of this Duty. Now to lead you up to this heavenly, ſweet and profitable exerciſe, I will beg your attention to the following Directions.

### *The Firſt Direction.*

*Labour to get as full and through recognitions of the Providences of God about you from firſt to laſt, as you are able.* O fill your Hearts with the thoughts of him and his ways. If a ſingle act of Providence be ſo raviſhing and tranſporting, what would many ſuch be, if they were preſented together to the view of the Soul? If one *Star* be ſo beautiful to behold, what is a *Conſtellation!* Let your reflection therefore upon the acts and workings of Providence for you, be full *extenſively* and *intenſively.*

(1.) Let them be as *extenſively* full as may be, Search backward into all the performances of Providence throughout your Lives. So did *Aſaph* in Pſal. 77. 11, 12. *I will remember the works of the Lord: ſurely I will remember thy wonders of old: I will meditate of all thy works, and talk of thy doings.* He laboured to recover and revive the ancient Providences of Gods mercies many years paſt, and ſuck a freſh ſweetneſs out of them by new reviews of them. Ah Sirs, let me tell you, there is not ſuch a pleaſant *Hiſtory* for you to read in all the World, as the *Hiſtory* of your own Lives, if you would but ſit down, and record to your ſelves from the beginning hitherto, what God hath been to you, and done for you; what ſignal manifeſtations, and out-breakings of his mercy, faithfulneſs and love, there have been in all the conditions you have paſt through: if your Hearts do not melt before you have gone half through that Hiſtory, they are hard hearts indeed. *My Father, the Guide of my Youth.*

(2.) Let them be as *intenſively* full as may be. Let not your thoughts ſwim like *feathers* upon the ſurface of the waters, but ſink like *lead* to the bottom. *The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of them that have pleaſure therein,* Pſal. 111. 2. Not that I think it feaſible to ſound the depth of Providence by our ſhort line, Pſal. 77. 19. *Thy way is in the ſea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footſteps are not known*; but it's our duty to dive as far as we can; and to admire the depth, when we cannot touch the bottom. It is in our viewing Providences, as it was with *Elijah*'s ſervant, when he looked out for rain, 1 *Kings* 18. 44. he went out once and viewed the Heavens, and ſaw nothing; but the *Prophet* bids him go again and again, and look upon the face of Heaven ſeven times; and when he had done ſo, what now, ſaith the *Prophet*? O now, ſaith he, *I ſee a cloud riſing like a Mans hand*; and then, keeping his eye upon it intent, he ſees the whole face of Heaven covered with clouds. So you may look upon ſome Providences once and again, and ſee little or nothing in them; but look *ſeven times*, (i. e.) *meditate often* upon it, and you ſhall ſee its increaſing glory, like that increaſing cloud.

There are divers things to be diſtinctly pondered, and valued in one ſingle Providence, before you can judge the amount and worth of it; as (1.) The *ſeaſonableneſs* of mercy may give it a very great value. When it ſhall be timed ſo opportunely, and fall out in ſuch a nick, as may make it a thouſand fold more conſiderable to you than the ſame mercy would have been at another time. Thus when our wants are ſuffered to grow to an extremity, and all viſible hopes fail, then to have relief given in, wonderfully enhances the price of ſuch a mercy, *Iſa.* 41. 17, 18.

(2.) The *peculiar care* and kindneſs of Providence to us, is a conſideration which exceedingly heightens the mercy in it ſelf, and endears it to us. So, when in general calamities upon the World, we are exempted by the favour of Providence, covered under its wings, when God ſhall call to us in evil days, *Come my People, enter thou into thy Chambers,* as it is in *Iſa.* 26. 20, 19. When ſuch *Promiſes* ſhall be fulfilled to us in times of want and famine, as *Pſal.* 33. 18, 19. When others are abandoned and expoſed to miſery, who have every way as much, it may be much more viſible ſecurity againſt it; and yet they delivered up, and we ſaved: Oh, how endearing are ſuch Providences! *Pſal.* 91. 7, 8.

(3.) The *Introductiveneſs* of a Providence, is of ſpecial regard and conſideration, and by no means to be neglected by us. There are leading Providences, which how ſlight and trivial ſoever they may ſeem in themſelves, yet in this reſpect juſtly challenge the firſt rank among Providential favours to us; becauſe they uſher in a multitude of other mercies, and draw a bleſſed train of happy conſequences after them. Such a Providence was that of *Jeſſe*'s ſending *David* with proviſions to his Brethren that lay encamped in the Army, 1 *Sam.* 17. 17. And thus every Chriſtian may furniſh himſelf out of his own ſtock of Experience, if he will but reflect, and conſider, the Place where he is, the Relations that he hath, and the Way by which he was led into them.

(4.) The *Inſtruments* imployed by Providence for you, are of ſpecial conſideration. And the finger of God is clearly ſeen by us when we purſue that meditation. For,

Sometimes great mercies ſhall be conveyed to us by very improbable means, and more probable ones laid aſide. A *ſtranger* ſhall be ſtirred up to do that for you, which your near relations in nature had no power or will to do for you. *Jonathan*, a meer ſtranger to *David*, clave cloſer to him, and was more friendly and uſeful to him, than his own Brethren who deſpiſed and ſlighted him. Miniſters have found more kindneſs and reſpect from ſtrangers than their own people that are more obliged to them, Mark 6. 4. *A Prophet* (ſaith Chriſt) *is not without Honour, ſave in his own Country, and among his own Kin, and in his own Houſe.*

how true

Sometimes by the hands of *Enemies*, as well as Strangers, Rev. 12. 16. *The Earth helped the Woman.* God hath bowed the hearts of many wicked men, to ſhew great kindneſs to his people, *Acts* 28. 2.

Sometimes God makes uſe of Inſtruments for good to his people, who deſigned nothing but evil and miſchief to them. Thus *Joſeph*'s Brethren were inſtrumental to his advancement in *that very thing*, wherein they deſigned his *ruin*, *Gen.* 50. 20.

(5.) The *deſign* and *ſcope* of Providence muſt not eſcape our through conſideration, what the aim and level of Providence is. And truly this, of all others, is the moſt warming and melting conſideration. You have the general account of the aim of all Providences, in Rom 8. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God.* A thouſand friendly hands are at work for them, to promote and bring about their happineſs. O, this is enough to ſweeten the bitterneſs of Providence to us, that we know it ſhall turn to our ſalvation, *Phil.* 1. 19.

(9.) The *reſpect* and *relation* Providence bears to our *prayers*, is of ſingular conſideration, and a moſt takingand ſweet Meditation. *Prayer* honours Providence, and Providence honours Prayer. Great notice is taking of this in Scripture, *Gen.* 24. 45. *Dan.* 9. 20. *Acts* 12. 12. You have had the *very Petitions* you *asked* of him. Providences have born the very ſignatures of your Prayers upon them. O how affectingly ſweet are ſuch mercies?

### *The Second Direction.*

*In all your Obſervation of Providence, have ſpecial reſpect to that Word of God, which is fulfilled and made good to you thereby.*

This is a clear truth that all Providences have relation to the written Word. Thus *So-*

*lomon* in his prayer, acknowledges, that the Promiſes and Providences of God went along ſtep by ſtep with his Father *David* all his days; and that his hand (put there for his Providence) had fulfilled whatever his mouth had ſpoken, 1 *Kings* 8. 24. So *Joſhua* in like manner acknowledges, that *not one good thing had failed of all the good things which the Lord had ſpoken*, Joſ. 23. 14. He had carefully obſerved what relation the *Works* of God had to his *Word*. He compared them together, and found an exact harmony. And ſo may you too, if you will compare them as he did.

This I ſhall the more inſiſt upon, becauſe it is by ſome *Interpreters* ſuppoſed to be the very Scope of the Text. For (as was noted in the Explication) they ſupply and fill the ſenſe with *quæ promiſit*, the things which he hath promiſed; and ſo read the Text thus, *I will cry unto God moſt high*, *to God who performeth* the things he hath promiſed, *for me*.

Now though I ſee no reaſon to limit the ſenſe ſo narrowly, yet it cannot be denyed, but this is an eſpecial part of its intendment. Let us therefore in all our reviews of Providence, conſider, what word of God, whether it be of threatning, caution, counſel, or promiſe is at any time made good to us by his Providences. And hereby a twofold excellent advantage will reſult to us.

(1.) This will greatly confirm to us the truth of the Scripture, when we ſhall ſee its truth ſo manifeſt in the events. Certainly had *Scripture* no other ſeal or atteſtation, this alone would be an unanſwerable Argument of its divinity. When men ſhall find in all ages the works of God wrought ſo exactly according to this Model, that we may ſee. As we have read or heard, ſo have we ſeen. O how great a confirmation is here before our eyes.

(2.) This will abundantly direct and inſtruct us in our preſent duties under all Providences. We ſhall know hereby what we have to do and how to carry our ſelves under all changes of conditions. You can learn the voice and errand of the *rod* only from the Word, *Pſal.* 94. 12. The Word interprets the works of God. Providences in themſelves are not a perfect guide. They often puzzel and entangle our thoughts; but bring them to the word, and your duty will be quickly manifeſted, as *Pſal.* 73. 16, 17. *Until I went into the Sanctuary, then I underſtood their end*: and, not only their *end*: but his own *duty*, to be quiet in an afflicted condition, and not envy their proſperity.

Well then, bring thoſe Providences you have paſt through, or are now under, to the Word; and you will find your ſelves ſurrounded with a marvellous light; and ſee the verification of the Scriptures in them. I ſhall therefore here appeal to your conſciences, whether you have not found theſe Events of Providence falling out agreeable in all reſpects with the Word.

1. The Word tells you, that it is your Wiſdom and Intereſt, to keep cloſe to its rules, and the duties it preſcribes, that the way of holineſs and obedience, is the wiſeſt way, Deut. 4. 5, 6. *This is your wiſdom.*

Now let the events of Providence ſpeak, whether this be true or not. Certainly it will appear to be ſo, whether we reſpect our *preſent comfort*, or *future happineſs*, both which we may ſee daily expoſed by departure from Duty, and ſecured by keeping cloſe to it. Let the queſtion be asked of the *Drunkard*, *Adulterer*, or prophane *Swearer*, when by Sin they have ruined Body, Soul, Eſtate and Name, whether it be their Wiſdom to walk in thoſe forbidden Paths after their own Luſts? Whether they had not better conſulted their own Intereſt and Comfort, in keeping within the Bounds and Limits of Gods Commands? And they cannot but confeſs, that *this their way is their Folly*. *What Fruit* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *had ye in thoſe Things, whereof you are now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe Things is Death*, Rom. 6. 21. Doth not the Providence of God verifie upon them thoſe threatnings that are Written, in the Experience of all Ages? *Prov.* 23. 29. *Prov.* 23. 21. *Prov.* 5 9. *Job* 31. 12. *Prov.* 5. 10. All which Woes and Miſeries they eſcape, that walk in Gods Statutes. Look upon the ruined Eſtates and Bodies you may every where ſee, and behold the Truth of the Scriptures evidently made good in thoſe ſad Providences.

2. The Word tells you, that your departure from the way of Integrity and Simplicity to make uſe of ſinful Policies, ſhall never Profit you, 1 *Sam.* 12. 21. *Prov.* 3. 5.

Let the Events of Providence ſpeak to this alſo; ask your own Experience, and you ſhall have a full Confirmation of this Truth. Did you ever leave the way of Simplicity and Integrity, and uſe ſinful ſhifts, to bring about your own Deſigns, and proſper in that way? Certainly God hath curſed all the Ways of Sin; and whoever finds them to thrive with them, his People ſhall not. *Iſrael* would not rely upon the Lord, but truſt in the ſhadow of *Egypt*; and what Advantage had they by this ſinful Policy? See *Iſa.* 30. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *David* uſed a great deal of ſinful Policy to cover his wicked Fact; but did it proſper? See 2 *Sam.* 12. 12. It is an excellent Note of *Livy*, *Conſilia callida, primâ ſpecie læta, tractatu dura, eventu triſtia.* Sinful policies in their firſt Appearances, are pleaſant and promiſing, in their management difficult, in their event ſad. Some by ſinful Ways have gotten Wealth; but that Scripture hath been verified in their Experience, *Prov.* 10. 2. *Treaſures of Wickedneſs profit nothing.* Either God hath blown upon it by a ſecret Curſe, that it hath done them no good, or given them ſuch diſquietneſs in their Conſciences, that they have been forced to vomit it up, e're they could find Peace, *Job* 11. 13, 14, 15.

That which *David* gave in charge to *Solomon*, hath been found experimentally true by thouſands, 1 *Chron.* 22. 12, 13. That the true way to Proſperity, is to keep cloſe to the Rule of the Word. And that the true Reaſon why Men cannot Proſper, is their forſaking that Rule, 2 *Chron* 24. 20.

It's true, if God have a purpoſe to deſtroy a Man, he may for a time ſuffer him to ſucceed and proſper in his Sin, for his greater hardening, *Job* 12 6. But it is not ſo with thoſe whom the Lord loves, their ſinful ſhifts ſhal never thrive with them.

3. The Word prohibits your *truſt* and *confidence* in the *Creature*, even the greateſt and moſt powerful among Creatures, *Pſalm* 146. 3. It tells us, that 'tis better to truſt in the Lord, than in them, *Pſalm* 118. 8. It forbids our Confidence

fidence in thoſe Creatures that are moſt nearly ally'd, and related in the Bonds of Nature to us, *Micah* 7. 5. It Curſeth the Man that gives that relyance to the Creature, which is due to God, *Jer.* 17. 5.

Conſult the Events of Providence in this Caſe, and ſee whether the Word be not verified therein? Did you ever lean upon an *Egyptian* Reed, and it did not break under you, and pierce as well as deceive you? O how often hath this been evident in our Experience! Whatſoever we have over-loved, idolized, and leaned upon, God hath from Time to Time broken it, and made us to ſee the Vanity of it; ſo that we find, the readieſt courſe to be rid of our Comforts, is to ſet our Hearts inordinately or immoderately upon them: For our God is a jealous God, and will not part with his Glory to another. The World is full of Examples of Perſons deprived of their Comforts, Husbands, Wives, Children, Eſtates, *&c.* upon this account, and by this means. If *Jonah* be over-joyed in his Gourd, a *Worm* is preſently prepared to ſmite it. Hence it is, that ſo many Graves are opened for the Burying of our *Idols* out of our ſight. If *David* ſay, *My mountain ſhall ſtand ſtrong, I ſhall not be moved*; the next news he ſhall hear, is of Darkneſs and Trouble, *Pſalm* 30. 6, 7. O how true and faithful do we find theſe ſayings of God to be! Who cannot put to his Seal, and ſay, *Thy Words are Truth*?

4. The Word aſſures us, that Sin is the Cauſe and Inlet of Affliction and Sorrow, and that there is an inſeparable Connexion betwixt them, *Numb* 32. 23. *Be ſure your Sin will find you out*: *(i. e.)* the ſad Effects and Afflictions that follow it ſhall find you out. So *Pſalm* 89. 30, 31, 32. *If his Sons forſake my Law, I will viſit their Iniquities with Rods.*

Enquire now at the Mouth of Providence, whether this be indeed ſo, according to the Reports of the Word. Ask but your own Experiences, and you ſhall find, that juſt ſo Providence hath ordered it all along your way. When did you grow into a ſecure, vain, carnal Frame, but you found ſome rouzing, ſtartling Providence ſent to awaken you? When did you wound your Conſciences with guilt, and God did not wound you for it, in ſome or other of your beloved enjoyments? Nay, ſo ordinary is this with God, that from the Obſervations of their own Frames and Ways, many Chriſtians have fore-boded and preſaged Troubles at Hand.

I do not ſay, that God never afflicts his People, but for their Sin; for he may do it for their Tryal, 1 *Pet.* 4. 12. Nor do I ſay, that God follows every Sin with a Rod; for who then ſhould ſtand before him? *Pſalm* 130. 3. But this I ſay, that it's Gods uſual way, to viſit the Sins of his People with Rods of Affliction, and this in Mercy to their Souls. Upon this account it was, that the Rod of God was upon *David* in a long Succeſſion of Troubles upon his Kingdom and Family, after that great Prevarication of his, 2 *Sam* 12. 10. And if we would carefully ſearch out the Seeds and Principles of thoſe Miſeries under which we or ours do groan; we ſhould find them to be our own turnings aſide from the Lord, according to that *Jer.* 2. 19. and *Jer.* 4. 18. Have not all theſe Cautions, and threatnings of the Word been exactly fulfilled by Providence in your own Experience? Who can but ſee the infallible Truth of God in all that he hath threatned! And no leſs evident is the Truth of the Promiſes to all that will obſerve how Providence makes them good every Day to us; for conſider,

5. How great Security God hath given to his People in the Promiſes, that no Man ſhall loſe any thing by ſelf denial for his Sake. He hath told us, Mark 10. 29, 30. *Verily, I ſay unto you, there is no Man that hath left Houſe, or Brethren, or Siſters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for my ſake, and the Goſpels; but he ſhall receive an hundred fold now in this Time, Houſes, and Brethren and Siſters, and Mothers, and Children, and Lands with Perſecutions, and in the World to come Eternal Life.*

Though that vile Apoſtate *Julian* derided this Promiſe, yet thouſands and ten thouſands have experienced it, and do at this Day ſtand ready to ſet their Seal to it. God hath made it good to his People, not only in *Spirituals*; inward Joy, and Peace; but even in *Temporals* alſo: Inſtead of natural Relations who took care for them before, hundreds of *Chriſtians* ſhall ſtand ready to aſſiſt and help them: So that though they have left all for *Chriſt*, yet they may ſay with the *Apoſtle*, 2. Cor. 6. 10. *As having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all Things.* O the admirable Care and Tenderneſs of Providence over thoſe that for Conſcience ſake have left all, and caſt themſelves upon its immediate Care! Are there not at this Day to be found many ſo provided for, even to the Envy of their Enemies, and their own Admiration? Who ſees not the faithfulneſs of God in the Promiſes, that hath but an Heart to truſt God in them!

6. The Word of Promiſe aſſures us, that whatever wants or ſtraits the Saints fall into, their God *will never leave them, nor forſake them,* Heb. 13. 5. That he *will be with them in Trouble,* Pſal. 91. 15.

*Summa hæc eſt, cum omnia bona ſuppeditentur a deo in omnibus vitæ humanæ ordinibus noſtri officii erit, in calamitatibus nos erigere conſideratione Providentiæ divinæ.* Alſted. Theol. Catechet. p. 192.

Conſult the various Providences of your Life in this Point, and I doubt not, but you will find the Truth of theſe Promiſes as often confirmed, as you have been in trouble. Ask your own Hearts, where, or when was it that your God forſook you, and left you to ſink and periſh under your Burdens? I doubt not, but moſt of you have been at one time or other plunged in difficulties, difficulties out of which you could ſee no way of eſcape by the Eye of Reaſon; yea, ſuch, as it may be, ſtaggered your Faith in the Promiſe, as *David*'s was, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. when he ſaid, *I ſhall one Day periſh by the Hand of Saul. All Men are Lyars,* (even *Samuel* himſelf) and yet notwithſtanding all, we ſee him emerge out of that Sea of Trouble, and the Promiſes made good in every Tittle to him. The like doubtleſs you may obſerve in your own Caſes. Ask your own Souls the queſtion, and they will ſatisfie it. Did God abandon and caſt you off in the Day of your ſtraits? Certainly you muſt belye your one Experience, if you ſhould ſay ſo. 'Tis true, there have been ſome plunges and difficulties you have met with, wherein (1.) You could ſee no way of eſcape, but concluded you muſt periſh in them. (2.) Difficulties that have ſtaggered your Faith in the Promiſes, and made you doubt, whether the Fountain of All-ſufficiency would let out it ſelf for your relief. (3.) Yea, ſuch difficulties as have provoked you to murmuring and impatience, and thereby provoked the Lord to forſake you in your ſtraits; but yet you ſee he did not. He hath either (1.) Strengthened your back to bear, or (2.) Lightened your burden, or (3.) Opened an unexpected door of eſcape, according to that Promiſe, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. ſo that the evil which you feared, came not upon you.

7. You read, that the Word of God is the only ſupport and relief to a gracious Soul in the dark Day of Affliction, *Pſalm* 119. 50, 92.—2 *Sam.* 23. 5. That for this very Purpoſe it was Written, *Rom.* 15. 4. No rules of moral Prudence, no ſenſual remedies can perform that for us, which the Word can do.

And is not this a ſealed Truth, atteſted by a thouſand of undeniable experiences? Hence have the Saints fetcht their *Cordials*, when fainting under the Rod. One Word of God can do more than ten thouſand Words of Men to relieve a diſtreſſed Soul. If Providence have at any time directed you to ſuch Promiſes, as either aſſure you that the Lord will be with you in trouble, *Pſalm* 91. 15. Or that encourage you from inward Peace, to bear chearfully outward burdens, *John* 16. 33. or ſatisfie you of Gods tenderneſs and moderation in his dealings with you, *Iſa.* 27. 8. Or that you ſhall reap bleſſed Fruits from them, *Rom.* 8. 28. Or that clear up your intereſt in God, and his Love under your Afflictions, 2 *Sam.* 7. 14. O what ſenſible eaſe and relief enſues! How light is your burthen, compared with what it was before!

8. The Word tells us, that there is no ſuch way to improve our Eſtates, as to lay them out with a chearful liberality for God; and that our withholding our Hands, when God and Duty calls to diſtribute, will not be for our Advantage. See *Prov.* 11. 25. *Iſa.* 32. 8. *Prov.* 19. 17. *Prov.* 11. 24.

Conſult Providence now, and you ſhall find it in all reſpects according to the Report of the Word. O how true is the Scripture Teſtimony herein! There are many thouſand Witneſſes now living, that can ſet their Seals to both Parts of this Propoſition. What Men ſave (as they count ſaving) with one Hand, Providence ſcatters by another Hand: And what they ſcatter abroad with a liberal Hand and ſingle Eye for God, is ſurely repay'd to them or theirs. Never did any Man loſe by diſtributing for God. He that lends to the poor *fœneratur Domino*, as ſome expound that Text, puts his Money to Intereſt to the Lord. Some have obſerved how Providence hath doubled all they have laid out for God, in Ways unexpected to them.

9. The Word aſſures us, that the beſt Expedient for a Man to ſettle his own Intereſt in the Conſciences and Affections of Men, is to direct his Ways, ſo as to pleaſe the Lord, *Prov.* 16. 7. and doth not Providence confirm it? This the three *Jews* found by Experience, *Dan.* 3. 28, 29. and ſo did *Daniel*, chap. 6. *v.* 20, 21, 22. This kept up *John*'s Reputation in the Conſcience of *Herod*, *Mark* 6. 20. So it fell out, when *Conſtantius* made that exploratory decree; thoſe that were Conſcientious were preferred, and thoſe that changed their Religion, expelled. Never did any Man loſe at laſt by his Fidelity.

10. The written Word tells us, that the beſt expedient to inward Peace and Tranquillity of mind under puzzling and diſtracting Troubles, is to commit our ſelves and our Caſe to the Lord; ſo you read, *Pſalm* 37. 5, 6, 7. & *Prov.* 16. 3.

And as you have read in the Word, ſo you have found it in your own Experience. Oh, what a burden is off your Shoulders, when you have reſigned the Caſe to God! Then doth Providence iſſue your Affairs comfortably for you. The difficulty is ſoon over, when the Heart is brought to this.

Thus you ſee, how Scriptures are fulfilled by Providence in theſe few Inſtances I have given of it. Compare them in all other Caſes, and you ſhall find the ſame: For all the Lines of Providence lead from the Scripture, and return thither again, and do moſt viſibly begin and end there.

### *The Fourth Direction.*

*In all your Reviews and Obſervations of Providence, be ſure that you Eye God as the Author or Orderer of them all,* Prov. 3. 6.

1. In all the *comfortable* Providences of your lives, Eye God as the *Author* or Donor of them. Remember he is *the Father of Mercies*, that begets every Mercy for you, 2 *Cor.* 1. 3. *The God of all Comfort*, without whoſe Order no Mercy or Comfort can come to your Hands. And think it not enough thus to acknowledge him in a general Way; but when you receive Mercies, take ſpecial Notice of the following Particulars.

(1.) Eye the Care of God for you, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. *He careth for you. Your Father knows you have need of theſe things*, Matth. 6. 32. It is but to acquaint him what you want, and your wants are ſupplied, *Phil.* 4. 6. μὴ μεριμνᾶτε, torture not your ſelves about it: You have a Father that cares for you.

(2.) Eye the Wiſdom of God, in the Way of diſpenſing his Mercies to you, how *ſuitably* they are ordered to your Condition, and how ſeaſonably. When one Comfort is cut off and removed, another is raiſed up in its room. Thus *Iſaac* was comforted in *Rebecka* after his *Mother*'s Death, *Gen.* 24. 67.

(3.) Eye the Free Grace of God in them, yea ſee Riches of Grace in every bequeſt of Comfort to ſo vile and unworthy Creatures as you are. See your ſelves over-topt by the leaſt of all your Mercies, *Gen.* 32. 10. *I am not worthy of the leaſt*, ſaid *Jacob*.

(4.) Eye the Condeſcenſion of God, to your Requeſts for thoſe Mercies, *Pſalm* 34. 6. This is the ſweeteſt bit in any Enjoyment, in which a Man can ſenſibly reliſh the return and anſwer of his Prayers, and greatly inflames the Souls Love to God, *Pſalm* 116. 1.

(5.) Eye the Deſign and End of God in all your Comforts. Know that it is not ſent to ſatisfie the cravings of your ſenſual Appetite, but to quicken and enable you for a more chearful diſcharge of your Duty, *Deut.* 28. 47.

(6.) Eye the Way and Method in which your Mercies are conveyed to you. They all flow to you through the Blood of *Chriſt* and *Covenant* of Grace, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. Mercies derive their ſweetneſs from the Channel through which they run to us.

(7.) Eye the diſtinguiſhing Goodneſs of God, in all the comfortable Enjoyments of your Lives. How many thouſand better than you, are denied thoſe Comforts? See *Heb* 11. 37.

*(8.)* Eye them all as Comforts appointed to refreſh you in your way to far better and greater Mercies than themſelves. The beſt Mercies are ſtill reſerved till laſt, and all theſe are introductive to better.

2. In all the ſad and afflictive Providences that beſal you, Eye God as the Author and Orderer of them alſo. So he repreſents himſelf to us, *Jer.* 18. 11. *Behold, I create evil, and deviſe a device againſt you.* And *Amos* 3. 6. *Is there evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it?* More particularly,

1. Set before you the *Sovereignty* of God. Eye him as a Being infinitely Superiour to you, at whoſe Pleaſure, you, and all you have is, *Pſalm* 115. 3. which is the moſt concluſive Reaſon and Argument of Submiſſion, *Pſal.* 46. 10. For if we, and all we have, proceeded from his Will, how equal is it, that we be reſigned up to it? It is not many Years agone ſince we were not, and when it pleaſed him to bring us upon the Stage of Action, we had no Liberty of indenting with him, on what Terms we would come into the World; or refuſe to be, except we might have our Being on ſuch Terms as we deſired. His *Sovereignty* is glorioully diſplayed in his *Eternal Decrees and Temporal Providences.* He might have put you into what Rank of Creatures he pleaſed. He might have made you the moſt deſpicable Creatures, *Worms* or *Toads*: Or, if Men, the moſt vile, abject and miſerable among Men: And when you had run through all the Miſeries of this Life, have damned you to Eternity, made you miſerable for ever, and all this without any wrong to you. And ſhall not this quiet us under the common Afflictions of this Life?

2. Set the *Grace* and *Goodneſs* of God before you in all afflictive Providences. O ſee him paſſing by you in the cloudy and dark Day, proclaiming his Name, *the Lord, the Lord merciful and gracious.* There are two ſorts of Mercies that are ſeldom eclipſed by the darkeſt Affliction that beſals the Saints in their temporal Concerns, *ſc. ſparing Mercy* in this World, and *ſaving Mercy* in that to come. It is not ſo bad now as it might, and we deſerved it ſhould be, and it will be better hereafter. This the Church obſerved, and reaſoned her ſelf quiet from it, *Lam.* 3. 22. Hath he taken ſome? he might have taken all. Are we afflicted? It's Mercy we are not deſtroyed. Oh if we conſider what Temporal Mercies are yet ſpared, and what Spiritual Mercies are beſtowed, and yet continued to us, we ſhall find cauſe to admire Mercy, rather than complain of Severity.

3. Eye the Wiſdom of God in all your Afflictions, behold it in the choice of the *kind* of your Affliction, this, and not another: The *Time*, now and not at another ſeaſon: The *Degree*, in this meaſure only, and not in a greater: The *Supports* afforded you under it, not left altogether helpleſs: The *Iſſue* to which it's over-ruled, it's to your good, not ruin. Look upon all theſe, and then ask thy Heart that Queſtion God ask'd *Jonah*, *Doſt thou well to be angry?* Surely, when you conſider all, what need you had of theſe Rods, that your Corruptions will require all this, it may be much more to mortifie them; that without the periſhing of theſe things, you might have periſhed for ever; you will ſee great Reaſon to be quiet and well ſatisfied under the Hand of God.

4. Set the *faithfulneſs* of the Lord before you under the ſaddeſt Providences. So did *David*, *Pſalm* 119. 75. This is according to his Covenant faithfulneſs, *Pſalm* 89. 32. Hence it is, that the Lord will not withhold a Rod when need requires it, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. Nor will he forſake his People under the Rod, when he inflicts it, 2 *Cor.* 4. 9.

Oh what Quietneſs will this breed! I ſee my God will not loſe my Heart, if a Rod can prevent it; he had rather hear me groan here, than howl hereafter: His Love is judicious, not Fond: He Conſults my *Good*, rather than my *Eaſe*.

5. Eye the *All-ſufficiency* of God in the Day of Affliction. See enough in him ſtill, whatever be gone. Here is the *Fountain* ſtill as full as ever, though this or that *Pipe* be cut off, which was wont to convey ſomewhat of it to me. O Chriſtians, can't you make up any Loſs this way? Can't you ſee more in God, than in any or all the Creature Comforts you have loſt? With what Eyes then do you look upon God?

6. *Laſtly*, Eye the *Immutability* of God. Look on him as the Rock of Ages, *James* 1. 17. *The Father of Lights, with whom is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning.* Eye *Jeſus Chriſt*, as *the ſame Yeſterday, to Day and for ever.* Oh how quietly will you then behave your ſelves under the Changes of Providence? It may be, two or three Days have made a ſad change in your Condition: The Death of a dear Relation hath turned all Things unſide down: That Place is empty were lately they were, as it is, *Job* 7. 10. *His Place ſhall know him no more*: Well, but God is what he was, and where he was: Time ſhall make no change upon him, as it is in *Iſa.* 40. 6, 7, 8. *The Graſs withereth, the flower fadeth; but the Word of the Lord abideth for ever.* O how compoſing are thoſe Views of God to our Spirits under dark Providences.

### *The Fifth Direction.*

Laſtly, *Work up your Hearts to thoſe Frames, and Exerciſe thoſe Affections which the ſeveral Providences of God that are verſant about you call for*, Ecclef. 7. 14. Suit your ſelves to anſwer the Deſign and End of God in all Providences. As there are various Affections planted in your Souls, ſo are there ſeveral Graces planted in thoſe Affections, and ſeveral Providences appointed to draw forth, and exerciſe theſe Graces.

1. When the Providences of God are ſad, and afflictive either upon the Church in General, or your Families and Perſons in particular, *then it is ſeaſonable for you to exerciſe Godly Sorrow and Humility of Spirit*: For in that Day, and by thoſe Providences God doth call to it, *Iſa.* 22. 12. *Mich.* 6. 9. Now, ſenſitive Pleaſure and natural Joy, is out of ſeaſon, *Ezek.* 21. 10. *Should we then make mirth?* If there be either, *(1.)* A filial Spirit in us, we cannot be light and vain, when our *Father* is angry; or (2.) If any real ſenſe of the evil of Sin which provokes God's Anger, we muſt be heavy hearted when God is ſmiting for it; or (3.) If any Senſe and Compaſſion for the Miſeries that Sin brings upon the World, it will make us to lay with *David*, Pſalm 119. 158. *I beheld the Tranſ-*

*greſſors and was grieved.* 'Tis ſaid to conſider the Miſeries that they pull down upon themſelves in this World and that to come. (4.) If there be any care in us to prevent utter Ruin, and ſtop God in the Way of his Anger, we know this is the means to do it, *Amos* 4. 12.

*How ſad and diſmal ſoever the Face of Providence be, yet ſtill maintain Spiritual Joy and Comfort in God under all. Though there be no Herd in the Stall* (ſaid *Habakkuk*, chap. 3. 17.) *yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will Joy in the God of my Salvation.*

There are two ſorts of Comforts, *Natural* and *Senſitive*, *Divine* and *Spiritual.* There is a time when it becomes *Chriſtians* to exerciſe both; ſo *Eſth.* 9. 22. And there is a Time when the former is to be ſuſpended and laid by, *Pſalm* 137. 2. But there is no Seaſon, wherein ſpiritual Joy and Comfort in God is unſeaſonable, as appears by thoſe Scriptures, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 16. *Phil.* 4. 4. This ſpiritual Joy or Comfort, is nothing elſe but the cheerineſs of our Heart in God, and the Senſe of our Intereſt in him, and in his Promiſes. And it's ſure, that no Providence can render this unſeaſonable to a Chriſtian. Let us ſuppoſe the moſt afflicted and calamitous State a Chriſtian can be incident to, yet,

(1.) Why ſhould ſad Providence make him lay by his Comforts in God? When as thoſe are but for a Moment, but theſe Eternal, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17.

(2.) Why ſhould we lay by our Joy in God, upon the account of ſad Providences without, when at the very worſt and loweſt Ebb, the Saints have infinitely more cauſe to rejoice, than to be caſt down? There's more in one of their Mercies to Comfort them, than in all their Troubles to deject them. All your Loſſes are but as the Loſs of a *farthing* to a Prince, *Rom.* 8. 18.

(3.) Why ſhould they be ſad, as long as their God is with them in all their Troubles? As *Chriſt* ſaid, *Matth.* 9. 15. *Can the Children of the Bride-Chamber be ſad, whileſt the Bridegroom is with them?* So ſay I, Can the Soul be ſad, whileſt God is with it? Oh methinks, that one Promiſe, *Pſalm* 91. 15. *I will be with him in trouble*, ſhould bear you up under all Burdens. Let them be caſt down, that have no God in Trouble to turn to.

(4.) Why ſhould they be ſad, as long as no outward Diſpenſation of Providence, (be it never ſo ſad) can be interpreted as a mark or ſign of God's Hatred or Enmity, *Eccl.* 9. 2. 3. *There is one event to the Righteous and Wicked.* Indeed, if it were a Signification of the Lord's Wrath againſt a Man, it would juſtifie our Dejection; but this cannot be ſo: His Heart is full of Love, whileſt the Face of Providence is full of Frowns.

(5.) Why ſhould we be caſt down under ſad Providences, whilſt we have ſo great Security, that even by the Hands of theſe Providences God will do us good. and all theſe things ſhall *turn to our Salvation*? Rom. 8. 28. By theſe God is but killing your Luſts, weaning your Hearts from a vain World, preventing Temptations, and exciting your Deſires after Heaven; this is all the hurt they ſhall do you, and ſhall that ſadden us?

(6.) Why ſhould we lay by our Joy in God, whenas the change of our Condition is ſo nigh? It's but a little while, and Sorrows ſhall flee away: You ſhall never ſuffer more; *God will wipe away all Tears*, Rev. 7. 17. Well then, you ſee there's no Reaſon upon the account of Providence, to give up your Joy and Comfort in God. But if you will maintain it under all Providences, then be careful,

(1.) To clear up your Intereſt in, and Title to God. *Faith* may be ſeparated from Comfort, but Aſſurance cannot.

(2.) Mortifie your inordinate Affections to earthly Things. This makes Providences that deprive and croſs us ſo heavy. Mortifie your Opinion and Affection, and you ſenſibly lighten your Affliction. It is ſtrong Affection that makes ſtrong Affliction.

(3.) Dwell much upon the Meditation of the Lord's near approach; and then all theſe Things will ſeem but trifles to you. *Let your Moderation be known unto all Men, the Lord is at hand.*

3. *Exerciſe heavenly Mindedneſs, and keep your Hearts upon Things Eternal, under all the Providences with which the Lord exerciſes you in this World*, Gen. 6. 9. *Noah* walked with God, yet met with as ſad Providences in his Day, as any Man that ever lived ſince his Time. But alas! we find moſt Providences, rather *ſtops*, than *ſteps* in our walk with God. If we be under comfortable Providences, how ſenſual, wanton and worldly do our Hearts grow! And if ſad Providences befal us, how dedolent or diſtracted are we! And this comes to paſs partly through the *narrowneſs*, but moſtly, through the *deceitfulneſs* of our Spirits. Our Hearts are narrow, and know not how to manage two Buſineſſes of ſuch different Natures, as Earthly and Heavenly Matters are without Detriment to one. *Pectora noſtra duas curas non admittunt.* But certainly ſuch a frame of Spirit is attainable that will enable us to keep on in an even and ſteddy courſe with God, whatever befal us. Others have attained it, and why not we? Proſperous Providences are for the moſt part a dangerous State to the Soul. The *Moon* never ſuffers an *Eclipſe*, but at full; yet *Jehoſaphat*'s Grace ſuffered no *Eclipſe* from the Fulneſs of his outward Condition, who *had Riches in abundance, and his Heart was lifted up in the way of God's Commandments*, 2 Chron. 17. 5, 6. *David*'s Life was as full of Cares, Turmoils, and Incumbrances, as moſt Men we read of; yet how ſpiritual the temper of his Heart was, that excellent *Book of Pſalms*, (which was moſtly compoſed amidſt thoſe Diſtractions) will acquaint us. The *Apoſtles* were caſt into as great Neceſſities, and ſuffered as hard Things, as ever Men did; yet how raiſed and heavenly their Spirits were amidſt all, who ſees not? And certainly, if it were not poſſible to maintain Heavenly-mindedneſs in ſuch a ſtate and poſture of Affairs, God would never exerciſe any of his People with ſuch Providences: He would never give you ſo much of the World to loſe your Hearts in the Love of it, or ſo little to diſtract you with the Cares of it. If therefore we were more deeply ſanctified, and the tendencies of our Hearts Heaven-ward more ardent and vigorous; If we were more mortified to Earthly Things, and could but keep our due Diſtance from them; our outward

Conditions would not at this rate draw forth and exerciſe our inward Corruptions, nor would we hazard the loſs of ſo ſweet an Enjoyment as our Fellowſhip with God is, for the ſake of any Concernment our Bodies have on Earth.

4. *Under all Providences maintain a contented Heart with what the Lord allots you, be it more or leſs of the Things of this World.* This Grace muſt run parallel with all Providences. *Learn how to be full, and how to ſuffer want, and in every ſtate to be content*, Phil. 4 12.

In this Duty all Men are concerned at all Times, and in every State, not only the People of God, but even the unregenerate alſo. I will therefore addreſs ſome Conſiderations proper to both. And firſt to the unregenerate, to ſtop their Mouths from repining, and charging God fooliſhly, when Providence croſſes them. Let them ſeriouſly conſider theſe four Things.

(1.) That Hell and Eternal Damnation are the Portion of their Cup, according to the Tenor of Law and Goſpel threatnings. Whatſoever therefore is ſhort of this is to be admired as the Fruit of God's ſtupendious Patience, and forbearance towards them. Ah poor Souls! Know you not, that you are Men and Women condemned to Wrath by the plain Sentence of the Law? *Mark* 16. 16. *John* 3. 36. 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 6, 7. And if ſo, ſure there are other Matters to exerciſe your thoughts, deſires, fears and cares about than theſe. Alas! if you cannot bear a frown of Providence, a light croſs in theſe Things, how will you bear the Everlaſting Burnings! A Man that is to loſe his Head to Morrow, is not very ſolicitous what Bed he lies on, or how his Table is furniſht the Night before.

(2.) Conſider, though you be condemned Perſons, and have no Promiſe to entitle you to any Mercy; yet there are very many Mercies in your Poſſeſſion at this Day. Be your Condition as afflictive as it will, is Life nothing? Eſpecially conſidering whither you muſt ſink, when that Thread is cut. Are the neceſſary ſupports of Life nothing? Doth not Providence Miniſter to you theſe Things, tho' you daily diſoblige it, and provoke God to ſend you to your own Place? But, above all, is the *Goſpel* and precious Means of Salvation nothing, by which you yet are in a Capacity of eſcaping the Damnation of Hell? O what would the damned ſay, if they were but put into your Condition once more? What! and yet fret againſt God, becauſe every thing elſe ſuits not your Deſires?

(3.) Conſider, that if ever you be reſcued out of that miſerable Condition you are in, ſuch croſs Providences, as theſe you complain of, are the moſt probable Means to do it. Alas! Proſperity and Succeſs is not the way to ſave, but deſtroy you, *Prov.* 1. 32 You muſt be bound in Fetters, and holden in Cords of Affliction, if ever your Ear be opened to Inſtruction, *Job* 36. 8, 9, 10. Wo to you, if you go on ſmoothly in the way in which you are, and meet with no Croſſes,

(4.) *Laſtly*, Conſider, all your Troubles under which you complain, are pulled down upon your Heads by your own Sins. You turn God's Mercies into Sin, and then fret againſt God, becauſe he turns your Sins into Sorrow. Your Ways and Doings procure theſe Things to you. Lay your Hand therefore upon your Mouth and ſay, *Why doth the living Man complain, a Man for the Puniſhment of his Sin*, Lam. 3. 39. But I muſt turn to the Lord's People, who have leaſt pretences of all Men to be diſſatisfied with any of God's Providences, and yet are but too frequently found in that temper. And to them I ſhall offer the following Conſiderations.

(1.) *Conſider your ſpiritual Mercies and Privileges with which the Lord Jeſus hath inveſted you, and repine at your Lot of Providence if you can.* One of theſe Mercies alone, hath enough in it to ſweeten all your Troubles in this World. When the Apoſtle conſidered them, his Heart was overwhelmed with Aſtoniſhment; ſo that he could not forbear in the midſt of all his outward Troubles to cry out, *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath abounded to us in all ſpiritual Bleſſings*, &c. *Eph.* 1. 3. Oh, who that ſees ſuch an Inheritance ſetled upon him in *Chriſt*, can ever open his Mouth more to repine at his Lot of Providence!

(2.) *Conſider your Sins, and that will make you contented with your Lot.* Yea, conſider two things in Sin. (1.) What it deſerves from God, and (2.) What it requires to mortifie and purge it in you. It deſerves from God Eternal Ruin: The Merit of Hell is in the leaſt vain Thought. Every Sin forfeits all the Mercies you have; and if ſo, rather wonder your Mercies are ſo many, than that you have no more. Beſides, you cannot doubt, but your Corruptions require all the Croſſes, Wants and Troubles that are upon you, and it may be, a great deal more, to mortifie and ſubdue them. Don't you find, after all the Rods that have been upon you, a proud Heart ſtill, a vain and earthly Heart ſtill? Oh how many bitter Potions are but neceſſary to purge out this tough malignant Humour!

(3.) *Conſider how near you are to the Change of your Condition*: Have but a little Patience, and all will be as well with you as your Hearts can deſire. It is no ſmall Comfort to the Saints, that this World is the worſt Place that ever they ſhall be in: Things will better every Day with them. If the *Traveller* have ſpent all his Money, yet it doth not much trouble him, if he know himſelf within a few Miles of his own home. If there be no *Candles* in the Houſe, we do not much matter it, if we are ſure it's almoſt break of Day; for then there will be no uſe for them. This is your Caſe; *Your Salvation is nearer than when you believed*, Rom. 13. 11.

I have done with the directive Part of this Diſcourſe; but before I paſs to this fifth Head, I judge it neceſſary to leave a few Cautions to prevent the abuſe of Providence, and your Miſcarriages in your Behaviour towards it. And,

### *Firſt Caution.*

*If Providence delay the Performance of any Mercy to you, that you have long waited and prayed for; yet ſee, that you deſpond not; nor grow weary of waiting upon God for that Reaſon.* It pleaſes the Lord oftentimes to try, and exerciſe his People this way, and make them cry, *How long Lord, how long?* Pſalm 13. 1, 2.

Theſe delaies both upon Spiritual and Temporal accounts are frequent, and when they befal us, we are too apt to interpret them as denials, and fall into a ſinful Deſpondency of Mind, though there be no cauſe at all for it, *Pſalm* 31. 12. *Lam.* 3. 8, 44. It is not always that the Returns of Prayer are diſpatch'd to us in the ſame Hour they are asked of God; yet ſometimes it falls out ſo, *Iſa.* 65. 24. *Dan.* 9. 23. But though the Lord means to perform to us the Mercies we deſire; yet he will ordinarily Exerciſe our Patience to wait for them; and that for theſe Reaſons.

(1.) Becauſe our Time is not the proper Seaſon for us to receive our Mercies in. Now the ſeaſon of Mercy is a very great Circumſtance that adds much to the value of it. God judges not as we do; we are all in haſte, and will have it now, *Numb.* 22. 13. *But he is a God of Judgment, and bleſſed are they that wait for him,* Iſa. 30. 18.

(2.) Afflictive Providences have not accompliſhed that deſign upon our Hearts they were ſent for, when we are ſo earneſt and impatient for a change of them; and till then the Rod muſt not be taken off, *Iſa:* 10. 12.

(3.) The more Prayers and Searchings of Heart come between our Wants and Supplies, our Afflictions and Reliefs, the ſweeter are our Reliefs and Supplies thereby made to us, *Iſa.* 25. 9. *This is our God, we have waited for him, and he will ſave us: This is the Lord we have waited for him, we will rejoyce and be glad in his Salvation.* This recompences the delay, and pays us for all the expences of our Patience.

But though there be ſuch weighty Reaſons for the ſtop and delay of refreſhing comfortable Providences; yet we cannot bear it, our hands hang down and we faint, *Pſal.* 69. 3. *I am weary of my crying, my Throat is dry, mine Eyes fail while I wait for my God.* For alas! we judge by Senſe and Appearance, and conſider not, that God's *Heart* may be *towards* us, whilſt the *Hand* of his Providence ſeems to be *againſt* us. If Things continue at one rate with us, we think our Prayers are loſt, and our Hopes periſhed from the Lord: Much more when Things grow worſe and worſe, and our Darkneſs and Trouble encreaſes, as uſually it doth juſt before the break of Day and change of our Condition, then we conclude, God is angry with our Prayers. See *Gideon*'s Reply, *Judges* 6. 13. This even ſtaggered a *Moſes*'s Faith, *Exod.* 5. 22, 23. O what groundleſs Jealouſies and Suſpicions of God are found at ſuch Times in the Hearts of his own Children! *Job* 9. 16, 17. *Pſal.* 77. 7, 8, 9.

But this is our great evil, and to prevent it in future Tryals, I will offer a few proper Conſiderations in the Caſe.

1. The delay of your Mercies, is really for your Advantage. You read *Iſa.* 30. 18. *The Lord waits that he may be Gracious.* What is that? Why, it's nothing elſe but the Time of his Preparation of Mercies for you, and your Hearts for Mercy, that ſo you may have it with the greateſt Advantage of Comfort. The fooliſh Child would pluck the Apple while it's green; but when it's Ripe, it drops of its own accord, and is more pleaſant and wholſome.

2. It's a greater Mercy, to have an Heart willing to refer all to God, and be at his diſpoſe; than to enjoy preſently the Mercy we are moſt eager and impatient for. In that God pleaſes *you*, in this you pleaſe *God*. A Mercy may be given you as the Fruit of common Providence; but ſuch a Temper of Heart is the Fruit of ſpecial Grace. So much as the Glorifying of God is better than the Content and Pleaſure of the Creature, ſo much is ſuch a Frame better, than ſuch a Fruition.

3. Expected Mercies are never nearer, than when the Hearts and Hopes of God's People are loweſt. Thus in their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and *Babylon*, Ezek. 37. 11. So we have found it in our own perſonal concerns: *At Evening Time it ſhall be Light*, Zach. 14. 7. When we look for encreaſing Darkneſs, Light ariſes.

4. Our unfitneſs for Mercy, is the reaſon why they are delayed ſo long. We put the blocks into the Way of Mercy, and then Repine, that they make no more haſt to us, *Iſa.* 59. 1, 2. *The Lord's hand is not ſhortned, but our Iniquities have ſeparated betwixt him and us.*

5. Conſider, the Mercies you wait for, are the Fruits of pure Grace, you deſerve them not, nor can claim them upon any Title of deſert; and therefore have Reaſon to wait for them in a patient and thankful Frame.

6. Conſider, how many *Millions* of Men as good as you by Nature, are cut off from all Hope and Expectation of Mercy for ever, and there remains to them nothing but *a fearful Expectation of Wrath.* This might have been your Caſe; and therefore be not of an impatient Spirit under the Expectations of Mercy.

*Second Caution.*

*Pry not too curiouſly into the Secrets of Providence, nor ſuffer your ſhallow Reaſon arrogantly to judge and cenſure its Deſigns.*

There be hard Texts in the *Works*, as well as in the *Word* of God. It becomes us modeſtly and humbly to *Reverence*, but not to *Dogmatize* too bold and poſitively upon them: A Man may eaſily get a Strain by over-reaching. *When I thought to know this* (ſaith *Aſaph*) *it was too wonderful for me.* I thought to know this, there was the arrogant attempt of Reaſon, there he pry'd into the *Arcana* of Providence; but it was too wonderful for me, it was *labor inutilis*, as *Calvin* expounds it. He pry'd ſo far into that puzzling Myſtery of the *Afflictions* of the *Righteous*, and *Proſperity* of the *Wicked*, till it begat *Envy* towards *them*, and *deſpondency* in himſelf, Pſalm 73. 3, 13. And this was all he got by ſummoning Providence to the Bar of Reaſon. Holy *Job* was guilty of this Evil, and ingenuouſly aſhamed of it, *Job* 42. 3.

*Scriptu*
*oppoſuit*
*curioſita*
*noſtræ*
*pagula*
*dam, q*
*perfring*
*nemini*
*cet, n*
*poteſt;*
*non ſit*
*ſtitutum*
*deum in*
*dicium*
*care:*
*eſt quo*
*judicia*
*dicuntur*
*ἀνεξιχν*
*αςα, n*
*fruſtra*
*tiget no*
*fine ſum*
*periculo*
*eo invol*
*gandem*
*humana.*
Camero-
nis præ-
lect.

I know, there is nothing in the Word or in the Works of God, that is repugnant to ſound Reaſon: But there are ſome things in both, which are oppoſite to carnal Reaſon; as well as above right Reaſon; and therefore our Reaſon never ſhews it ſelf more unreaſonable, than in ſummoning thoſe things to its Bar, which tranſcend its Sphere and Capacity. Manifold are the miſchiefs which enſue upon this Practice.

1. By this we are drawn into an unworthy ſuſpicion and diſtruſt of the Faithfulneſs of God in the Promiſes. *Sarah* laught at the Tydings of the Son of Promiſe, becauſe Reaſon contradicted, and told her, it was naturally impoſſible, *Gen.* 18. 13, 14.

2. Hence comes deſpondency of Mind, and faintneſs of Heart under afflictive Providences; Reaſon can diſcern no good Fruits in them, nor Deliverance from them, and ſo our Hands hang down in a ſinful Diſcouragement, ſaying, all theſe Things are againſt us 1 *Sam.* 27. 1.

3. Hence flow Temptations to deliver our ſelves by indirect and ſinful *Mediums*, Iſa. 30. 15, 16. When our own Reaſon fills us with a diſtruſt of Providence, it naturally prompts us to ſinful ſhifts, and there leave us entangled in the ſnares of our own making.

Beware therefore you lean not too much to your own reaſons and underſtandings. Nothing is more plauſible, nothing more dangerous. In other matters it is appointed the Arbiter and Judge, we make it ſo here, and therefore we are ſo diffident and diſtruſtful notwithſtanding the fulleſt Security of the promiſes, whilſt our Reaſon ſtands by unſatisfied.

### *The Fifth Head.*

Having given Direction for the due Management of this great and important Duty, what remains, but that we now ſet our Hearts to it, and make it the conſtant Work of every Day throughout our Lives? O what Peace, what pleaſure, what ſtability, what holy Courage and Confidence would reſult from ſuch an Obſervation of Providence as hath been directed to! But alas! we may ſay with Reference to the Voices of Divine Providence, as it is *Job* 33. 14. *God ſpeaketh once, yea twice, yet Man perceiveth it not.* Many a time Providence hath ſpoken *Inſtruction* in Duty, *Conviction* for iniquity, *Encouragement* under Deſpondency; but we regard it not. How greatly are we all wanting to our Duty, and Comfort by this neglect! It will be but needful therefore to ſpread before you, the lovelineſs and excellency of walking with God in a due and daily Obſervation of his Providences, that our Souls may be fully engaged to it.

### *Firſt Motive.*

And firſt, let me offer this, as a moving Argument to all Gracious Souls; *That by this means you may maintain ſweet and ſenſible Communion with God from day to day.* And what is there deſirable in this World, in compariſon therewith! *Thou Lord haſt made me glad through thy Works: I will triumph in the Works of thy Hands*, Pſal. 92. 4 Your Hearts may be as ſweetly and ſenſibly refreſht by the Works of Gods Hands, as by the Words of his Mouth. *Pſal.* 104. *per totum*, is ſpent in the Conſideration of the Works of Providence, which ſo filled the *Pſalmiſt*'s Heart, that, by Way of Ejaculation, he expreſſes the Effect of it, *Ver.* 34. *My Meditation of him ſhall be ſweet.*

Communion with God properly and ſtrictly taken, conſiſts in two things; *viz.* Gods Manifeſtation of himſelf to the Soul, and the Souls anſwerable returns to God. This is that *κοινωνία*, *Fellowſhip*, we have here with *God*. Now *God* manifeſts himſelf to his *People* by *Providences* as well as Ordinances; neither is there any Grace in a ſanctified *Soul* hid from the *gracious* Influences of his *Providential Manifeſtations.* Sometimes the *Lord* manifeſts his Diſpleaſure and Anger againſt the Sins of his *People* in correcting and rebuking *Providences.* His *Rods* have a chiding Voice, *Micah* 6. 9. *Hear the Rod and who hath appointed it.* This diſcovery of Gods Anger kindly melts and thaws a gracious Soul, and produces a double ſweet Effect upon it, namely, *Repentance* for Sins paſt, and due *Caution* againſt future Sins. (1.) It thaws and melts the Hearts for Sins committed. Thus *David*'s Heart was melted for his Sin, when the Hand of God was heavy upon him in Affliction, *Pſal.* 32. 4, 5. Thus the *Captive Church*, upon whom fell the ſaddeſt and moſt diſmal Providence that ever befel any of God's People in any Age of the World; ſee how their Hearts are broken for Sin under this ſevere Rebuke, *Lam.* 2. 17, 18, 19. And then, (2.) For Caution againſt Sin for the time to come; it's plain, that the Rebukes of Providence leave that Effect alſo upon gracious Hearts, *Ezra* 9. 13, 14. *Pſalm* 85. 8.

Sometimes he Cheers and Comforts the Hearts of his People with ſmiling and reviving Providences, both Publick and Perſonal. There are Times of lifting up as well as caſting down by the Hand of Providence. The Scene Changes, the Aſpects of Providence are very chearful and encouraging: Their Winter ſeems to be over: They put off their Garments of Mourning; and then, ah, what ſweet returns are made to Heaven by gracious Souls! Doth God lift them up by Proſperity? They alſo will lift up their God by Praiſes See *Pſal.* 18. *Title*, and *v.* 1, 2, 3. So *Moſes*, and the People with him, *Exod.* 15. when God had delivered them from *Pharaoh*, how do they exalt him in a Song of Thankſgiving, which for the elegancy and ſpirituality of it, is made an Emblem of the Doxologies given to God in Glory by the Saints! *Rev.* 15. 3.

Upon the whole, whatever Effects our Communion with God in any of his Ordinances doth uſe to produce upon our Hearts, the ſame we may obſerve to follow our converſing with him in his Providences. For,

1. It is uſually found in the Experience of all the Saints, that in what Ordinance or Duty ſoever they have any ſenſible Communion with God, it naturally produces in their Spirits a deep Abaſement and Humiliation from the Senſe of Divine Condeſcentions to ſuch vile poor Worms as we are. Thus *Abraham*, Gen. 18. 27. *I am but Duſt and Aſhes.* The ſame effect follows our converſe with God in his Providences. Thus when God had in the way of his Providence proſpered *Jacob*, how doth he lay himſelf at the Feet of God, as a Man overwhelmed with the Senſe of Mercy! See *Gen.* 32. 5. 10. *And Jacob ſaid, I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy Mercies, and of all the Truth which thou haſt ſhewed thy Servant; for with my Staff I paſſed over this Jordan, and now am become two Bands.* Thus alſo it was with *David*, 2 Sam. 7. 18. *Who am I, and what is my Father's Houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto!* And I doubt not, but ſome of you have found the like Frame of Heart upon you that theſe Holy Men here expreſſed. Can you not remember when God lifted you up by Providence, how you caſt down your ſelves before him, and have been viler in your own Eyes than ever! Why, thus do all gracious Hearts; What am I, that the Lord ſhould do thus and thus for me! O that ever ſo great and Holy a God ſhould thus be concerned for ſo vile and ſinful a Worm!

(2.) Doth Communion with God in Ordinances, melt the Heart into Love to God? *Cant.* 2. 3, 4, 5. Why, ſo doth the Obſervation of his Providences alſo. Never did any Man *Converſe* with *God's Works of Providence* aright, but found his Heart at ſometimes melted into *Love* to the *God* of his Mercies, *Pſalm* 18. 1. compared with the Title. When *God* had delivered him from the Hand of *Saul*, and all his Enemies, he ſaid, *I will love thee, O Lord, my Strength.* Every Man *Loves* the Mercies of *God*, but a Saint *Loves* the *God* of his Mercies. The Mercies of *God*, as they are the fewel of a wicked Man's Luſts, ſo they are fewel to maintain a good Man's *Love* to *God*; not that their *Love* to *God* is grounded upon theſe external Benefits. Not thine, but thee, O *Lord*, is the *Motto* of a *Gracious Soul*; but yet theſe Things ſerve to *blow* up the flame of *Love* to *God* in their Hearts, and they find it ſo.

4. Doth *Communion* with *God* ſet the keeneſt Edge upon the *Soul* againſt Sin? You ſee it doth: And have a pregnant Inſtance of it in *Moſes* when he had been with *God* in the *Mount* for Forty Days, and had there enjoyed *Communion* with him; when he came down and ſaw the *Calf* the *People* had made; ſee what an Holy *Paroxyſm* of Zeal and Anger it caſt his *Soul* into, *Exod.* 32. 19, 20. Why, the ſame Effect you may diſcern to *follow* the Saints *Converſe* with *God* in his *Providences*. What was that which pierced the Heart of *David* with ſuch a deep Senſe of the Evil of his Sin, which is ſo abundantly manifeſted in *Pſalm* 51. throughout? Why, if you look into the Title you ſhall find, it was the Effect of what *Nathan* had laid before him: And if you Conſult 2 *Sam.* 12. 7, 8, 9, 10. you ſhall find, it was the *Goodneſs* of *God* manifeſted to him in the ſeveral endearing *Providences* of his Life, which in this he had ſo evilly requited the *Lord* for, that broke his Heart to pieces in the Senſe of it: And I doubt not, but ſome of us have ſometimes found the like Effects, by comparing *God's* Ways and our own together.

4. Doth *Communion* with the *Lord* enlarge the Heart for Obedience and Service? Surely it is as Oyl to the Wheels, that makes them run on freely and nimbly their Courſe. Thus when *Iſaiah* had obtained a ſpecial *Manifeſtation* of *God*, and the *Lord* askt, *Whom ſhall I ſend?* He preſents a ready Soul for the Employment. *Iſa.* 6. 8. *Here am I, Lord, ſend me.* Why, the very ſame Effect follows ſanctified Providences, as you may ſee in *Jehoſaphat*, 2 Chron. 17. 5, 6. And in *David*, Pſalm 116. 12. O when a Soul conſiders what *God* hath done for him, he cannot chuſe but ſay, What ſhall I return? How ſhall I Anſwer theſe Engagements?

And thus you ſee, what ſweet Communion a Soul may have with God in the way of his Providences. O that you would thus walk with him! How much of Heaven might be found on Earth this way! And certainly, it will never repent the Lord he hath done you good, when his Mercies produce ſuch Effects upon your Hearts: He will ſay of every favour thus improved, it was well beſtowed, and will rejoice over you to do you good for ever.

### *Second Motive.*

*A great Part of the Pleaſure and Delight of the Chriſtian Life is made out of the Obſervations of Providence.* It is ſaid, *Pſalm* 111. 2. *The Works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all them that have Pleaſure therein*: (*i.e.*) the Study of Providence is ſo ſweet and pleaſant, that it invites and allures the Soul to ſearch and dive into it. How pleaſant is it to a well-tempered Soul to behold and obſerve,

(1.) The ſweet harmony and conſent of Divine Attributes in the iſſues of Providence! They may ſeem ſometimes to jarr and claſh, to part with each other, and go contrary Ways: But they only ſeem ſo to do; for in the winding up, they always meet and embrace each other, *Pſal.* 85. 10. *Mercy and Truth have met together: Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other.* It is ſpoken with an immediate Reference to that ſignal Providence of *Iſrael's* Deliverance out of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and the ſweet Effects thereof: Wherein the Truth and Righteouſneſs of God in the Promiſes, did as it were kiſs and embrace the Mercy and Peace that was contained in the Performance of them, after they had ſeemed for ſeventy Years to be at a great diſtance from each other. For it is an alluſion to the uſual Demonſtrations of Joy and Gladneſs, that two dear Friends are wont to give and receive, after a long Abſence and Separation from each other: They no ſooner meet, but they ſmile, embrace and kiſs each other. Even thus it is here. The Word נפגשו may be, (and by ſome is) rendered, *have met us*, and that alſo is true; for whenever theſe bleſſed Promiſes and Performances meet and kiſs each other, they are alſo joyfully embraced and kiſſed by believing Souls. There is, I doubt not, a mediate Reference of this Scripture to the *Meſſiah* alſo, and our Redemption by him: In him it is that theſe Divine Attributes which before ſeemed to claſh and contradict one another in the buſineſs of our Salvation, have a ſweet Agreement and Accompliſhment. Truth and Righteouſneſs do in him meet with Mercy and Peace in a bleſſed agreement. What a lovely ſight is this! and how pleaſant to behold! O if with *Habbakuk*, *chap.* 2. *v.* 3. we would but ſtand upon our Watch-Tower to take due obſervations of Providence; what rare Proſpects might we have! *Luther* underſtands it of the Word of God, *q.d.* I will look into the Word, and obſerve there how God accompliſheth all things, and brings them to paſs, and how his works are the fulfilling of his Word. Others (as *Calvin*) underſtand it of Man's own retiring thoughts and Meditations, wherein a Man carefully obſerves what purpoſes and deſigns God hath upon the World in general, or upon himſelf in particular, and how the Truth and Righteouſneſs of God in the Word work themſelves through all difficulties and impediments, and meet in the mercy, peace and happineſs of the Saints at laſt. Every Believer (take it in which ſenſe you will,) hath his *Watch Tower* as well as *Habakkuk*: And give me leave to ſay, it's an *Angelical employment* to ſtand upon it, and behold the conſent of God's Attributes, the accompliſhment of his Ends, and our own happineſs in the work of Providence. For this is the very joy of the Angels and Saints in Heaven, to ſee God's Ends wrought out, and his Attributes glorified in the mercy and peace of the Church, *Rev.* 14. 1, 2, 3. & 8.

*Occurrunt nobis, Syriac.*

(2.) And as it's a pleaſant ſight to ſee the harmony of Gods Attributes, ſo it is exceeding pleaſant to behold the reſurrection of our own prayers and hopes as from the dead. Why, this you may often ſee, if you will duly obſerve the works of Providence towards you. We hope and pray for ſuch and ſuch mercies to the Church, or to our ſelves? but God delaies the accompliſhment of our hopes, ſuſpends the anſwer of our prayers, and ſeems to ſpeaks to us, as Hab. 2. 3. *For the viſion is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it ſhall ſpeak and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry:* but we have no patience to wait the time of the Promiſe, our hopes languiſh and die in the interim; and we ſay with the deſpondent Church, Lam. 3. 18. *Our hope is periſhed from the Lord*; but Oh, how ſweet and comfortable is it to ſee theſe prayers fulfilled, after we have given up all expectation of them! May we not ſay of them, as the Scripture ſpeaks of the reſtoration of the Jews, it is even *life from the dead.* This was *David*'s caſe, *Pſal.* 31. 22. he gave up his hopes and prayers for loſt, yet lived to ſee the comfortable and unexpected returns of them. And this was the caſe of *Job, chap.* 6. 11. he had given up all expectation of better days, and yet this Man lived to ſee a reſurrection of all his loſt comforts with an advantage. Think how that change and unexpected turn of Providence affected his Soul: it is with our hopes and prayers as with our *Alms, Caſt thy bread on the waters, for thou ſhalt find it after many days*, Eccleſ. 11. 1. or as it was with *Jacob*, who had given over all hopes of ever ſeeing his beloved *Joſeph* again, but when a ſtrange and unexpected Providence had reſtored that hopeleſs mercy to him again, Oh how raviſhing and tranſporting was it? *Gen.* 46. 29, 30.

(3.) What a tranſporting pleaſure is it, to behold great bleſſings and advantages to us wrought by Providence, out of thoſe very things that ſeemed to threaten our ruine or miſery? and yet by due obſerving the ways of Providence, you may to your ſingular comfort find it ſo. Little did *Joſeph* think his tranſportation into *Egypt*, had been in order to his advancement there; yet he lived with joy to ſee it, and with a thankful heart to acknowledge it, *Gen.* 45. 5. Wait and obſerve, and you ſhall aſſuredly find that Promiſe, *Rom.* 8. 28. working out its way through all Providences. How many times have you been made to ſay as *David*, Pſal. 119. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* O what a difference have we ſeen betwixt our Afflictions at our firſt meeting with them, and our parting from them! We have entertained them with Sighs and Tears, but parted from them with Joy, bleſſing God for them, as the happy Inſtruments of our good. Thus our fears and ſorrows are turned into praiſes and ſongs of thankſgiving.

(4.) What unſpeakable comfort is it for a poor ſoul, that ſees nothing but ſin and vileneſs in it ſelf, at the ſame time to ſee what an high eſteem and value the great God hath for him! This may be diſcerned by a due attendance to Providence, for there a man ſees *goodneſs and mercy following* him through all his days, as it is *Pſal.* 23. 6. Other men proſecute good, and it flies from them, they can never overtake it; but goodneſs and mercy follow the people of God, and they cannot avoid or eſcape it: it gives them chaſe day by day, and finds them out; even when they ſometimes put themſelves by ſin out of the way of it. In all the Providences that befal them, goodneſs and mercy purſues them. O with what a melting heart do they ſometimes reflect upon theſe things! *and will not the goodneſs of God be diſcouraged from following me, notwithſtanding all my vile affronts and abuſes of it in former mercies? Lord, what am I, that mercy ſhould thus purſue me, when vengeance and wrath purſue others as good by nature as I am?* It certainly argues the great eſteem God hath of a man, when he thus follows him with ſanctified Providences (whether they be comforts or croſſes) for his good. And ſo much is plain, from *Job* 7. 18. *Lord what is man, that thou ſhouldſt viſit him every morning, and try him every moment?* Certainly, God's people are his treaſure, and by this it appears that they are ſo, that he withdraws not his eye from them, *Job* 36. 7. I ſay not, that God's Favour and reſpect to a man, may be concluded ſingly from his Providences; but ſanctified Providences may very much clear it to us: and when it doth ſo, it cannot but be matter of exceeding great joy.

(5.) To conclude, What is there in all this World, that can give a ſoul ſuch joy and comfort, as to find himſelf by every thing ſet on and farthered in his way to Heaven! And yet this may be diſcerned, by an heedful attendance to the effects and iſſues of Providences.

How croſs ſoever the Winds and Tides of Providence at any time ſeem to us, yet nothing is more certain, than that they all conſpire to haſten ſanctified ſouls to God, and fit them for glory.

S. *Paul* knew, that both his bonds, and the afflictions added to them ſhould turn to, or (as the word ἀποβήσεται imports) finally iſſue in his ſalvation, *Phil.* 1. 19. Not that in themſelves they ſerve to any ſuch purpoſe; but as they are over-ruled and determined to ſuch an end, *through Prayer, and the ſupply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt.* When *Prayer* the external, and the *Spirit* the internal means are joined with them; then afflictions themſelves become excellent means to promote ſalvation. And have we not with joy obſerved, how thoſe very things, that ſenſe and reaſon tell us are oppoſite to our happineſs, have been the moſt bleſſed Inſtruments to promote it? How hath God bleſſed *croſſes* to mortifie *corruption*, *wants* to kill our *wantonneſs*, *diſappointments* to wean us from the *world!* O we little think how comfortable thoſe things will be in the review, which are ſo burdenſome to preſent ſenſe!

### *The Third Motive.*

In the next place, I beſeech you conſider, *What an effectual means the due obſervation of Providence will be to over-power and ſuppreſs the natural Atheiſm that is in your hearts.*

There is a natural ſeed of Atheiſm in the beſt hearts, and this is very much nouriſhed, by paſſing a raſh and falſe judgement upon the works of Providence. When we ſee wicked ones to proſper in the world, and godly men cruſhed and deſtroyed in the way of righteouſneſs and integrity; it may tempt us to think, there is no Advantage by Religion, and all our Self-denial and Holineſs, to be little better than loſt Labour. Thus ſtood the Caſe with good *Aſaph*, Pſal. 73. 12, 13. *Behold, theſe are the ungodly that proſper in the world, they increaſe in riches*: And what doth the fleſh infer from thence? Why no leſs than the unprofitableneſs of the Ways of Holineſs, *Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency.* This irreligious Inference carnal Reaſon was ready to draw from the diſpenſations of outward Proſperity to wicked men; but now if we would heedfully obſerve, either the ſignal retributions of Providence to *many* of them in *this world*, or to *all* of them in the *World to come*; O what a full Confirmation is this to our Faith? Pſal. 9. 16. *The Lord is known by the Judgments that he executeth.* The fifty eighth *Pſalm* contains the Characters of the moſt prodigious Sinners, whoſe Wickedneſs is aggravated,

By the deliberation with which it's committed, *V.* 2.
By their habit and cuſtom in it, *V.* 3.
By their incorrigibleneſs and perſiſtance in it, *V.* 4, 5.
And the Providence of God is there invited
To deſtroy their power, *V.* 6. and that either.
By a gradual and inſenſible conſumption of them, *V.* 7. 8 or,
By a ſuddain and unexpected ſtroke, *V.* 9.
And what ſhall the effects of ſuch Providences be to the Righteous? Why, it ſhall be matter of joy, *V.* 10. And great confirmation to their Faith in God, *V.* 11. *Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

And on the contrary, how convincingly clear are thoſe Providences, that demonſtrate the Being, Wiſdom, Power, Love and Faithfulneſs of God, in the ſupporting, preſerving and delivering of the Righteous, in all their dangers fears and difficulties? In theſe things the Lord ſhews himſelf, to his people, *Pſal.* 94. 1. Yea, he ſhews himſelf to ſpiritual eyes in the Providences, as clearly, as the Sun manifeſts himſelf by his own beams of light, Hab. 3. 3, 4. *His brightneſs was as the light, and he had horns coming out of his hands, and there was the hiding of his power.* It's ſpoken of the Lords going forth for his people in their deliverance from their Enemies: And then he had horns or raies and beams of power and mercy coming out of his hands; by his hands, are meant his Providential Adminiſtrations and Diſpenſations, and the horns that came out of them, are nothing elſe but the glorious diſplay of his Attributes in thoſe Providences. How did God make himſelf known to his people in that ſignal deliverance of them out of *Egypt*? See *Exod.* 6. 3. then he was known to them by his Name *Jehovah*, in giving being by his Providences to the Mercies promiſed.

Thus when *Chriſt* ſhall give his people the laſt and greateſt deliverance from *Antichriſt*, he ſhall ſhew himſelf to his people in a veſture dipt in blood, and his Name ſhall be called, *The Word of God*, Rev. 19. 13. His Name was the Word of God before; but then he was the Word *revealing* and diſcovering the promiſes and truths of God; now *accompliſhing* and fulfilling them. That his Name is near, his wonderful works declare, *Pſal.* 75. 1.

But more particularly, let us bring it home to our own experience. It may be, we find our ſelves ſometimes aſſaulted with Atheiſtical Thoughts: We are tempted to think God hath left all Things below to the courſe and ſway of Nature, that our prayers reach him not, as it is *Lam.* 3. 44. that he regards not what Evils befall us. But, tell me, Saints, have you not enough at hand to ſtop the mouths of all ſuch temptations? O do but reflect upon your own Experiences, and ſolemnly ask your own hearts.

(1.) Have you never ſeen the All-ſufficient God in the proviſions he hath made for you and yours, throughout all the way that you have gone? Who was it that ſupplied to you whatever was needful in all your Straits? Was it not the Lord? *'Tis he that hath given bread to them that fear him, and hath been ever mindful of his Covenant*, Pſal. 111. 5. O do but conſider the conſtancy, ſeaſonableneſs, and at ſometimes the extraordinarineſs of theſe proviſions, and how they have been given in upon prayer, and ſhut your eyes if you can, againſt the convincing Evidence of that great Truth, Job 36. 7. *He withdraweth not his Eye from the Righteous.*

(2.) Have you not plainly diſcerned the care of God in your Preſervations from ſo many and great dangers as you have eſcaped and been carried through hitherto? how is it, that you have over-lived ſo many mortal dangers, ſickneſſes, accidents, deſigns of Enemies to ruin you? It is I preſume, beyond queſtion with you, that the very finger of God hath been in theſe things, and that it is by his care alone, you have been preſerved. When God had ſo ſignally delivered *David* from a dangerous Diſeaſe and the plots of Enemies againſt him, *by this* (ſaith he) *I know thou favoureſt me, becauſe mine enemy doth not triumph over me*, Pſal. 41. 11. he gathered from thoſe gracious protections, the care God had over him.

(3.) Have you not plainly diſcerned the hand of God, in the returns and accompliſhments of your Prayers? Nothing can be more evident than this, to Men of Obſervation, Pſal. 34. 4, 5, 6. *I ſought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him and were lightned, and their faces were not aſhamed. This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and ſaved him out of all his troubles.* Parallel to this, runs the experience of thouſands and ten thouſands of Chriſtians this day; they know they have the Petitions they asked of him. The *Mercy* carries the very impreſs and ſtamp of the *Duty* upon it. So that we can ſay, This is the *Mercy*, the very Mercy I have ſo often *ſought* God about. O how ſatisfying, and convincing are theſe things!

(4.) Have you not evidently diſcerned the Lords hand, in the guiding and directing of your Paths, to your unforeſeen Advantage? Things that you never projected for your ſelves, have been brought about beyond all your Thoughts. Many ſuch Things are with God; and which of all the Saints hath not found that word, *Jer.* 10. 23. verified by clear and undeniable experience? *The way of Man is not in himſelf.* I preſume, if you will but look over the Mercies you poſſeſs this day, you will find three to one, it may be ten to one thus wrought by the Lord for you. And how ſatisfying beyond all Arguments in the World are theſe experiences, That there is a God to whom his people are exceeding dear, *a God that performeth all things for them!*

(5.) Is it not fully convictive, that there is a God who takes care of you, in as much as you have found in all the temptations and difficulties of your Lives his Promiſes ſtill fulfilled, and faithfully performed in all thoſe conditions? I appeal to your ſelves, if you have not ſeen that Promiſe made good, Pſal. 91. 15. *I will be with him in trouble*; and that 1 Cor. 10. 13. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* Have not theſe been as clearly made out by Providence before your eyes, as the Sun at Noon-day? What room then is left for Atheiſtical ſuggeſtions in your Breaſts?

### *The Fourth Motive.*

*Diligenter perpendamus res præteritas, tum præſentes; ut ad futura parati, & accincti ſimus: fides argumentare ſolet à præterito, ad præſens; & ab utroque ad futurum.* Alſted.

*The Recording and Recognizing of the Performances of Providence, will be a ſingular ſupport to Faith in future exigencies.* This excellent Uſe of it lies full in the very eye of the Text. There never befell *David* in all his Troubles, a greater ſtrait and diſtreſs than this; and doubtleſs his Faith had ſtaggered, had not the conſiderations of former Providence come in to its relief. From this *Topick* Faith argues, and that very ſtrongly and concluſively. So did *David*'s Faith in many exigencies: when he was to encounter the *Champion* of the *Philiſtins*, it was from former Providence that he encouraged himſelf, 1 *Sam.* 17. 37. And the Apoſtle *Paul* improves his experiences to the ſame purpoſe, 2 *Cor.* 1. 9, 10. Indeed the whole Scripture is full of it: What Chriſtian underſtands not the exceeding uſefulneſs of thoſe experiences he hath had to relieve and enliven? But I ſhall not ſatisfie my ſelf with the common Aſſertion, than which nothing is more trite in the lips of profeſſors; but will labour to ſhew you, wherein the great uſefulneſs of our recorded Experiences, for encouraging Faith labouring under difficulties, conſiſts. To this purpoſe, I ſhall deſire the Reader to ponder ſeriouſly theſe following Particulars,

1. How much advantage thoſe things have upon our Souls, which we have already felt and taſted, beyond thoſe which were never reliſhed by any former experience? What is Experience, but the bringing down of the Objects of Faith to the dijudication and teſt of ſpiritual Senſe? Now when any thing hath been once taſted, felt and judged by former experience, it is much more eaſily believed and received when it concurs again. It's much eaſier for Faith to travel in a path that is well known to it, having formerly trod it, than to beat out a new one which is never trod, nor can ſee one ſtep before it. Hence it is, though there be a difficulty in all the Acts of Faith, yet ſcarce in any like the firſt Adventure it makes upon *Chriſt*; and the Reaſon lies here, becauſe in the *ſubſequent* Acts it hath all its former experiences to aid and encourage it; but in the *firſt adventure* it hath none at all of its own, it takes a path which it never knew before.

To truſt God without any trial or experience, is a more noble act of Faith; but to truſt him after we have often try'd him, is known to be more eaſie. O 'tis no ſmall advantage to a Soul in a new plunge and diſtreſs, to be able to ſay, This is not the firſt time I have been in theſe deeps, and yet emerged out of them: Hence it was, that *Chriſt* rub'd up his Diſciples Memories with what Providence had formerly wrought for them in a day of ſtraits, Matth. 16. 8, 9, 10, 11. *O ye of little Faith, why reaſon ye among your ſelves, becauſe ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet underſtand, neither remember?* *q. d.* Were ye never under any ſtrait for Bread before now? Is this the firſt difficulty that ever your Faith combated with? No, no, you have felt ſtraits, and experienced the power and care of God in ſupplying them, before now; and therefore I cannot but call you men of *little faith*; for a very ordinary and ſmall meaſure of Faith, aſſiſted with ſo much experience as you have had, would enable you to truſt God. There is as much difference betwixt believing before, and after experience, as there is betwixt ſwiming with Bladders, and our firſt venture into the deep Waters without them.

What a ſingular encouragement to Faith do former Experiences yield it, by anſwering all the Pleas and Objections of Unbelief drawn from the Object of Faith? Now there be two things that Unbelief ſtumbles at in *God*: One is his Power, the other his Willingneſs to help.

(1.) Unbelief objects the impoſſibility of relief in deep diſtreſſes, Pſal. 78. 19. *Can God furniſh a Table in the Wilderneſs? Can he give bread alſo? Can he provide fleſh for his people?* O vile and unworthy Thoughts of God! proceeding from our meaſuring the immenſe and boundleſs power of God, by our own line and meaſure: Becauſe we ſee not which way relief ſhould come, we conclude, none is to be expected. But all theſe reaſonings of Unbelief are vanquiſh'd by a ſerious reflection upon our own Experiences: God hath helped, therefore he can, Iſa. 59. 1. *His hand is not ſhortned*: *i. e.* he hath as much power and ability as formerly.

(2.) Unbelief objects againſt the Will of *God*, and queſtions, whether he will now be gracious, though he hath formerly been ſo. But after ſo many experiences of his readineſs to help, what room for doubting remains? Thus *Paul* reaſoned from the experience of what he had done, to what he could do, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. and ſo did *David*, 1 Sam. 17. 36. Indeed if a man had never experienced the Goodneſs of God to him, it were not ſo heinous a ſin to queſtion his willingneſs to do him good? But what place is left after ſuch frequent trials?

2. It gives great encouragement to Faith, as it anſwers the Objections of Unbelief drawn from the *ſubject*. Now theſe Objections are of two ſorts alſo.

(1.) Such as are drawn from our great unworthineſs. How (ſaith Unbelief) can ſo ſinful and vile a Creature expect, that ever God ſhould do this or that for me? 'Tis true, we find he did great Things for *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Moſes*, &c. but theſe were Men of eminent Holineſs, Men that obeyed God, and denied themſelves for him, and lived more in a Day to his Glory, than ever I did all my Days.

Well, but what ſignifies all this to a Soul, that under all its ſenſible Vileneſs and Unworthineſs hath taſted the Goodneſs of God as well as they? As unworthy as I am, God hath been good to me notwithſtanding: his mercy appeared firſt to me, when I was worſe than I am now, both in *condition* and *diſpoſition*; and therefore I will ſtill expect the continuance of his Goodneſs to me, though I deſerve it not. *If when we were Enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his Life?* Rom. 5. 10.

(2.) Such as are drawn from the Extremity of our preſent Condition; if Troubles or Dangers grow to an height, and we ſee nothing but Ruin and Miſery in the Eye of Reaſon before us; now Unbelief becomes importune and troubleſome to the Soul: Now where are thy Prayers, thy Hopes, yea, where is now thy God?

But all this is eaſily put by and avoided, by conſulting our Experiences in former Caſes. This is not the firſt time I have been in theſe Straits, nor the firſt time I have had the ſame Doubts and Deſpondencies; and yet, God hath carried me through all, *Pſal.* 77. 7, 8, 9, &c. This is it that ſuffers not a Chriſtian to unravel all his Hopes in an Hour of Temptation. O how uſeful are theſe Things to the People of God!

### *The Fifth Motive.*

*The Recognition of former Providences will miniſter to your Souls continual matter of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, which is the very Employment of the Angels in Heaven, and the ſweeteſt part of our Lives on Earth.*

See *Pſal.* 61. 7, 8. If God will prepare Mercy and Truth for *David*, he will prepare Praiſes for his God, and that daily. So Pſal. 71. 6. *By thee have I been holden up from the womb, thou art he that took me out of my Mother's bowels*; (there Mercies from the beginning are recognized.) *My praiſe ſhall be continually of thee*: there the natural Reſult of thoſe Recognitions is expreſſed.

There be five Things belonging to the Praiſe of God, and all of them have relation to his Providences exerciſed about us.

(1.) A careful Obſervation of the Mercies we receive from him, *Iſa.* 41. 17, 18, 19, 20. This is fundamental to all praiſe: God cannot be glorified for the Mercies we never noted.

(2.) A faithful Remembrance of the favours received, Pſal. 103. 2. *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his Benefits.* Hence the Lord brands the Ingratitude of his people, Pſal. 106. 13. *They ſoon forgat his Works.*

(3.) A due Appreciation and Valuation of every Providence that doth us good, 1 *Sam.* 12. 24. That Providence that fed them in the Wilderneſs with Manna, was the moſt remarkable Providence to them; but they not valuing it at its Worth, God had not that praiſe for it which he expected, *Numb.* 11. 6.

(4.) The Excitation of all the faculties and powers of the Soul in the acknowledgement of theſe Mercies to us. Thus *David*, Pſal. 103. 1. *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy name.* Soul-praiſe is the very Soul of Praiſe: This is the fat and marrow of that Thank-offering.

(5.) A ſuitable Retribution for the Mercies received. This *David* was careful about, *Pſal.* 116. 1. And the Lord taxes good *Hezekiah* for the neglect of it, 2 *Chron.* 32. 24, 25. This conſiſts in a full and hearty Reſignation of all to him: That we have received by Providence from him: And in our willingneſs actually to part with all for him, when he ſhall remand it.

Thus you ſee, how all the ingredients to praiſe, have reſpect to Providences. But more particularly I will ſhew you, that as all the ingredients of Praiſe have reſpect to Providences, ſo all the Motives and Arguments obliging and engaging Souls to praiſe, are found therein alſo. To this end conſider, how the mercy and goodneſs of God is exhibited by Providence, to excite our Thankfulneſs.

(1.) That the goodneſs and mercy of God is let out upon his people in his Providences about them: And this is the very root of Praiſe. It is not ſo much the poſſeſſion that Providence gives us of ſuch or ſuch Comforts, as the goodneſs and kindneſs of God in the diſpenſing of them, that engages a gracious Soul to praiſe, Pſal. 63. 3. *Becauſe thy loving kindneſs is better than life, my lips ſhall praiſe thee.* To give, maintain, and preſerve our life, are choice acts of Providences: but to do all this in a way of Grace and Loving kindneſs, this is far better than the gifts themſelves; life is but the ſhadow of death without it: This is the mercy that crowns all other mercies, *Pſal.* 103. 4. It's this a ſanctified Soul deſires God would manifeſt in every Providence about him, *Pſal.* 17. 7. and what is our praiſing of God elſe, but our ſhewing forth that Loving-kindneſs, which he ſheweth us in his Providences? *Pſal.* 92. 1, 2.

(2.) As the Loving-kindneſs of God manifeſted in Providences, is a motive to praiſe; ſo the *free* and *undeſerved* favours of God, diſpenſed by the hand of Providence, oblige the Soul to praiſe. This was the conſideration that melted *David's* Heart into a thankful praiſing frame, even the conſideration of the free and undeſerved favours caſt in upon him by Providence, 2 Sam. 7. 18. *What am I? O Lord God: And what is my Fathers houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?* (*i. e.*) raiſed me by Providence from a mean Condition to all this Dignity: *From following the Ewes, to feed Jacob his People*, Pſalm 78. 70, 71. O this it is that engages Thankfulneſs, *Gen.* 32. 10.

(3.) As the freeneſs of Mercies diſpenſed by Providence, engageth Praiſe; ſo the multitudes of Mercies heaped this way upon us, ſtrongly oblige the Soul to Thankfulneſs. Thus *David* comes before the Lord encompaſſed with a multitude of Mercies to praiſe him, *Pſalm* 5. 7. We have our loads of Mercies, and that every Day, *Pſalm* 68. 19. O what a rich heap will the Mercies of one Day make, being laid together!

(4) As the multitudes of Mercies diſpenſed by Providence, oblige to Praiſe; ſo the *tenderneſs* of Gods Mercy manifeſted in his Providence, leaves the Soul under a ſtrong Obligation to thankfulneſs. We ſee what tender Reſentments the Lord hath of all our wants, ſtraits, and burdens, *Pſalm* 103. 13. *Like as a Father pitieth his Children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* He is full of Bowels, as that Word πολύσπλαγχνος in *James* 5. 11. ſignifies. Yea, there are not only Bowels of Compaſſion in our God, but the tenderneſs of Bowels, like thoſe of a Mother to her Sucking Child, *Iſa.* 49. 15. He feels all our Pains, as if the apple of his Eye were touched, *Zech.* 2. 8. and all this is diſcovered to his People in the way of his Provi-

dences with them, *Pſalm* 111. 1, 2, 3, 4. O who of all the Children of God hath not often found this in his Providences? And who can ſee it, and not be filled with thankfulneſs: All theſe are ſo many Bands clapt by Providence upon the Soul, to oblige it to a Life of Praiſe. Hence it is, that the Prayers of the Saints are ſo full of thankſgivings upon theſe accounts: 'Tis ſweet to recount them to the Lord in Prayer; To lie at his Feet in an holy Aſtoniſhment at his gracious Condeſcenſions to poor Worms.

### *The Sixth Motive.*

*The due Obſervation of Providence will endear Jeſus Chriſt every Day more and more to your Souls.* *Chriſt* is the Channel of Grace and Mercy; through him are all the *decurſus & recurſus gratiarum*, all the Streams of Mercy that flow from God to us, and all the returns of Praiſe from us to God, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21, 22. All things are ours upon no other Title, but our being his.

Now there be ſix things in Providence that are exceedingly endearing of the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* to his People: And theſe are the moſt ſweet and delicious Parts of all our Enjoyments.

1. The purchaſe of all thoſe Mercies which Providence conveys to us, is by his own Blood: For not only Spiritual and Eternal Mercies, but even all our Temporal ones, are the Acquiſition of his Blood. Look, as Sin forfeited all, ſo *Chriſt* reſtored all theſe Mercies again to us by his Death. Sin had ſo ſhut up the womb of Mercy, that had not *Chriſt* made an Atonement by his Death, it could never have brought forth one Mercy to all Eternity for us. It is *with him* that God *freely gives us all things*, Rom. 8. 32. Heaven it ſelf, and all things needful to bring us thither, among which, is principally included the Tutelage and Aid of Divine Providence: So that whatever good we receive from the Hand of Providence, we muſt put it upon the ſcore of Chriſt's Blood; and when we receive it, we may ſay, 'Tis the price of Blood: 'Tis a Mercy riſing up out of the Death of Chriſt: It coſt him dear, though it come to me freely: It's *ſweet in the Poſſeſſion*, but coſtly in the *Acquiſition*. Now this is a moſt endearing Conſideration? Did *Chriſt* die, that theſe Mercies might Live? Did he pay his invaluable Blood to purchaſe theſe Comforts, that I poſſeſs? O what tranſcendent, matchleſs Love, was the Love of Chriſt! You have known Parents that have laid out all their Stock of Money to purchaſe Eſtates for their Children; but when did you hear of any that ſpent the whole Stock and Treaſure of their Blood, to make a Purchaſe for them? If the Life of Chriſt had not been ſo afflictive and ſad to him, ours could not have been ſo ſweet and comfortable to us: 'Tis through his Poverty we are enriched, 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. Theſe ſweet Mercies that are born of Providence every day, are the Fruits of *the Travail of his Soul*.

*Bona gratiæ & gloriæ, ac præ omnibus divinæ tutelæ opis, ac providentiæ ſuæ ſcutum.* Poli Synopſis in loc.

2. The Sanctification of all, is by our Union with Chriſt: 'Tis by vertue of our Union with his Perſon, that we enjoy the ſanctified Gifts and Bleſſings of Providence. All theſe are Mercies, additional to that great Mercy CHRIST, *Mat.* 6. 33. They are given with him, as in *Rom.* 8. 32. This is the Tenure by which we hold them, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21, 22, 23. Look, what we loſt in *Adam*, is reſtored again with Advantage in *Chriſt*: Immediately upon the fall, that Curſe, *Gen.* 2. 17. ſeized upon all the miſerable Poſterity of *Adam*, and upon all their Comforts, *outward* as well as *inward*; and this ſtill lies heavy upon them: All that Providence doth for them that are Chriſtleſs, is but to feed ſo many poor condemned Wretches, till the ſentence they are under be executed upon them: It is indeed bountiful and open-handed to many of them; and fills them with earthly Comforts; but not one ſpecial ſanctified Mercy is to be found among all their Enjoyments: Theſe Gifts of Providence do but deceive, defile and deſtroy them through their own Corruptions, and for want of Union with Chriſt, *Prov.* 1. 32. *The Proſperity of Fools ſhall deſtroy them.*

But when a man is once in Chriſt, then all Providences are ſanctified and ſweet, *Tit.* 1. 15. *Unto the pure, all things are pure. A little that a Righteous Man hath, is better than the Treaſures of many wicked*, Pſalm 37. 16. Now Chriſt becomes an Head of *Influence*, as well as of *Dominion*; and in all things he conſults the good of his own Members, *Eph.* 1. 22.

3. The Diſpenſation of all our Comforts and Mercies, is by his Direction and Appointment. It's true, the *Angels* are employed in the Kingdom of Providence, they move the Wheels, (*i. e.*) are inſtrumental in all the Revolutions in this lower World; but ſtill they receive Directions and Orders from Chriſt, as you may ſee in that admirable Scheme of Providences, *Ezek.* 1. 25, 26. &c. Now what an endearing Meditation is this! Whatever Creature be inſtrumental for any good to you, it's your Lord Jeſus Chriſt that gave the orders and commands to that Creature to do it; and without it they could have done nothing for you: It's your Head in Heaven that conſults your Peace and Comfort on Earth. Theſe be the Fruits of his Care for you. So in the Prevention and Reſtraints of Evil; 'tis he that Bridles in the Wrath of Devils and Men, he holds the Reins in his own Hands, *Rev.* 2. 10. 'Twas the care of Chriſt over his poor Sheep at *Damaſcus*, that ſtopt the raging Adverſary who was upon the Way, deſigning to deſtroy them, *Acts* 9.

4. The *Continuation* of all your Mercies and Comforts, outward as well as inward, is the fruit of his Interceſſion in Heaven for you. For look, as the offering up of the Lamb of God a Sacrifice for Sin, opened the Door of Mercy at firſt; ſo his appearing before God as a Lamb that had been ſlain, ſtill keeps that door of Mercy open, *Rev.* 5. 6. *Heb.* 9. 24. By this his Interceſſion, our Peace and Comforts are prolonged to us, *Zech.* 1. 12, 13. Every Sin we commit, would put an end to the Mercies we poſſeſs, were it not for that Caution which is put in for us by it, 1 *John* 2. 1, 2. *If any Man Sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous: And he is the Propitiation for our Sins*, &c. This ſtops all Pleas, and procures new Pardons for new Sins. Hence it is *he ſaves to the uttermoſt*, to the laſt compleating Act, *Heb.* 7. 25. New Sins do not irritate our former Pardons, nor cut off our Privileges ſetled upon us in Chriſt.

5. The returns and anſwers of all your Prayers and Cries to Heaven for the removing of your Afflictions, or ſupply of your wants, are all procured and obtained for you by Jeſus Chriſt. He is the Maſter of your Requeſts; and were it not that God had reſpect to him, he would never regard your cries to him, nor return any anſwer of Peace to you, how great ſoever your Diſtreſſes ſhould be, *Rev.* 8. 3, 4. 'Tis his Name that gives our Prayers their acceptance, *John* 15. 16. Becauſe the Father can deny him nothing, therefore your Prayers are not denied. Doth God condeſcend to hear you in the day of trouble? Doth he convince you by your own Experience, that your Prayers have *Power with God, and do prevail*? O ſee how much you owe to your dear Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for this high and glorious Privilege!

6. The Covenant of Grace, in which all your comfortable Enjoyments are comprized, and by which they are ſecured, ſanctified, and ſweetned to you, is made in Chriſt, and ratified by him betwixt God and you. Your Mercies are all comprized in this Covenant, even your daily Bread, *Pſalm* 111. 5. as well as your Juſtification, and other ſpiritual Mercies.

'Tis your Covenant Intereſt, that ſecures to you whatever it comprizes, *Iſa.* 55. 3. Hence they are called the ſure Mercies of *David*.

Nay, this is it that ſanctifies them, and gives them the nature of ſpecial and peculiar Mercies. One ſuch Mercy is worth a thouſand common Mercies. And being ſanctified and ſpecial Mercies, they muſt needs be exceeding ſweet beyond all other Mercies. On theſe accounts it was, that *David* ſo rejoiced in his Covenant Intereſt, though laden with many Afflictions, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5.

But now all this hangs entirely upon Chriſt. The *New Teſtament* is in his Blood, 1 *Cor.* 11. 25. And whatever Mercies you reap from that Covenant, you muſt thank the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for them. Put all this together, and then think how ſuch Conſiderations will endear Chriſt to your Souls!

### *The Seventh Motive.*

*The due Obſervations of Providence have a marvellous Efficacy to melt the Heart, and make it thaw and relent ingenuouſly before the Lord.*

How can a ſanctified Heart do leſs, than melt into Tears, whilſt it either *conſiders* the dealings of God from Time to Time with it: Or *compares* the Mercies received, with the Sins committed; or the *different* Adminiſtrations of Providence towards it *ſelf* and *others*.

Let a Man but ſet himſelf to think deliberately and cloſely of the ways of Providence towards him, let him but follow the Tract of Providence, as it hath led him all along the way that he hath gone, and if there be any Principle of gracious tenderneſs in him, he ſhall meet with variety of occaſions to excite and draw it forth. Reader, go back with thy ſerious Thoughts, (1.) To the beginning of the Ways of God with thee, the Mercies that brake out early in thy Youth, even the firſt-born Mercies from the Womb of Providence; and thou wilt ſay, What need I go farther? Here is enough, not only to move, but overwhelm my Heart. *May I not from this time cry unto thee, my Father, thou art the guide of my Youth*, Jer. 3 4. What a critical Time is the Time of Youth? It's the moulding Age; and (ordinarily) according to the courſe of thoſe leading Providences, after-Providences do ſteer their Courſe. What levity, raſhneſs, ignorance, and ſtrong propenſions to Sin and Ruin accompanied that Age? How many being then left to the ſway of their own Luſts, run themſelves into thoſe Sins and Miſeries, which they never recover themſelves from to their dying Day? Theſe, like the Errors of the firſt Concoction, are rarely rectified afterwards. Did the Lord guide thee by his Providence, when but a Child? Did he then preſerve thee from thoſe Follies and Miſcarriages, which blaſt the very Bloſſom, and nip the Bud, ſo that no good Fruit is to be expected afterwards? Did he then caſt thee into ſuch Families, or among ſuch Company and Acquaintance, as moulded and formed thy Spirit to a better Temper? Did he then direct thee into that way of Employment, wherein thou haſt ſeen ſo large a train of happy Conſequents ever ſince following thee? And wilt thou not from henceforth ſay, *My Father, my Father, thou art the guide of my Youth*?

Or (2.) Let us but bring our thoughts cloſe to the Providences of after-Times, and conſider how the ſeveral changes and removes of our Lives have been ordered for us: Things we never foreſaw nor deſigned (but much better for us, than what we did deſign) have been all along ordered for us. *The way of Man is not in himſelf. God's Thoughts have not been our Thoughts, nor his Ways our Ways.* Among the eminent Mercies of thy Life, Reader, how many of them have been meer *ſurprizals* to thee? Thy own Projects have been thruſt aſide, to make way for better Things deſigned by Providence for thee.

Nay, (3.) Do but obſerve the *Springs* and *Autumns* of Providence, in what order they have *flouriſhed* and *faded* with thee, and thou wilt find thy ſelf over-powered with the Senſe of Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs: When neceſſity required, ſuch a Friend was ſtirred up to help thee, ſuch a Place opened to receive thee, ſuch a Relation raiſed up or continued to refreſh thee: And no ſooner doth Providence deprive thee of any of them, but either thy need of them ceaſes, or ſome other way is opened to thee. O the depth of Gods Wiſdom and Goodneſs! O the matchleſs tenderneſs of God to his People!

(4.) Compare the dealings of Providence with you and others, yea, with others that ſprang up with you in the ſame Generation, it may be, in the ſame Families, and from the ſame Parents, it may be in Families greater and more flouriſhing in the World than yours, and ſee the difference, upon many great accounts, it hath made betwixt you and them. I knew a *Chriſtian*, who after many Years Separation, was viſited by his own Brother, the very ſight of whom, wrought upon him, much as the ſight of *Benjamin* did upon *Joſeph*, ſo that he could not refrain to fall upon his Neck, and weep for joy; but after a few hours ſpent together, finding the Spirit of his Brother, not only eſtranged from all that's ſpiritual and ſerious, but alſo very vain and prophane, he haſtened to his Chamber, ſhut the door upon him, threw himſelf down at the Feet of God, and with flowing Eyes, and a melting Heart, admired the diſtinguiſhing Grace of God, ſaying, Was not *Eſau Jacob's* Brother? O Grace, Grace, aſtoniſhing Grace!

(5.) Compare the carriage of Providence towards you, with your own carriage towards the Lord; and it muſt needs melt your Hearts to find ſo much Mercy beſtowed, where ſo much Sin hath been committed. What Place did you ever live in, where you cannot remember great Provocations committed, and manifold Mercies notwithſtanding that, received? O with how many *notwithſtandings* and *nevertheleſſes*, hath the Lord done you good in every Place! What Relation hath not been abuſed by Sin; and yet both raiſed up and continued by Providence for your Comfort? In every Place God hath left the Marks of his Goodneſs, and you the remembrances of your ſinfulneſs. Give your ſelves but leave to think of theſe things, and it's ſtrange if your Hearts relent not at the remembrance of them.

(6.) Or Laſtly, Do but compare your Dangers with your Fears, and both with the ſtrange out-letts and doors of eſcape Providence hath opened, and it cannot do leſs than overpower you with a full Senſe of Divine Care and Goodneſs.

There have been dark Clouds ſeen to riſe over you, Judgment even at your door, ſometimes threatning your Life, ſometimes your Liberty, ſometimes your Eſtates, and ſometimes your deareſt Relations, in whom it may be, your Life was bound up; remember in that Day, what faintneſs of ſpirit ſeized you, what charges of guilt ſtirring up fears of the iſſue within you: You turned to the Lord in that Diſtreſs, and hath he not made a way to eſcape, and delivered you from all your Fears? *Pſalm* 34. 4.

Oh is your Life ſuch a continued Throng, ſuch a diſtracted Hurry, that there is no room to be found with Chriſtians to ſit alone, and think on theſe things, and preſs theſe marvellous diſcoveries of God in his Providences upon their own Hearts? Surely, might theſe Things but lie upon our Hearts, talk with our Thoughts by Day, and lodge with us at Night; they would even force their Paſſage down to our very Reins.

### *The Eighth Motive.*

*Due Obſervation of Providence will both beget and ſecure inward tranquility in your Minds amidſt the Viciſſitudes and Revolutions of Things in this unſtable vain World.*

Pſalm 4. 8. *I will both lay me down in Peace, and ſleep, for the Lord only makith me dwell in ſafety.* He reſolves the ſinful Fears of Events ſhall not rob him of his inward quiet, nor torture his Thoughts with anxious preſages: He will commit all his concerns into that faithful fatherly Hand that had hitherto wrought all Things for him, and he means not to loſe the Comfort of one Night's reſt, nor bring the evil of to Morrow upon the Day, but knowing in whoſe Hand he was, wiſely enjoys the ſweet Felicity of a reſigned Will.

Now this Tranquility of our Minds is as much begotten and preſerved by a due Conſideration of Providence, as by any thing whatſoever. Hence it was, that our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, when he would cure the *Diſciples* anxious and diſtracting ſolicitudes about a livellihood, bids them conſider the Care Providence hath over the Birds of the Air, and the Lilies of the Field, how it feeds the one, and cloaths the other, without any anxious Care of theirs; and would have them well conſider thoſe Providences, and Reaſon themſelves into a calm and ſweet Compoſure of Spirit from thoſe Conſiderations, *Mat.* 6. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31.

Two Things deſtroy the Peace and Tranquility of our Lives, our *bewailing paſt diſappointments*, or *fearing future ones*. But would we once learn previſion and proviſion to be Divine Prerogatives, and take notice how often Providence baffles thoſe that pretend to it, cauſing the good they foreſaw (according to their Conjectures) coming to their Hand, yet to balk them and flee from them: And the evil they thought themſelves ſufficiently ſecured from, to invade them. I ſay, would we conſider how Providence daily baffles theſe Pretenſions of Men, and aſſerts its own Dominion, it would greatly conduce to the Tranquility of our Lives.

This is a great Truth, that there is no Face of Adverſity ſo formidable, but being viewed from this ſtation, would become amicable. Now there be ſeveral Things in the Conſideration of Providence, that naturally and kindly compoſe the mind of a Chriſtian to Peace, and bring it to a ſweet reſt, whilſt events hang in a doubtful ſuſpence.

1. As Firſt, The Supremacy of Providence, and its uncontroulable Power in working. This is often ſeen in the good that it brings us in a way that's above the Thoughts and Cares of our Minds, or Labour of our Hands. *I had not thought* (ſaid *Jacob*) *to have ſeen thy Face; and lo, God hath ſhewed me thy Seed alſo*, Gen. 48. 11. There is a frequent coincidency of Providences in a way of ſurprizal, which from no appearance, or the remoſt tendency of outward Cauſes could be foreſeen, but rather falls viſibly Croſs to the preſent *Scheme*, and poſture of our Affairs. Nothing tends to convince us of the Vanity and Folly of our own Sollicitudes and Projections, more than this doth.

2. The profound Wiſdom of Providence in all that it *performeth* for the People of God. The Wheels are full of Eyes, *Ezek.* 1. 18. (*i. e.*) there is an intelligent and wiſe Spirit that ſits upon, and governs the Affairs of this World.

*Non cæco impetu volvuntur rotæ.*

This Wiſdom ſhines out to us in the unexpected, yea, contrary events of Things. How often have we been courting ſome beautiful appearance that invited our Senſes, and with trembling ſhun'd the formidable Face of other Things, when notwithſtanding the Iſſues of Providence have convinced us, that our Danger lay in what we courted, and our good in what we ſo ſtudiouſly declined? This alſo is a ſweet Principle of Peace, and quiet to the Chriſtians mind, that he knows not, but his good may be imported in what ſeemed to threaten his Ruin. Many were the Diſtreſſes and Straits of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, but all was *to humble them, that he might do them good in the latter End*, Deut. 8. 16. Sad and diſmal was the Face of that Providence that ſent them out of their own Land, into the Land of the *Chaldeans*; yet even this was a project to do them good, *Jer.* 24. 5. How often have we retracted our raſh and headlong cenſures of Things upon Experience of this Truth! And been taught to bleſs our Afflictions and Diſappointments in the Name of the Lord. Many a time have we kiſſed thoſe Troubles at parting, which we met with trembling. And what can promote Peace under doubtful Providences more effectually than this?

3. The Experiences we have had throughout our Lives of the faithfulneſs and conſtancy of Providence, are of excellent uſe to allay and quiet our Hearts in any Trouble that befals us. *Hitherto God hath helped*, 1 Sam. 7. 12. We never found him wanting to us in any Caſe hitherto: This is not the firſt Strait we have been in: The firſt time that our Hearts and Hopes have been low. Surely, he is the ſame God now as heretofore, his hand is not ſhortned, neither doth his faithfulneſs fail. O recount in how great Extremities former Experience hath taught you not to deſpair!

4. The Conjectures Chriſtians may make of the Way of Providence towards them, from what its former Methods have been towards them, is exceeding quieting and comfortable. It's uſual with Chriſtians, to compare Times with Times, and to gueſs at the Iſſue of one Providence by another. The Saints do know what courſe Providence uſually holds, and accordingly with great probability Collect what they may expect from what in like Caſes they have formerly obſerved. Chriſtian, examine thine own Heart, and its former Obſervations, and thou wilt find, as *Pſal.* 89. 30, 31, 32. That it's uſually the Way of God to prepare ſome ſmart Rods to correct thee, when either thy Heart hath ſecretly revolted from God, and is grown vain, careleſs and ſenſual, or when thy ſteps have declined, and thou haſt turned aſide to the Commiſſion of Iniquity. And then when thoſe Rods have been ſanctified to humble, reduce, and purge thy Heart, it's uſually obſerved, that thoſe ſad Providences are then upon the change, and then the Lord changes the Voice of his Providence towards thee, Jer. 3. 12, 13. *Go, and proclaim theſe Words towards the North, and ſay, Return thou backſliding Iſrael, ſaith the Lord, and I will not cauſe mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, ſaith the Lord, and I will not keep Anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine Iniquity*, &c.

If therefore I find the bleſſed Effects of the Rod upon me, that it hath done its Work, to break the hard heart, and pull down the proud heart, and awaken the drowſie heart, and quicken the ſloathful, negligent, lazy Heart; now with great probability I may Conjecture, a more comfortable aſpect of Providence will quickly appear, the refreſhing and reviving Time is nigh.

5. It is uſual with Chriſtians, to argue themſelves into freſh reviving Hopes, when the ſtate of things is moſt forlorn, by comparing the Providences of God one with another.

(1.) It is a mighty compoſing Meditation, when we compare the Providences of God towards the Inanimate and irrational Creatures, with his Providences towards us. Doth he take care for the very Fowls of the Air, for whom no Man provides, as well as thoſe at the door which we daily feed? Doth he ſo cloth the very Graſs of the Field? Hear the young Ravens, when they cry for Meat? And can it be ſuppoſed, he ſhould forget his own People, that are of much more Value than theſe?

(2.) Or if we compare the Bounty and Care that Providence hath expreſſed to the Enemies of God, how it feeds and cloths and protects them, even whilſt they are fighting againſt him with his own Mercies; it cannot but quiet and ſatisfie us, that ſurely he will not be wanting to that People upon whom he hath ſet his Love, to whom he hath given his Son, and for whom he hath deſigned Heaven it ſelf.

(3.) Or laſtly, It muſt needs quiet us, when we conſider, what the Lord did for us in the way of his Providence, when we our ſelves were in the ſtate of Nature, and Enmity againſt God. Did he not then look after us, when we knew him not? Provided for us, when we owned him not in any of his Mercies? Beſtowed thouſands of Mercies upon us, when we had no Title to Chriſt or any one Promiſe? And will he now do leſs for us, ſince we are reconciled and become his Children?

Surely, ſuch Conſiderations as theſe, cannot but fill the Soul with Peace, and preſerve the Tranquility of it under the moſt diſtracting Providences.

### *The Ninth Motive.*

*Due Obſervations of the Ways of God in his Providences towards us, have an excellent uſefulneſs and aptitude to advance and improve Holineſs in our Hearts and Lives.* For,

1. The Holineſs of God is manifeſted to us in all his Works of Providence, *Pſalm* 145. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his Works.* The Inſtruments uſed by Providence may be very ſinful and wicked, they may aim at baſe ends, and make uſe of wicked mediums to attain them; but it's certain God's deſigns are moſt pure, and all his workings are ſo too. Though he permits, limits, orders, and over rules many unholy Perſons and Actions; yet in all he Works like himſelf; and his Holineſs is no more defiled and ſtained by their Impurity, than the Sun beams are by the noiſome Exhalations of a Dunghil, Deut. 32. 4. *He is the Rock, his Work is perfect; for all his Ways are Judgment, a God of Truth, and without Iniquity: Juſt and Right is he.* So that in all his Providences he ſets before us a perfect Pattern of Holineſs, that we might be Holy in all our Ways, as our Father is in all his Ways. But this is not all.

2. His Providences if duely obſerved, promote Holineſs, by ſtopping up our Way to Sin. Oh if men would but note the Deſigns of God in his preventive Providences, how uſeful would it be to keep them upright and holy in their Ways? For why is it, that the Lord ſo often hedges up our way with Thorns, as it is *Hoſea* 2. 6. But that we ſhould not find our paths to Sin? Why doth he clogg us, but to prevent our ſtraying from him? 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. *Leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure, there was given me a Thorn in the Fleſh, a Meſſenger of Satan to buffet me.* O 'tis good to attend to theſe Works of God, and ſtudy the meaning

of them. Sometimes Providence croſſeth a hopeful thriving project to advance our Eſtate, and fruſtrates all our Labours and cares; Why is this? but to hide Pride from man. Shouldſt thou proſper in the World, that Proſperity might be thy ſnare, and make thee a proud, ſenſual, vain Soul; the Lord Jeſus ſees this, and therefore withdraws the food and fuel from thy Corruptions.

It may be thou haſt a crazy, diſeaſed, weak Body; thou laboureſt under often Infirmities: in this, the Wiſdom and Care of God over thy Soul is manifeſted; For wert thou not ſo clogged, how probable is it, that much more guilt might be contracted? Your Poverty doth but clog your Pride; Reproaches clog your Ambition; Want prevents Wantonneſs; ſickneſs of Body conduces to the prevention of many inward gripes of Conſcience and groans under guilt.

God would not rub ſo hard, if it were not to fetch out the dirt that is ingrained in our natures: He loves Purity ſo well, he had rather ſee a hole, than a *ſpot* in his *childs* Garment. *Gurnal*'s Chriſtian Armour, *Par*. 2. *p*. 221.

3. The Providences of God may be obſerved to conduce to our Holineſs, not only preventing ſin, that we may not fall into it; but alſo purging our ſins when we are fallen into them, Iſa. 27. 9. *By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin.* So *Dan.* 11. 33, 34, 35. they are of the ſame uſe that Fire and Water are for purging and cleanſing; not that they can purge us from ſin in their own vertue and power, for if ſo, thoſe that have moſt afflictions would have moſt grace alſo? but it is in the vertue of Chriſt's blood, and God's bleſſing upon afflictive Providences, that they purge us from ſin. A *Croſs* without a *Chriſt* never did any man good. Now in God's afflictive Providences for ſin there are many things that tend to the purging of it. For,

(1.) Such rebukes of Providence diſcover the diſpleaſure of God againſt us: The Lord frowns upon us in thoſe Providences. Our Father is angry, and theſe are the Tokens of it; and nothing works more to the melting of a gracious heart than this. Muſt not the heart of a Child melt and break whil'ſt the Father is angry? O this is more bitter to our Spirits than all the ſmart and anguiſh of the Affliction can be to our Fleſh. See *Pſal.* 38. 1, 2, 3. *O Lord rebuke me not in thy wrath; neither chaſten me in thy hot diſpleaſure: for thine arrows ſtick faſt in me; and thine hand preſſeth me ſore. There is no ſoundneſs in my fleſh becauſe of thine anger: neither is there any reſt in my bones becauſe of my ſin.*

(2.) By theſe rebukes of ſin, the evil of ſin is diſcovered more ſenſibly to us, and we are made to ſee more clearly the evil of it in theſe glaſſes of Affliction which Providence at ſuch times ſets before us, than formerly we ever ſaw. *Jer.* 2. 19. *Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee; and thy backſliding ſhall reprove thee, know therefore and ſee that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* O the gall and wormwood that we taſte in it under God's Rebukes for it!

(3.) Providence blaſts and fruſtrates all ſinful Projects to the People of God: Whoever thrives in them, they ſhall not. *Iſa.* 30. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. And this alſo convinces them of the folly that is in ſin, and makes them cleave to the way of Simplicity and Integrity.

4. Holineſs is promoted in the ſoul by cautioning and warning the ſoul againſt ſin for time to come. *Job* 34. 31. *I have born Chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more.* O happy Providences, how ſmart ſoever, that make the ſoul for ever afraid of ſin! Surely ſuch rods are well beſtow'd. This gives God his end; and if ever we ſorrowed after a godly ſort, in the day of our Troubles it will work this carefulneſs. 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. *Behold this ſelf ſame thing that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought in you?* &c. O if ever a man have been under a ſanctified rod which hath ſhewed him the evil of ſin, and kindly humbled him for it; and a temptation ſhould again ſollicite him to the ſame evil: Why thinks he, what a madneſs is it for me to buy repentance at ſo dear a rate? Have I not ſmarted enough already? You may as well aſk me, whether I will run again into the fire, after I have been already ſcorch'd in it?

(5.) To conclude, *Providences* do greatly improve and promote Holineſs by drawing the Soul into the Preſence of God, and giving it the opportunity and occaſion of much communion with him. Comfortable Providences will do this, they will melt a man's heart in love to the God of his Mercies, and ſo pain his bowels that he ſhall not be quiet till he have found a place to pour out his Soul in thankfulneſs to the Lord. 2 *Sam.* 7. 18.

Afflictive Providences will drive us to the feet of God, and there make us to judge and condemn our ſelves. And all this hath an excellent uſe to deſtroy ſin, and promote holineſs in the Soul.

### *The Tenth Motive.*

Laſtly, *The Conſideration and ſtudy of Providence will be of ſingular uſe to us in a dying hour.* Hereby we treaſure up that which will ſingularly ſweeten our death to us, and greatly aſſiſt our faith in the laſt encounter. You find when *Jacob* died, what reflections he had upon the dealing of God with him in the various Providences of his Life. See *Gen.* 48. 3, 7, 15, 16. In like manner you find *Joſhua* recording the Providences of God when at the brink of the Grave: They were the ſubject of his dying Diſcourſe, *Joſ.* 24. And I cannot but think it a ſweet cloſe to the life of any Chriſtian: It muſt needs ſweeten a deathbed to recount there the ſeveral remarkable Paſſages of God's care and love to us from our beginning to that day: To reflect upon the Mercies that went along with us all the way, when we are come to the end of it. O Chriſtians, treaſure up theſe inſtances for ſuch a time as that is; that you may go out of the world bleſſing God for *all the goodneſs of truth* he hath performed to you all your life long. Now the meditations of theſe things muſt needs be of great uſe in that day, if you conſider the following particulars.

1. The time of Death is the time when Souls are uſually moſt violently aſſaulted by Satan with horrid Temptations and black Suggeſtions. We may ſay of that figurative, as it's ſaid of the natural Serpent, *nunquam niſi moriens, producitur in longum.* He never exerts his utmoſt rage till the laſt encounter; and then his great deſign is to perſwade the Saints, that God loves them not, hath no care nor regard for them, nor their cries; though they pray

for eaſe, and cry for ſparing Mercy, they ſee none comes. He handles them with as much roughneſs and ſeverity as other men; yea, many of the vileſt and moſt diſſolute wretches endure leſs torments, and are more gently handled than they. *Pſal.* 73. 4. *there are no bands in their death,* when as thou muſt go through a long lane of ſickneſs to the grave, and endure many deaths in one.

But what credit can theſe plauſible tales of Satan obtain with a Chriſtian who hath been treaſuring up all his life long the *memorials* of God's tender regard both to his wants and prayers, and that hath carefully remarked the evident returns of his prayers, and gracious condeſcenſions of God to him from his beginning to that moment? In this caſe his faith is mightily aſſiſted by thouſands of experiences which back and encourage it, and will not ſuffer the ſoul to give up ſo eaſily a truth which he hath ſo often ſenſibly felt and taſted. I am ſure (ſaith he) God hath had a tender fatherly care of me ever ſince I became his; he never failed me yet in any former ſtrait; and I cannot believe he will do ſo now. I know his love is like himſelf, unchangeable. *Joh.* 13. 1. *having loved his own which were in the world he loved them unto the end: for this God is our God for ever and ever he will be our guide even unto death. Pſal.* 48. 14. Did he love me in my youth, and will he caſt me off in my decrepit age? O God, (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *thou haſt taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wonderous works, now alſo when I am old and gray headed, O God, forſake me not, Pſal.* 71. 17, 18.

At death the Saints are engaged in the laſt, and one of the moſt eminent works of faith, even the committing themſelves into the hands of God, when we are lanching forth into that vaſt Eternity, and entring into that new ſtate which will make ſo great a change upon us in a moment. In this Chriſt ſets us a pattern, *Luke* 23. 46. *Father into thy hand I commend my ſpirit:* and having ſaid thus he gave up the Ghoſt. So *Stephen* at his death, *Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit, and immediately fell aſleep, Act.* 7. 59.

There be two ſignal and remarkable acts of faith, both exceedingly difficult, *viz.* its firſt act, and its laſt. The firſt is a great venture that it makes of it ſelf upon Chriſt; and the laſt is a great venture too, to caſt it ſelf into the Ocean of Eternity upon the credit of a Promiſe. But yet I know the firſt adventure of the Soul upon Chriſt is much more difficult than the laſt adventure upon death; and that which makes it ſo is in great meaſure, the manifold recorded experiences that the Soul hath been gathering up from the day of its eſpouſals to Chriſt unto its dying which is (in a ſenſe) its marriage day. Oh with what encouragement may a Soul throw himſelf into the arms of that God with whom he hath ſo long converſed and walked in this World! Whoſe viſits have been ſweet and frequent, with whom the Soul hath contracted ſo intimate acquaintance in this World? whom he hath committed all its affairs to formerly, and ſtill found him a faithful God; and now hath no reaſon to doubt, but it ſhall find him ſo in this laſt diſtreſs and exigence alſo.

3. At death the People of God receive the laſt mercies that ever they ſhall receive in this World by the hand of Providence, and are immediately to make up their Accounts with God for all the mercies that ever they received from his hand. What can be more ſuitable therefore to a dying perſon, than to recount with himſelf the mercies of his whole life, the manifold receipts of favour for which he is to reckon with God ſpeedily, and how ſhall this be done without a due and ſerious obſervation and recording of them now? I know there are thouſands of mercies forgotten by the beſt of Chriſtians: a memory of braſs cannot contain them: And I know alſo that Jeſus Chriſt muſt make up the Account for us, or it will never paſs with God; yet it is our duty to keep the Accounts of our own mercies, and how they have been improv'd by us, for we are Stewards, and then are to give an Account of our Stewardſhip.

4. At death we owe an Account alſo to men, and ſtand obliged (if there be opportunity for it) to make known to them that ſurvive us what we have ſeen and found of God in this world, that we may leave a teſtimony for God with men, and bring up a good report upon his ways. Thus dying *Jacob,* when *Joſeph* was come to take his laſt farewell of him in this world, ſtrengthned himſelf, and ſate upon the Bed, and related to him the eminent appearances of God to him, and the places where, *Gen.* 48. 2, 3. as alſo an account of his afflictions, *Verſe* 7. So *Joſhua* in his laſt ſpeech to the people makes it his buſineſs to vindicate and clear the truth of the Promiſes, by recounting to them how the Providence of God had fulfill'd the ſame to a tittle in his day. *Joſh.* 23. 14. *And behold* (ſaith he) *this day I am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your Souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you; all are come to paſs unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.*

And certainly 'tis of great importance to the World, to underſtand the Judgments, and hear of the Experiences of dying Men. They of all Men are preſumed to be moſt wiſe and moſt ſerious: Beſides, this is the laſt opportunity that ever we ſhall have in this World to ſpeak for God. O then what a ſweet thing would it be to cloſe up our lives with an honourable Account of the ways of God! to go out of the World bleſſing him for all the Mercies and Truth which he hath here performed to us! how would this encourage weak Chriſtians, and convince the Atheiſtical World, that verily there is a reality, and an excellency in the ways and people of God!

5. At death we begin the *Angelical Life* of praiſe and thankſgiving. We then enter upon that everlaſting ſweet employment; and as I doubt not but the Providences in which we were concerned in this World will be a part of that Song which we ſhall ſing in Heaven, ſo certainly it will become us to tune our hearts and tongues for it whilſt we are here, and eſpecially when we are ready to enter upon that bleſſed ſtate. O therefore let it be your daily meditation and ſtudy what God hath been to you, and done for you, from the beginning of his way hitherto.

And thus I have ſpread before you ſome encouragements to this bleſſed work. Oh that you would be perſwaded to this lovely and every way beneficial practice. This I dare preſume to ſay, that whoever finds a careful and a thankful heart to record and treaſure up the daily experiences of God's mercy to him, ſhall never want new mercies to record to his dying day. It was ſaid of *Claudian* that he wanted matter ſuitable to the excellency of his parts; but where is the head or heart that is ſuitable to this matter? who can utter the mighty works of the Lord? who can ſhew forth all his praiſe? *Pſal.* 106. 2.

Thus I have through the aid of Providence diſpatched the main deſign I aimed at in the choice of this Subject. All that remains will now be ſpeedily finiſhed in ſome few Corollaries to be briefly noted upon the whole, and three or four practical Caſes to be ſtated. You have heard how Providence *performeth all things for you.* Learn thence,

*Firſt Corollary.*

*That God is therefore to be owned by you in all that befalls you in this world, whether it be in a way of ſucceſs and comfort, or of trouble and affliction.* O 'tis your duty to obſerve his hand and diſpoſal: When God gives you comforts, 'tis your great evil not to obſerve his hand in them. Hence was that charge againſt *Iſrael, Hoſ.* 2. 8. *She did not know that I gave her Corn and Wine and Oil, and multiplied her Silver and Gold* (*i. e.*) ſhe did not actually and affectionately conſider my care over her and goodneſs to her, in theſe mercies. And ſo for afflictions, 'tis a great wickedneſs, when God's hand is lifted up not to ſee it. *Iſa.* 26. 11. *The Ox knows his owner; and the Aſs his maſters crib, Iſa.* 1. 3. the moſt dull and ſtupid creatures know their benefactors. O look to the hand of God in all; and know, that neither your comforts nor afflictions do ariſe out of the duſt, or ſpring up out of the ground.

*Second Corollary.*

If God perform all things for you, *how great is his condeſcenſion to and care over his people! What is man* (ſaith Job, chap. 7. 17, 18.) *that thou ſhouldſt magnifie him, and ſet thine heart upon him? and that thou ſhouldſt viſit him every morning, and try him every moment?* Such is his tender care over you, that he withdraws not his eye from you. See *Job* 36. 7. leſt any hurt you, he himſelf will guard and keep you day and night, *Iſa.* 27. 3. Should he withdraw his eye or hand one moment from you, that moment would be your ruin. Ten thouſand evils watch but for ſuch an opportunity to ruſh in upon you, and deſtroy you and all your comforts. You are too dear to him to be truſted in any hand but his own. *Deut.* 33. 3. *All his Saints are in thy hand.*

*Third Corollary.*

*Learn hence how you are obliged to perform all duties and ſervices for God, who performeth all things for you.* It was the wiſh of a good man, *optarem id me eſſe Deo, quod eſt mihi manus mea,* O that I could be to God what my hand is to me, *viz.* a ſerviceable uſeful inſtrument. Shall God do all things for you, and will you do nothing for God? Is Providence every moment at work for you, and will you be idle? To what purpoſe then is all that God hath done for you? Is it not the aim and deſign of all, to make you a fruitful People? If God plant, and fence, and water you by Providence, ſure he looks you ſhould bring forth fruit. *Iſa.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. O that in return for all the benefits of Providence, you would ſay to God, as grateful *Eliſha* ſaid to the *Shunamite*, behold thou haſt been careful for us with all this care, what is to be done for thee? 1 *Kings* 4. 13. and with *David, Pſal.* 116. 12. *what ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me!* He is ever doing you good; be you always abounding in his work. His Providence ſtands by you in your greateſt diſtreſſes and dangers; don't you flinch from God when his ſervice and your duty is compaſſed about with difficulties. O be active for that God, who is acting every moment for you.

*Fourth Corollary.*

*Doth God perform all things for his people? Do not diſtruſt him then as often as new or great difficulties ariſe.* Why ſhould you think he that hath done ſo many things for you, will now do no more? Surely, the Lords hand is not ſhortned that it cannot *ſave, nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear*; if any thing put a ſtop to his mercy, 'tis your iniquities, your diſtruſt and infidelity. *Iſa.* 59. 1. *How long will it be e'er you believe him?* If a thouſand and ten thouſand of tryals and experiences of his tender care, faithfulneſs and love will cure this diſtemper in you, you have them at hand to do it. If the frequent confutations of this your diſtruſt by the unexpected breakings out of Mercy for you under like diſcouragements will cure it, look back, and you may ſee them. Certainly you have been often forced by Providence with ſhame and repentance to retract your raſh cenſures of his care; and yet will you fall into the ſame diſtemper again? Oh that you would once learn this great Truth, That no Man ever wanted that Mercy, which he wanted not an heart to truſt and wait quietly upon God for. You never yet ſought God in vain, except when you ſought him vainly.

*The Fifth Corollary.*

Doth God perform all things for you? then ſeek God for all by Prayer, and never undertake any deſign without him: Certainly, if he do not perform it for you, you can never have what you deſire and labour for: and tho' he have deſigned to perform this or that mercy for you, yet for theſe things he will be enquired of that he may do it for you: *Ezek.* 36. 37. I reckon that buſineſs as good as done, that mercy as good as if it were in hand, that trouble as good as over, for the doing, enjoying, or removing whereof we have engaged God by prayer. 'Tis our folly to engage this Inſtrument, and that for us, to attempt this way and that to compaſs our deſign, and all the while forget him, upon whoſe pleaſure all inſtruments and means entirely depend. That which begins not with prayer, ſeldom winds up with comfort. *The way of man is not in himſelf*; if it were, prayer might then be reckon'd loſt labour. O let him that performs all, be owned and acknowledged in all.

*Conſilia & preces non eo fine adhiberi, ut dei, per hæc quaſi impedimenta, mutentur decreta & deſtinatus providentiæ curſus inhibeatur: ſed ut obſequium divinæ legi præſtando, & conſuetum providentiæ ordinem obſervando conſcientia tranquilletur, & ſpe bonâ impleatur.* Wendelin. Theol. p. 186.

*The ſixth Corollary.*

Laſtly, *If God perform all things for us, then it is our great Intereſt and Concernment in all things to ſtudy to pleaſe him, upon whom we depend for all things.*

It

*Chryſoſt. Hom.* in 2 Cor. 7.

It is a grave and weighty Obſervation of *Chryſoſtome.* Nothing (ſaith he) ſhould be grievous and bitter to a Chriſtian, but to provoke the Diſpleaſure of God. Avoid that, and no Affliction or Trouble whatever can caſt down ſuch a prudent Soul; but even as a ſpark is eaſily extinguiſh'd in the Sea, ſo will the favour of God extinguiſh thoſe Troubles. It is with ſuch a Soul (ſaith he) as it is with the Heavens; we think the Heavens ſuffer when they are over-ſpread with Clouds, and the Sun ſuffers when it is eclipſed; but there is no ſuch thing, they ſuffer not when they ſeem to ſuffer. *Tranquillus Deus, tranquillat omnia.* Every thing is well, and ſhall be well, when all is Well betwixt us and God. The great Conſolation of the Saints lies in this, that all that concerns them is in the hands of their Father. *Pene deſperaſſem niſi Chriſtus eſſet caput Eccleſiæ.* I had utterly deſpair'd (ſaith *Luther*) had not Chriſt been head of the Church. When he that *performs all things is our God, even our God* that delights in our Proſperity, that rejoyces over us to do us good, What ample Security is there in the greateſt confuſions and dangers? When one told *Borromeus* that there were ſome that laid wait for his life, his anſwer was, *An Deus eſt in mundo pro nihilo?* What, is God in the World for nothing? And as notable was the reply of *Silentiarius* in a like caſe, *ſi Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* If God take no care of me, how do I live, how have I ſubſiſted hitherto? Though it ſeems a *Romance* to many (ſaith a late grave Author,) yet we muſt either quit the Scripture, or give credit to this, that the moſt infallible Rules for one to raiſe his Fortune and enſure a Deſtiny that can controul the Stars, are given forth there (*viz.* in the Scriptures) where that evidently is found, *Sapiens dominabitur Aſtris, & quomodo unuſquiſq; faber poteſt eſſe fortunæ ſuæ.* A good man may even be his own Carver. O that we would but ſteer our courſe according to thoſe rare politicks of the Bible, thoſe divine Maxims of Wiſdom. Fear nothing but Sin. Study nothing ſo much as how to pleaſe God. Warp not from your Integrity under any Temptation. Truſt God in the way of your Duty. Theſe are ſure Rules to ſecure your ſelves and your Intereſt in all the Viciſſitudes of this Life.

**Author of the fulfilling of Scripture,** *2 Part. p.* 223.

My laſt Work will be to ſtate Three or Four practical Caſes about this Subject, and ſo I ſhall ſhut up this Diſcourſe of Providence.

### Firſt Caſe.

*How may a Chriſtian diſcover the will of God and his own duty under dark and doubtful Providences?*

In order to the clearing of this Caſe, we are to conſider, what is meant by the will of God; what by thoſe doubtful Providences, that make the diſcovery of his Will difficult, and what Rules are to be obſerved for the clearing up of God's Will to our ſelves under ſuch difficult and puzzling Providences.

As to the Will of God, is falls under a twofold Conſideration of his *ſecret* and *revealed* Will; this Diſtinction is found in that Scripture, Deut. 29. 29. *The ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God, but thoſe things which are revealed belong unto us,* &c. The firſt is the rule of his own Actions; the later of ours. And this only is concerned in the Quere.

This *revealed* Will of God is either manifeſted to us in his *Word,* o in his *Works.* The former is his *commanding* Will, the latter his *effecting* or *permitting* Will; the one verſant about good, the other about evil.

In theſe ways God manifeſts his Will to men, but yet with great Variety and Difference, both as to the things revealed, the Perſons to whom he reveals them, and the degrees of clearneſs in which they are revealed.

(1.) As to the things revealed, there is great difference: For the great and neceſſary Duties of Religion are revealed to us in the Word, with greateſt perſpicuity and evidence. About theſe there can be no Heſitation; but things of a lower nature and leſſer concern are left more obſcure.

(2.) As to the Perſons to whom God reveals his Will, there is great difference; ſome are ſtrong men, others babes, 1 *Cor.* 3. 1. Some have ſenſes exerciſed, others are of weak and dull underſtanding; and we know every thing is received according to the ability and meaſure of the Perſon receiving it. Hence it is that one mans way is very plain before him, he knows what he ought to do: The other is ever and anon at a loſs, bivious, and uncertain what to do.

(3.) The manner of God's revealing his Will to men is alſo very different. Some have had ſpecial, perſonal, and peculiar Diſcoveries of it made to them. So had *Samuel* about the Choice of the Perſon whom he ſhould anoint King, 1 *Sam.* 9. 15. And ſo had *David,* 1 *Sam.* 23. 2, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12. where you find upon his enquiry of God (likely by the *Urim* and *Thummim*) God told him what was his Duty as to that Expedition, and what would be the event of it.

But now, all are tied up to the ordinary ſtanding Rule of the written Word, and muſt not expect any ſuch extraordinary Revelations from God. The way we now have to know the Will of God concerning us in difficult Caſes, is to ſearch and ſtudy the Scriptures, and where we find no particular Rule to guide us in this or that particular Caſe, there we are to apply general Rules, and govern our ſelves according to the Analogy and Proportion they bear towards each other.

But now it often falls out, That in ſuch doubtful Caſes we are entangled in our own Thoughts, and put to a loſs what courſe to take. We pray with *David,* that God would *make his way plain before us,* Pſal. 5. 8. Afraid we are of diſpleaſing God, and yet doubtful we may do ſo; whether we reſolve this way, or that. And this comes to paſs not only thro' the difficulty of the Caſe, but from our own ignorance and inadvertency? And very frequently from thoſe *Providences* that lie before us, wherein God ſeems to hint his mind to us, this way or that, and whether we may ſafely guide our ſelves by thoſe intimations of Providence, is doubtful to us.

That God doth give men ſecret hints and intimations of his Will by his Providence, cannot be doubted; but yet Providences in themſelves, are no ſtable rule of Duty, nor ſufficient diſcovery of the Will of God. We may ſay of them, as it is, Job 23. 8, 9. *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there: and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left Hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: He hideth himſelf on the right Hand, that I cannot ſee him.*

If Providence in it ſelf be allowed to be a ſufficient diſcovery of God's Will to us, then we ſhall be forced often times to juſtifie and condemn the ſame Cauſe or Perſon, foraſmuch as there is *one Event happens to all,* and as it falls out to the Good, ſo to the Wicked, *Eccleſ.* 9 2. Beſide, if Providence alone were the Rule to judge any Action or Deſign by; then a wicked Undertakement would ceaſe to be ſo, if it ſhould ſucceed well; but Sin is Sin ſtill, and Duty is Duty ſtill, what ever the Events and Iſſues of either be.

3. The ſafeſt way therefore to make uſe of Providence in ſuch Caſes is, to conſider them as they follow the Commands or Promiſes of the Word, and not ſingly and ſeparately in themſelves. If you ſearch the Scriptures with an indifferent and unbyaſſed Spirit, in a doubtful Caſe, pray for Counſel and Direction from the Lord, attend to the dictates of Conſcience. And when you have done all, ſhall find the Providences of God falling out agreeably to the dictates of your own Conſcience, and the beſt Light you can find in the Word, you may in ſuch Caſes make uſe of it as an Encouragement to you, in the way of your Duty: But the moſt ſignal Demonſtrations of Providence are not to be accepted againſt a Scripture Rule; no ſmiles or ſucceſſes of Providence may in this Caſe encourage us to proceed; and on the other ſide, no frowns or diſcouragements of Providence ſhould diſhearten us in the way of our Duty, how many ſoever we ſhould encounter therein. Holy *Job* could not find the meaning of God in his Works, yet would he not *go back from the Commandments of his Lips,* Job 23. 9. The like Reſolution you find in *David,* to proceed in his Duty, and cleave to the Word, how many ſtumbling Blocks ſoever Providence ſhould permit to be laid in his way. *I am become* (ſaith he) *like a bottle in the Smoke* (not only blackt, but withered up by troubles) *yet do I not forget thy Statutes,* Pſalm 119. 13. and again *Ver.* 87. *They had almoſt conſumed me upon Earth: But I forſook not thy Precepts.*

*Paul* by the Direction of the Spirit was engaged to go to *Jeruſalem,* Acts 20. 22. After a clear Revelation of the Mind of God to him in that Matter, how many difficult and diſcouraging Providences befel him in his way? The *Diſciples* of *Tyre* ſaid to him *by the Spirit* (tho' in that they followed their own Spirits) *that he ſhould not go to Jeruſalem,* Acts 21. 4.

Then at *Cæſarea* he met *Agabus* a Prophet, who told him what ſhould befal him when he came thither, *Chap.* 21. 10, 11. All this will not diſſwade him. And after all this, how paſſionately do the Brethren beſeech him to decline that Journey? *Ver.* 12, 13. Yet knowing his Rule, and reſolving to be faithful to it, he puts by all and proceeds in his Journey.

Well then, Providence in Concurrence with the Word may give ſome Encouragement to us in our Way; but no Teſtimony of Providence is to be accepted againſt the Word. If Scripture and Conſcience tell you, ſuch a way is ſinful, you may not venture upon it, how many opportunities and encouragements ſoever Providence may ſuffer to offer themſelves to you, for they are only permitted for your Trial, not your encouragement: Take this therefore for a ſure Rule, That no Providence can legitimate, or juſtifie any moral Evil. Nor will it be a Plea before God for any Man to ſay, The Providence of God gave me Encouragement to do it, though the Word gave me none. If therefore in doubtful Caſes, you would diſcover God's Will, govern your ſelves in your ſearch after it by theſe Rules.

1. Get the true fear of God upon your Hearts, be really afraid of offending him, God will not hide his mind from ſuch a Soul, *Pſalm* 25. 14. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant.*

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2. Study the *Word* more, and the Concerns and Intereſts of the World leſs. The *Word* is a light to your Feet, *Pſal.* 119. 10. 5. (*i. e.*) it hath a diſcovering and directive Uſefulneſs as to all Duties to be done, and Dangers to be avoided: It is the great Oracle at which you are to enquire: Treaſure up its rules in your Hearts, and you will walk ſafely, *Pſalm* 119. 11. *Thy Word have I hid in my Heart that I might not Sin againſt thee.*

3 Reduce what you know into practice, and you ſhall know what is your Duty to practiſe, John 7. 17. *If any Man do his Will he ſhall know of the Doctrine.* Pſalm 111. 10. *A good Underſtanding have all they that do thereafter.*

4. Pray for *Illumination* and *Direction* in the way that you ſhould go; beg the Lord to guide you in ſtraits, and that he would not ſuffer you to fall into Sin. This was the Holy Practice of Ezra, chap. 8. 21. *Then I proclaimed a faſt there at the River* Ahava, *that we might afflict our ſelves before our God, to ſeek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our ſubſtance.*

5. And this being done, follow Providence ſo far as it agrees with the Word, and no farther. There is no uſe to be made of Providence againſt the *Word,* but in ſubſerviency to it. And there are two excellent Uſes of Providence in ſubſerviency to the *Word.* (1.) Providences as they follow Promiſes and Prayer are Evidences of God's Faithfulneſs in their Accompliſhment. When *David* languiſhed under a Diſeaſe, and his Enemies began to triumph in the Hopes of his downfal; he prays, *Pſalm* 41. 10. That God would be merciful to him, and raiſe him up; and by that, he ſaith, *He knew the Lord favoured him, becauſe his Enemy did not triumph over him,* ver. 11. This Providence he looked upon as a Token for Good, as elſewhere he calls it, *Pſal.* 86. 17. And (2.) Providences give us loud calls to thoſe Duties which the Command lays upon us, and tells us when we are actually and preſently under the Obligation of the Commands as to the Performance of them. Thus when ſad Providences befal the Church or our ſelves, they call us to Humiliation; and let us know that then the Command upon us to humble our ſelves at the Feet of God is in force upon us, Micah 6. 9. *The Lords Voice cryeth to the City, and the Man of Wiſdom ſhall ſee thy Name, hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it.* The Rod hath a Voice; and what doth it ſpeak? Why now is the Time

**Read the obſcure Texts of Providence with the Comment of the word, and we cannot make a falſe interpretation of them.**

to humble your ſelves under the mighty Hand of God This is the Day of trouble in which God hath bid you to call upon him. And *è contra*, when comfortable Providences refreſh us, it now informs us, this is the time to rejoice in God according to the Rule, Eccleſ. 7. 14. *In the Day of Proſperity be joyful.* Theſe Precepts bind *always*, but not *to always.* It's our Duty therefore and our Wiſdom to diſtinguiſh Seaſons, and know the proper Duties of every Seaſon: And Providence is an *Index* that Points them out to us. Thus of the firſt Caſe.

*Præcepta affirmativa obligant ſemper, non ad ſemper.*

### The Second Caſe.

*How may a Chriſtian be ſupported in waiting upon God whil'ſt Providence delays the Performance of the Mercies to him for which he hath long pray'd and waited?*

Two Things are ſuppoſed in this Caſe.

(1.) That Providence may linger and delay the Performance of thoſe Mercies to us that we have long waited and prayed for.

(2.) That during that Delay and Suſpenſion, our Hearts and Hopes may be very low, and ready to fail.

1. Providence may long delay the Performance of thoſe Mercies we have prayed and waited upon God for.

For the right Underſtanding of this, know that there is a twofold Term or Seaſon fixed for the Performance of Mercy to us. One by the Lord our God, in whoſe hand Times and Seaſons are, *Acts* 1. 7. Another by our ſelves, who raiſe up our own Expectations of Mercies ſometimes meerly through the eagerneſs of our Deſires after them, and ſometimes upon uncertain conjectural Grounds and appearances of Encouragement that lie before us.

Now nothing can be more preciſe, certain, and punctual, than is the Performance of Mercy at the Time and Seaſon which God hath appointed, how long ſoever it be, or how many Obſtacles ſoever lie in the way of it. There was a Time prefixed by God himſelf for the Performance of that Promiſe of *Iſrael*'s deliverance out of *Egypt*; and it's ſaid, *Exod.* 12. 41. *At the end of the four hundred and thirty Years, even the ſelf ſame day it came to paſs, that all the hoſt of the Lord went out of the Land of* Egypt. Compare this with *Acts* 7. 17, and there you have the Ground and Reaſon why their deliverance was not, nor could be delayed one Day longer, becauſe *the Time of the Promiſe was now come.* Promiſes like a pregnant Woman muſt accompliſh their appointed Months, and when they have ſo done, Providence will Midwife the Mercies they go big withal into the World, and not one of them ſhall miſcarry.

But for the Seaſons which are of our own fixing and appointment, as God is not tied to them, ſo his Providence; are not governed by them: And hence are our Diſappointments. *We looked for Peace, but no good came; for a Time of Health, and behold Trouble*, Jer. 8. 15. And hereupon is it that we fret at the delays of Providence, and ſuſpect the Faithfulneſs of God in their Performance. *But his Thoughts are not our Thoughts*, Iſa. 55. 8. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his Promiſe as Men count ſlackneſs*, 2 Pet. 3. 9. It is ſlackneſs if you reckon by our own rule and meaſure, but it is not ſo, if you reckon and count it by God's. The Lord doth not compute and reckon his Seaſons of working by our *Arithmetick* You have both theſe Rules compared, and the Ground of our miſtake detected in that Scripture, Hab. 2. 3. *The Viſion is yet for an appointed Time, but at the end it ſhall ſpeak, and not lye: Though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry.*

God appoints the Time: When that appointed time is come, the expected Mercies will not fail: But in the mean Time, *though it tarry* (ſaith the Prophet) *wait for it, for it will not tarry.* Tarry, and not tarry, how ſhall this be reconciled? The meaning is, it may tarry much beyond *your Expectation*, but not a moment beyond *God's Appointment.*

2. During this delay of Providence, the Hearts and Hopes of the People of God may be very low, and much diſcouraged. This is too plain from what the Scriptures have recorded of others, and every one of us may find in our own Experiences. We have an Inſtance of this in *Iſa.* 49. 13, 14. in the 13. *ver.* you have God's faithful Promiſe, that *he will Comfort his People, and have Mercy upon his Afflicted.* Enough one would think to Raiſe and Comfort their Hearts. But the Mercy promiſed was long in coming, they waited from Year to Year, and ſtill the burthen preſſed them, and was not removed. And therefore *ver.* 14. Zion *ſaid, the Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me*, q. d. It's in vain to look for ſuch a Mercy, God hath no regard to us, we are out of his Heart and Mind, he neither Cares for us nor Minds what becomes of us.

So it was with *David*, after God had made him ſuch a Promiſe, and in the Time thereof ſo faithfully performed it, that never was Mercy better ſecured to any Man; for they are call'd, *the ſure mercies of* David, *Iſa.* 55. 3. Yet Providence delayed the Accompliſhment of them ſo long, and ſuffered ſuch Difficulties to intervene, that he even deſpairs to ſee the Accompliſhment of them, but even concludes God had forgotten him too, *Pſalm* 13. 1. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever?* And what he ſpeaks here by way of *Queſtion*, he elſewhere turns into a poſitive *Concluſion*, Pſal. 116. 11. *All Men are Lyars, I ſhall one day periſh by the hand of* Saul. And the Cauſes of theſe Deſpondencies, and ſinkings of Heart are partly from our ſelves, and partly from Satan. If we duly examine our own Hearts about it, we ſhall find that theſe ſinkings of Heart are,

1. The immediate Effects of Unbelief. We do not depend and rely upon the Word with that full Truſt and Confidence that is due to the infallible Word of a faithful and unchangeable God. You may ſee the Ground of this faintneſs in that Scripture, *Pſalm* 27. 13: *I had fainted unleſs I had believed.* Faith is the only Cordial that relieves the Heart againſt theſe Faintings and Deſpondencies. Where this is wanting, or is weak, no wonder our Hearts ſink at this rate, when Diſcouragements are before us.

2. Our judging and meaſuring things by the rules of Senſe, this is a great Cauſe of our Diſcouragements. We conclude, According to the Appearances of things will be their Iſſues. If *Abraham* had done ſo, in that great Tryal of his Faith, he had certainly loſt his

footing; *but againſt Hope*, (*i. e.*) againſt natural probability, *he believed in Hope, giving Glory to God*, Rom. 4. 18. If *Paul* had done ſo, he had fainted under his Tryals, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16, 18. *We faint not* (ſaith he) *whilſt we look not at the things that are ſeen*, q. d. That which keeps up our Spirits, is our looking off from things preſent and viſible, and meaſuring all by another rule, *viz.* The Power and Fidelity of God firmly engaged in the Promiſes.

3. In all theſe things *Satan* manages a deſign upon us. Hence he takes occaſions to ſuggeſt hard Thoughts of God and to beat off our Souls from all Confidence in him, and Expectations from him. He is the great make-bate betwixt God and the Saints. He reports the Difficulties and Fears that are in our way with advantage, and labours to weaken our Hands, and diſcourage our Hearts in waiting upon God. And theſe Suggeſtions gain the more Credit with us, becauſe they are confirm'd and atteſted by ſenſe and feeling.

But here is a deſperate Deſign carrying on under very plauſible Pretences againſt our Souls. It concerns us to be watchful now, and maintain our Faith and Hope in God Now bleſſed is he that can reſign all to God, and quietly wait for his Salvation. To aſſiſt the Soul in this difficulty, I ſhall offer ſome farther Help beſide what hath been formerly given under the *firſt Caution*, in the following Conſiderations.

### *Firſt Conſideration.*

Though Providence do not yet perform the Mercies you wait for, yet you have no ground to entertain hard thoughts of God; for it's poſſible God never gave you any ground for your Expectation of theſe things from him. It may be you have no *Promiſe* to bottom your Hope upon; and if ſo, why ſhall God be ſuſpected and diſhonoured by you in a *Caſe* wherein his *Truth* and *Faithfulneſs* was never engaged to you? If we are croſſed in our outward Concernments, and ſee our Expectations of Proſperity daſhed; if we ſee ſuch or ſuch an outward Comfort removed, from which we promiſed our ſelves much; why muſt God be accuſed for this? Theſe things you promiſed your ſelves: But where did God Promiſe you Proſperity, and the Continuance of thoſe comfortable things to you? Produce his Promiſe, and ſhew wherein he hath broken it. It is not enough for you to ſay, There are general Promiſes in the Scripture, that *God will withhold no good thing*, and theſe are good things which Providence withholds from you; for that Promiſe, *Pſal.* 84. 11. Hath its Limitations, it is expreſly limited to ſuch as *walk uprightly*; and it concerns you to examine whether you have done ſo, before you quarrel with Providence for non performance of it. Ah Friend, ſearch thine own Heart, reflect upon thine own Ways; ſeeſt thou not ſo many flaws in thine Integrity, ſo many turnings aſide from God, both in Heart and Life, that may juſtifie God, not only in withholding what thou lookeſt for, but in removing all that thou enjoyeſt? And beſides this Limitation as to the *Object*, it's limited (as all other Promiſes relating to externals are) in the matter or things premiſed by the Wiſdom and Will of God, which is the only Rule by which they are meaſured out to Men in this World, (*i e.*) ſuch Mercies in ſuch Proportions as he ſees needful and moſt conducible to your good; and theſe given out in ſuch Times and Seaſons as are of his own Appointment, not yours.

God never came under an abſolute unlimited tie for outward Comforts to any of us; and if we be diſappointed, we can blame none but our ſelves. Who bid us expect reſt, eaſe, delight, and things of this kind in this World? He hath never told us, we ſhall be rich, healthy and at eaſe in our Habitations; but on the contrary, he hath often told us, we muſt expect *troubles in the World*, John 16. 33. And that *through many Tribulations we muſt enter into his Kingdom*, Acts 14. 22. All that he ſtands bound to us by Promiſe for, is to *be with us in trouble*, Pſal. 91. 15. to ſupply our real and abſolute needs, *Iſa.* 41. 17. *When the Poor and Needy ſeek Water, and there is none, and their Tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not forſake them*; and to ſanctifie all theſe Providences to our Good at laſt, *Rom.* 8. 28. *All Things ſhall Work together for good to them that Love God.* And as to all theſe things not one Tittle ever did, or ſhall fail.

### *Second Conſideration.*

But if you ſay you have long waited upon God for ſpiritual Mercies to your Souls according to the Promiſe, and ſtill thoſe Mercies are deferred, and your Eyes fail whilſt you look for them; I would deſire you ſeriouſly to conſider of what kind thoſe ſpiritual Mercies are, for which you have ſo long waited upon God. Spiritual Mercies are of two ſorts; ſuch as belong to the *Eſſence*, the very being of the new Creature, without which it muſt fail: Or to its *well-being*, and the Comfort of the inner Man; without which you cannot live ſo chearfully as you would. The Mercies of the former kind are abſolutely neceſſary, and therefore put into abſolute Promiſes, as you ſee, *Jer.* 32. 40. *And I will make an Everlaſting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their Hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me.* But for the reſt they are diſpenſed to us in ſuch Meaſures, and at ſuch Seaſons as the Lord ſees fit, and many of his own People live for a long Time without them. The Donation and Continuation of the Spirit, to quicken, ſanctifie and unite us with Chriſt is neceſſary, but his Joys and Comforts are not ſo. A Child of Light may *walk in darkneſs*, Iſa. 50. 10. He lives by Faith, and not by Feeling.

### *Third Conſideration.*

You complain, Providence delays to perform to you the Mercies you have prayed and waited for; but have you right Ends in your Deſires after theſe Mercies? It may be that's the Cauſe, you ask and receive not, *James* 4. 3. The want of a good *Aim*, is the Reaſon why we want good *Succeſs* in our Prayers. It may be we Pray for Proſperity, and our End is to pleaſe the Fleſh; we look no higher than the Pleaſure and Accommodation of the Fleſh; we beg and wait for deliverance from ſuch a Trouble and Affliction, not that we might be the more expedite and prepared for Obedience, but freed of what is grievous to us, and deſtroys our Pleaſure in the World.

Certainly, if it be ſo, you have more need to judge and condemn your ſelves, than to cenſure and ſuſpect the Care of God.

### *Fourth Conſideration.*

You wait for good, and it comes not; but is your Will brought to a due Submiſſion to the Will of God about it? Certainly God will have you come to this before you enjoy your Deſires. Enjoyment of your Deſires is the thing that will pleaſe you, but Reſignation of your Wills, is that which is pleaſing to God: If your Hearts cannot come to this, Mercies cannot come to you. *David* was made to wait long for the Mercy promiſed him, yea, and to be content without it before he enjoied it, *Pſalm* 131. 2. He was brought to be *as a weaned Child*, and ſo muſt you.

### *Fifth Conſideration.*

Your betters have waited long upon God for Mercy, and why ſhould not you? *David* waited till his *Eyes failed*, Pſal. 69. 3. The Church *waited for him in the way of his Judgments*, Iſa. 26. 8. Are you better than all the Saints that are gone before you? Is God more obliged to you, than to all his People? They have quietly waited, and why ſhould not you?

### *Sixth Conſideration.*

Will you loſe any thing by patient waiting upon God for Mercies? Certainly, not at all: Yea, it will turn to a double advantage to you, to continue in a quiet ſubmiſſive waiting poſture upon God. For, (1.) Though you do not yet enjoy the good you wait for, yet all this while you are exerciſing your Grace; and its more excellent to act Grace, than to enjoy Comfort. All this while the Lord is training you up in the exerciſe of Faith and Patience, and bending your Wills in Submiſſion to himſelf; and what do you loſe by that? Yea, and (2.) When ever the deſired Mercy comes, it will be ſo much the ſweeter to you: For, look how much Faith and Prayer hath been employed to produce it, how many wreſtlings you have had with God for it, ſo many more Degrees of ſweetneſs you will find in it, when it comes. O therefore faint not, how long ſoever God delay you.

### *Seventh Conſideration.*

Are not thoſe Mercies you expect from God worth the waiting for? If not, it is your folly to be troubled for the want of them: If they be, why don't you continue waiting? Is it not all that God expects from you for the Mercies he beſtows upon you, that you wait upon him for them? You know you have not deſerved the leaſt of them at his Hands. You expect them not as a *recompence*, but a *free favour*, and if ſo, then certainly the leaſt you can do, is to wait upon his Pleaſure for them.

### *Eighth Conſideration.*

Conſider how many Promiſes are made in the Word to waiting Souls. One Scripture calls them *bleſſed that wait for him*, Iſa. 30. 18. Another tells us, *none that wait for him ſhall be aſhamed*, Pſalm 25. 3. (*i. e.*) they ſhall not be finally diſappointed, but at laſt be Partakers of their Hopes. A third Scripture tells us, *they that wait upon the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength*, Iſa. 40. 31. a Promiſe you had need make much uſe of in ſuch a fainting Time, with many more of like Nature; and ſhall we faint at this rate in the midſt of ſo many cordials as are prepared to revive us in theſe Promiſes?

### *Ninth Conſideration.*

How long hath God waited upon you when you will comply with his Commands, come up to your Engagements and Promiſes? You have made God wait long for your Reformation and Obedience; and therefore have no Reaſon to think it much, if God make you wait long for your Conſolation. We have our *How longs*, and hath not God his? We cry, *Pſalm* 6. 3. *But thou O Lord, how long?* Pſalm 13. 1, 2. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy Face from me? How long ſhall I take Counſel in my Soul, having ſorrow in my Heart daily? How long ſhall mine enemy be exalted over me?* But ſurely we ſhould not think theſe things long, when we conſider, how long the Lord hath exerciſed his Patience about us. We have made him ſay, How long, how long? Our *unbelief* hath made him cry, *How long will it be e'er they believe me?* Numb. 14. 11. Our corrupt Hearts have made him cry, *How long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* Jer. 4. 14. Our impure Natures and Ways have made him cry, *How long will it be e'er they attain to innocency?* Hoſea 8. 5. If God wait upon you with ſo much Patience for your Duties, well may you wait upon him for his Mercies.

### *Tenth Conſideration.*

This impatience and infidelity of yours, expreſt in your wearineſs to wait any longer, as it is a great Evil in it ſelf, ſo very probably it is that Evil which obſtructs the way of your expected Mercies: You might have your Mercies ſooner, if your Spirits were quieter and more ſubmiſſive.

*And thus of the Second Caſe.*

## The Third Caſe.

*How may a Chriſtian diſcern when a Providence is ſanctified, and comes from the Love of God to him?*

There are two ſorts or kinds of Providences verſant about Men in this World, the Iſſues and Events of which are vaſtly different, yea, contrary to each other.

1. To ſome all Providences are over-ruled and ordered for good, according to that bleſſed Promiſe, *Rom.* 8. 28. Not only things that are good in themſelves, as Ordinances, Graces, Duties and Mercies; but things that are Evil in themſelves, as Temptations, Afflictions, and even their Sins and Corruptions ſhall turn in the Iſſue to their Advantage and Benefit. For though Sin be ſo *intrinſecally* and *formally* Evil in its own Nature, that in it ſelf it be not capable of Sanctification; yet out of this worſt of Evils God can work good to his People; and though he never make Sin the *Inſtrument* of good, yet his Providence may make it the occaſion of good to his People; ſo that ſpiritual Benefits may by the wiſe over-ruling of Providence be occaſioned to the People of God by it.

And ſo for Afflictions of all kinds, the greateſt and ſoreſt of them; they do work in the influence of Providence a great deal of good to the Saints, and that not only as the occaſions, but as the Inſtruments and Means of it, *Iſa.* 27. 9. *By this ſhall the Iniquity of Jacob be* *purged*, (*i. e.*) by the inſtrumentality of this ſanctified Affliction.

2. To others nothing is ſanctified either as an Inſtrument or occaſion of any ſpiritual good; but as the worſt things are ordered to the Benefit of the Saints, ſo the beſt things wicked Men enjoy do them no good. Their Prayers are turned into Sin. *Pſalm* 109. 7. The Ordinances are the ſavour of Death, 2 *Cor.* 2. 16 The Grace of God turned into wantonneſs, *Jude* v. 4. Chriſt himſelf a rock of Offence, 1 *Pet.* 2. 8. Their Table a ſnare, *Pſal.* 69. 22. Their *Proſperity* their ruine, *Prov* 1. 32. As Perſons are, ſo things work for good or evil, *Tit.* 1. 15. *To the pure all things are pure, but to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure.*

Seeing therefore the Events of Providence fall out ſo oppoſite to each other upon the Godly, and Ungodly; every thing farthering the Eternal Good of the one, and the Ruine of the other; it cannot but be acknowledged a moſt important Caſe in which every Soul is deeply concern'd, whether the Providences under which he is, be ſanctified to him or no?

For the Clearing of which I ſhall Premiſe two neceſſary Conſiderations, and then ſubjoin the Rules which will be uſeful for the Determination of the Queſtion.

And firſt, Let it be conſidered, that we cannot know from the Matter of the things before us, whether they be ſanctified or unſanctified to us; for ſo conſider'd, *All things come alike to all; and no Man knoweth either love or hatred by all the things that are before him, Eccleſ.* 9. 1, 2. We cannot underſtand the mind and *Heart* of God, by the things he diſpenſeth with his *Hand.* If proſperous Providences befal us, we cannot ſay, Herein is a ſure ſign that God loves me; for who have more of thoſe Providences than the People of his Wrath? *Pſalm* 73. 7. *They have more than their Hearts can wiſh.* Sure that muſt be a weak Evidence for *Heaven*, which accompanies ſo great a part of the World to *Hell.* By theſe things we may teſtifie our love to God; but from ten thouſand ſuch enjoyments we cannot get any ſolid aſſurance of his Love to us.

And from adverſe afflictive Providences we cannot know his hatred. If Afflictions, great Afflictions, many Afflictions, long continued Afflictions ſhould ſet a brand, or fix a Character of God's hatred upon the Perſons on whom they fall; where then ſhall we find Gods People in the World? We muſt then ſeek out the proud vain ſenſual Wantons of the World, who ſpend their days in pleaſure, and ſay theſe are the Men whom God loves.

Outward things are promiſcuouſly diſpenſed, and no man's ſpiritual eſtate is diſcernable by the view of his temporal. When God draws the Sword, it may *cut off the righteous* as well as *the wicked, Ezek.* 21. 3.

2. Tho' the Providences of God *materially* conſidered afford no Evidence of God's love to us, yet the *manner* in which they befal us, and the effects and fruits they produce in us, do diſtinguiſh them very manifeſtly; and by them we may diſcern whether they be ſanctified Providences, and fruits of the Love of God, or no. But yet theſe effects and fruits of Providences by which we diſcern their nature, do not always preſently appear; but time muſt be allowed for the Souls exerciſe under them: As it is *Heb.* 12. 11. *Now no affliction for the preſent ſeemeth joyous, but grievous: nevertheleſs afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of Righteouſneſs unto them which are exerciſed thereby.*

The benefit of a *Providence* is diſcern'd as that of a *Medicine* is, for the preſent it gripes, and makes the ſtomach ſick and loathing; but afterwards we find the benefit of it in our recovery of health and chearfulneſs. Now the Providences of God being ſome of them comfortable, and others ſad and grievous to Nature, and the way to diſcern the ſanctification and bleſſing of them, being by the manner in which they come, and their operations upon our Spirits; I ſhall conſider the Caſe as it reſpects both ſorts of Providences, and ſhew you what effects of our troubles or comforts will ſpeak them to be ſanctified and bleſſed to us.

And firſt for ſad and afflictive Providences in what kind or degree ſoever they befal us, we may warrantably conclude, they are bleſſings to us, and come from the love of God, when

1. They come in a proper ſeaſon, when we have need of them, either to prevent ſome ſin we are falling into, or recover us out of a remiſs, ſupine, and careleſs frame of ſpirit into which we are already fallen, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. *if need be, ye are in heavineſs.* Certainly, it is a good ſign that God deſigns your good by thoſe troubles which are ſo fitted and wiſely order'd to nick the opportunity. If you ſee the Husbandman lopping a tree in the proper Seaſon, it argues he aims at the fruitfulneſs and flouriſhing of it; but to do the ſame thing at *Midſummer* ſpeaks no regard to it, yea, his deſign to deſtroy it.

2. When they are fitted both for *quality* and *degree* to work properly upon our moſt predominant corruptions, then they look like ſanctified ſtrokes. The Wiſdom of God is much ſeen in the choice of his rods. It is not any kind of trouble that will work upon and purge every ſin; but when God chuſes for ſuch afflictions as like Phyſick are appropriated to the diſeaſe the Soul labours under; this ſpeaks divine care and love. Thus we may obſerve, its uſual with God to ſmite us in thoſe very comforts which ſtole away too much of the love and delight of our Souls from God: To croſs us in thoſe things from which we raiſed up too great expectations of comfort. Theſe Providences ſpeak the jealouſie of God over us, and his care to prevent far worſe evils by theſe ſad but needful ſtrokes. And ſo for the degrees of our troubles, ſanctified ſtrokes are *ordinarily* fitted by the wiſdom of God to the ſtrength and ability of our inherent grace, *Iſa.* 17. 8. *in meaſure when it ſhooteth forth thou wilt debate with it: he ſtayeth his rough wind in the day of the eaſt wind.* It is an *Alluſion* to a *Phyſician* who exactly weighs and meaſures all the ingredients which he mingles in a potion for his ſick patient; that it may be proportionate to his ſtrength and no more; and ſo much the next words intimate, *by this therefore ſhall the iniquity of* Jacob *be purged.*

3. It is a good ſign our troubles are ſanctified to us, when they turn our hearts againſt ſin, and not againſt God. There be few great afflictions which befall men, but they make them quarrelſome and diſcontented. Wicked men quarrel with God, and are filled with diſcontent

againſt him. So the Scripture deſcribes them, *Rev.* 17. 9 *They were ſcorched with great heat, and blaſphemed the name of God, which hath power over theſe plagues.* But Godly men to whom afflictions are ſanctified, they Juſtified God, and fall out with ſin, they condemn themſelves, and give glory to God, *Dan.* 9. 7. *O Lord, righteouſneſs belongeth unto thee, but unto us confuſion of faces,* &c. And *Lam.* 3. 39. *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his ſins!* Happy afflictions, which make the Soul fall out and quarrel only with ſin.

4. It is a ſure ſign afflicting Providences are ſanctified when they purge the heart from ſin, and leave both heart and life more pure, heavenly, mortified, and humble than they found them Sanctified afflictions are cleanſers, they pull down the pride, refine the earthlineſs, and purge out the vanity of the Spirit. So you read, *Dan.* 11. 35. it purifies and makes their Soul white: Hence it's compar'd to a *furnace* which ſeparates the droſs from the pure metal, *Iſa.* 48. 10. *Behold I have refined thee, but not with Silver: I have choſen thee in the furnace of affliction.* But for wicked men, let them be never ſo long in the *Furnace*, they loſe no droſs, *Ezek.* 24 6. How many Chriſtians can bear witneſs to this truth! After ſome ſharp affliction hath been upon them, how is the earthlineſs of their hearts purged! they ſee no beauty, taſte no more reliſh in the world than in the white of an Egg. Oh how ſerious, humble, and heavenly are they, till the impreſſions made upon them by afflictions be worn off, and their deceitful luſts have again entangled them! And this is the reaſon why we are ſo often under the diſcipline of the rod. Let a Chriſtian (ſaith a late writer) be but two or three years without an affliction, and he is almoſt good for nothing: he cannot pray, nor meditate, nor diſcourſe at that rate he was wont do: but when a new affliction comes, now he can find his tongue, and come to his knees again, and live at another rate.

5. It is a good ſign afflicted Providences are ſanctified to us, when we draw near to God under them and *turn to him that ſmites us.* A wicked man under affliction *revolts more and more, Iſa.* 1. 5. *turns not to him that ſmites him, Iſa.* 9. 13. but grows worſe than before; formality is turned into ſtupidity and dedolency.

But if God afflict his own people with a ſanctified rod, it awakens them to a more earneſt ſeeking of God: it makes them pray more frequently, ſpiritually and fervently than ever. When *Paul* was buffeted by Satan, he *beſought the Lord thrice,* 2 Cor. 12 8.

6. We may conclude our afflictions to be ſanctified, and to come from the love of God to us when they do not alienate our hearts from God, but enflame our love to him. This is a ſure rule, whatever ends in the increaſe of our love to God, proceeds from the love of God to us A wicked man finds his heart riſing againſt God, when he ſmites him; but a gracious heart cleaves the cloſer to him: he can love, as well as juſtifie an afflicting God. *All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falſly in thy Covenant: our heart is not turned back, neither have our ſteps declined from thy way: though thou haſt ſore broken us in the place of Dragons, and covered us with the ſhadow of Death*, Pſal. 44. 17, 18, 19 Here you have a true account of the temper and frame of a gracious ſoul under greateſt afflictions. To be *broken in the place of Dragons and covered with the ſhadow of Death* imports the moſt diſmal ſtate of affliction: yet even then a gracious heart turns not back (*i. e.*) doth not for all this abate one drachm of love to God: God is as good and dear to him in afflictions as ever.

7. Laſtly, We may call our afflictions ſanctified when *divine teachings* accompany them to our Souls, *Pſal.* 94. 12. *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord, and teacheſt him out of thy law.* Sanctified afflictions are *eye-ſalves,* they teach us ſenſibly and effectually when the Spirit accompanies them; the evil of ſin, the vanity of the creature, the neceſſity of ſecuring things that cannot be ſhaken. Never doth a Chriſtian take a truer meaſure both of his corruptions and graces, than under the rod. Now a man ſees that filthineſs that hath been long contracting in proſperity, what intereſt the Creature hath in the heart, how little faith, patience, reſignation, and ſelf-denyal we can find, when God calls us to the exerciſe of them. O 'tis a bleſſed ſign, that trouble is ſanctified, that makes a Man thus turn it upon his own heart, ſearch it and humble himſelf before the Lord for the evils of it!

2. In the next place let us take into conſideration the other branch of Providences which are comfortable and pleaſant. Sometimes it ſmiles upon us in ſucceſſes, proſperity, and the gratification of the deſires of our hearts. Here the Queſtion will be how the ſanctification of theſe Providences may be diſcovered to us? For reſolution in this matter, I ſhall for clearneſs ſake lay down two ſorts of Rules; one Negative, the other Poſitive.

First *Negative.*

1. It is a ſign, that comfort is not ſanctified to us, which comes not ordinarily in the way of Prayer. *The wicked boaſteth of his hearts deſire, and bleſſeth the covetous whom the Lord abhorreth. The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not ſeek after God; God is not in all his thoughts, Pſal.* 10. 3, 4. Here you ſee Providence may give men *their Hearts deſire,* and yet they never once open their Deſires to God in Prayer about it. But then thoſe gifts of Providence are only ſuch as are beſtowed on the worſt of Men, and are not the Fruits of Love.

2. Whatever Succeſs, Proſperity or Comfort Men acquire by ſinful *mediums,* and indirect Courſes, are not ſanctified Mercies to them. This is not the Method in which thoſe mercies are beſtowed. *Better is a little with Righteouſneſs, than great Revenues without Right,* Prov. 16. 8. Better upon this account, that it comes in God's way, and with his bleſſing, which never follows the way of Sin. God hath curſed the ways of Sin, and no bleſſing can follow them.

3. Whatever Proſperity and Succeſs makes men forget God, and caſt off the care of Duty, is not ſanctified to them. It is unſanctified Proſperity which lulls men aſleep into a deep Oblivion of God, *Deut.* 32. 13, 14, 15, 18. *He made him ride on the high Places of the Earth that*

*he might eat the increaſe of the Fields; and he made him to ſuck Honey out of the Rock, and Oyl out of the flinty Rock, Butter of Kine, and Milk of Sheep, with Fat of Lambs, and Rams of the breed of Baſhan, and Goats, with the Fat of Kidneys of Wheat, and thou didſt drink the pure Blood of the Grape; but Jeſurun waxed Fat and Kicked; thou art waxed Fat, thou art grown Thick, thou art covered with Fatneſs: Then he forſook God which made him, and lightly eſteemed the Rock of his Salvation. Of the Rock that begat thee thou are unmindful, and haſt forgotten God that formed thee.* Rare fumant fœlicibus aræ.

4. When Proſperity is abuſed to Senſuality and meerly ſerves as fuel to maintain Fleſhly Luſts, it is not ſanctified. See *Job* 21. 11, 12, 13. *They ſend forth their little ones like a Flock, and their Children Dance. They take the Timbrel and Harp, and rejoyce at the ſound of the Organ. They ſpend their Days in Wealth, and in a moment go down to the Grave.*

5. It's a ſign that Proſperity is not ſanctified to Men, when it ſwells the Heart with Pride and Self conceitedneſs, *Dan.* 4. 29, 30. *At the end of twelve Months he walked in the Palace of the Kingdom of Babylon. The King ſpake and ſaid, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the Houſe of the Kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the Honour of my Majeſty?*

6. That Succeſs is not ſanctified to Men, which takes them off from their Duty, and makes them wholly negligent, or very much indiſpoſed to it, *Jer.* 2. 31. *O generation, ſee the Word of the Lord; have I been a Wilderneſs unto Iſrael? A land of darkneſs? Wherefore ſay my People, We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee?*

7. Nor can we think that Proſperity ſanctified, which wholly ſwallows up the Souls of Men in their own Enjoyments, and makes them regardleſs of publick Miſeries or Sins, *Amos* 6. 4, 5, 6. *They lie upon Beds of Ivory, and ſtretch themſelves upon their Couches, and eat the Lambs out of the Flock, and the Calves out of the midſt of the Stall. They chant to the ſound of the Viol, and invent to themſelves Inſtruments of Muſick like David. They drink wine in bowls, and anoint themſelves with the chief Ointments; but they are not grieved for the Afflictions of Joſeph.*

But then *Poſitively.*

1. Thoſe mercies and comforts are undoubtedly ſanctified to men, which humble their Souls kindly before God in the ſenſe of their own vileneſs and unworthineſs of them, Gen. 32. 10. *And Jacob ſaid, I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies,* &c.

2. Sanctified mercies are commonly turned into Cautions againſt ſin, *Ezra* 9. 13. they are ſo many bands of reſtraint upon the ſoul that hath them, to make them ſhun ſin.

3. They will engage a mans heart in love to the God of his mercies, *Pſal.* 18. 1. compared with the *Title.*

4. They never ſatisfie a Man as his Portion, nor will the ſoul accept all the proſperity in the world upon that ſcore, Heb. 11. 26. *Eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt: for he had reſpect unto the recompence of the reward.*

5. Nor do they make Men regardleſs of Publick ſins or miſeries, *Nehem.* 2. 1, 2, 3. compared with *Acts* 7. 23.

6. It's a ſure ſign that mercies are ſanctified, when they make the ſoul more expedite and enlarged for God in duty, 2 Chron 17. 5, 6. *Therefore the Lord ſtabliſhed the Kingdom in his hand, and all Judah brought to Jehoſhaphat preſents, and he had riches and honour in abundance. And his heart was lift up in the ways of the Lord,* &c.

7. To conclude, That which is obtained by prayer, and returned to God again in due praiſe carries his own Teſtimonials with it, that it came from the love of God, and is a ſanctified mercy to the ſoul.

*And ſo much of this Third Caſe.*

## The Fourth Caſe.

*How may we attain unto an evenneſs and ſteddineſs of ſpirit under the Changes and contrary Aſpects of Providence upon us?*

Three things are ſuppoſed in this Caſe.

1. That Providence hath various and contrary Aſpects upon the People of God.
2. That it is a common thing with them, to experience great diſorders of ſpirit under thoſe Changes of Providence.
3. That theſe Diſorders may be (at leaſt in a great meaſure) prevented, by the due uſe and application of thoſe rules and helps that God hath given us in ſuch Caſes.

1. That Providence hath various, yea, contrary Aſpects upon the people of God, is a caſe ſo plain, that it needs no more than the mentioning, to let it in to all our Underſtandings. Which of all the people of God have not felt this truth? Providence rings the changes all the world over, *He encreaſeth the Nations, and deſtroyeth them; he enlargeth the Nations, and ſtraitneth them again,* Job 12. 23. The ſame it doth with perſons, *Pſal.* 102. 10. *Thou haſt lifted me up, and caſt me down.* See what a ſad Alteration Providence made upon the Church, Lam. 1. 1, 12. *How doth the City ſit ſolitary that was full of people! How is ſhe become as a Widow! She that was great among the Nations, and Princeſs among the Provinces, how is ſhe become tributary! Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by? Behold and ſee, if there be any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.* And how great an Inſtance was *Job* of this Truth, *Job* 29. *per tot.* and 30. compared? How many thouſands have complained with *Naomi,* whoſe condition hath been ſo ſtrangely altered, that others have ſaid as the People of *Bethlehem* did of her, *Is this Naomi?* Ruth 1. 19, 20, 21.

2. Theſe Viciſſitudes of Providence commonly cauſe great Diſorders of Spirit in the beſt Men. Look as intenſe *heat* and *cold* try the ſtrength and ſoundneſs of the Conſtitution of our Bodies, ſo the *Alterations* made by Providence upon our Conditions, try the ſtrength of our Graces; and too often diſcover the weakneſs and corruption of holy Men. *Hezekiah* was a good Man: but yet his weakneſs and corruption was bewrayed by the Alterations Providence made upon his Conditions. When ſickneſs and pains ſummoned him to the grave, what bitter complaints and deſpondencies are recorded? in *Iſa.* 38. *per tot.* and when Providence lifted him up again into a proſperous Condition, what Oſtentation and vain-glory did he diſcover? *Iſa.* 39. 2. *David* had more

than a common ſtock of inherent Grace, yet not enough to keep him in an equal temper of Spirit under great Alterations, *Pſalm* 30. 6, 7. *In my Proſperity I ſaid I ſhall never be moved; thou bideſt thy Face and I was troubled.* It is not every Man can ſay with *Paul, I know both how to be abaſed, and I know how to abound, every where, and in all things I am inſtructed both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound and to ſuffer need,* Phil. 4 12. He is truly rich in Grace, whoſe Riches or Poverty neither hinders the acting, nor impoveriſheth the ſtock of his Graces.

3. Though the beſt Men be ſubject to ſuch diſorders of Heart under the changes of Providence; yet theſe diſorders may in a great meaſure be prevented by the due Application of ſuch Rules and Helps, as God hath given us in ſuch Caſes.

Now, theſe *helps* are ſuited to a threefold *Aſpect* of Providence upon us: *viz.*

1. Comfortable,
2. Calamitous,
3. Doubtful.

To all which I ſhall ſpeak particularly and briefly.

*Queſt* 1.

How may we attain to an Evenneſs and Steddineſs of Heart under the *Comfortable* Aſpects of Providence upon us?

Under Providences of this kind, the great danger is, leſt the Heart be lifted up with Pride and Vanity, and fall into a drowſie and remiſs temper. To prevent this, we had need urge humbling and awakening *Conſiderations* upon our own Hearts; ſuch are theſe that follow.

*Firſt Conſideration.*

Theſe Gifts of Providence are common to the worſt of Men, and are no ſpecial diſtinguiſhing Fruits of God's Love. The vileſt of Men have been filled even to ſatiety with theſe things, *Pſal.* 73. 7. *Their Eyes ſtand out with Fatneſs: They have more than Heart could wiſh.*

*Second Conſideration.*

Think how unſtable and changeable all theſe things are. What you glory in to day, may be none of yours to morrow, Prov. 23. 5. *Riches make themſelves wings, and flee away as an Eagle towards Heaven.* As the Wings of a Fowl grow out of the ſubſtance of the body, ſo the cauſe of the Creatures tranſitorineſs is in it ſelf: It's ſubjected to *vanity*, and that vanity, like Wings, carries it away: they are but *fading flowers*, James 1. 10.

*Third Conſideration.*

The Change of Providences is never nearer to the people of God, than when their hearts are lifted up, or grown ſecure by proſperity. Doth *Hezekiah* glory in his Treaſures? The next news he hears, is of an impoveriſhing Providence at hand *Iſa.* 39. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Others may be left to periſh in unſanctified Proſperity but you ſhall not.

*Fourth Conſideration.*

This is a great diſcovery of the Carnality and Corruption that is in thy heart: it argues an heart little ſet upon God, little mortified to the world, little acquainted with the vanity and enſnaring nature of theſe things. O you know not what hearts you have, till ſuch Providences try them. And is not ſuch a diſcovery matter of deep humiliation?

*Fifth Conſideration.*

Was it not better with you in a low condition, than it is now; Reflect, and compare ſtate with ſtate, and time with time. How is the frame of your hearts altered with the alteration of your condition? So God complains of *Iſrael*, Hoſea 13. 5, 6, *I did know thee in the Wilderneſs, the land of drought; according to their paſture, ſo were they filled: they were filled, and their heart was exalted, therefore have they forgotten me ſaith the Lord: q. d.* You and I were better acquainted formerly when you were in a low condition; Proſperity hath eſtranged you, and altered the caſe. How ſad is it, that Gods mercies ſhould be the occaſion of our eſtrangement from him?

*Queſt.* 2.

Upon the other ſide, it's worth conſidering how our hearts may be eſtabliſht and kept ſteddy under *Calamitous and adverſe Providences.*

Here we are in equal danger of the other Extream, *viz.* deſpondency and ſinking under the frowns and ſtrokes of croſs Providences. Now to ſupport and eſtabliſh the heart in this caſe, take three helps.

*Firſt Conſideration.*

Firſt, Conſider, That afflictive Providences are of great uſe to the people of God, they cannot live without them. The Earth doth not more need chaſtening froſts, and mellowing ſnows than our hearts do nipping Providences. Let the beſt Chriſtian be but a few years without them, and he will be ſenſible of the want of them; he will find a ſad *remiſſion* and declining upon all his graces.

*Second Conſideration.*

No ſtroke of Calamity upon the People of God, can *ſeparate* them from Chriſt, *Rom.* 8. 35. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of Chriſt? Shall Tribulation?* There was a time when *Job* could call nothing in this World but *trouble* his own: He could not ſay, my Eſtate, my Honour, my Health, my Children; for all theſe were gone; yet then he could ſay, *my Redeemer*, Job 19. 25. Well then, there is no cauſe to ſink whilſt Intereſt in Chriſt remains ſure to us.

*Third Conſideration.*

All your Calamities will have an end ſhortly. The longeſt Day of the Saints troubles hath an End; and then, no more troubles for ever. The troubles of the wicked will be to Eternity; but you ſhall *ſuffer but a while*, 1 Pet. 5. 10. If a *thouſand* troubles be appointed for you, they will come to *one* at laſt, and after that no more: Yea, and though our troubles *be but for a moment, yet they work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.* Let that ſupport your Hearts under all your ſufferings.

*Queſt.* 3.

Laſtly, Let us conſider, what may be uſeful to ſupport and quiet our Hearts under *doubtful Providences*, when our dear Concernments hang in a doubtful ſuſpence before us, and we know not which way the Providence of God will caſt and determine them.

Now the beſt Hearts are apt to grow ſolicitous and penſive, diſtracted with thoughtfulneſs about the Event and Iſſue. To relieve and ſettle us in this Caſe, the following Conſiderations are very uſeful.

### *Firſt Conſideration.*

*Firſt*, Let us conſider the Vanity and Inutility of ſuch a ſolicitude, *Matth.* 6. 27. *Which of you* (ſaith our Lord) *by taking Thought can add one Cubit*? We may break our Peace, and waſte our Spirits, but not alter the Caſe. We cannot turn God out of his way, *Job* 23. 13. *He is in one Mind.* We may by ſtrugling againſt God increaſe, but not avoid or lighten our Troubles.

### *Second Conſideration.*

How often do we Afflict and Torment our ſelves by our own unquiet Thoughts, when there is no real cauſe or ground for ſo doing? *Iſa.* 51. 13.——*And haſt feared continually every Day, becauſe of the Fury of the Oppreſſor, as if he were ready to deſtroy, and where is the Fury of the Oppreſſor!* O what abundance of Diſquiet and Trouble might we prevent, by waiting quietly till we ſee the Iſſues of Providence, and not bringing as we do the Evils of the Morrow upon the Day?

### *Third Conſideration.*

How great ground of quietneſs is it that the whole Diſpoſe and Management of all our Affairs and Concerns is in the Hand of our own God and Father! No Creature can touch us without his Commiſſion or Permiſſion. *I know* (ſaith Chriſt) *thou couldſt have no Power againſt me, except it were given thee from above*, John 19. 11. Neither Men nor Devils can act any thing without God's leave; and be ſure he will ſign no Order to your Prejudice.

### *Fourth Conſideration.*

How great Satisfaction muſt it be to all that believe the Divine Authority of the Scripture, that the faithfulneſs of God ſtands engaged for every Line and Syllable found therein? And how many bleſſed Lines in the Bible may we mark, that reſpect even our outward Concerns, and the happy iſſue of them all? Upon theſe two grounds, *viz.* That our outward Concerns with their ſteddy Direction to a bleſſed End is found in the Word; and this Word being of Divine Authority, the faithfulneſs and honour of God ſtands good for every Tittle that is found there. I ſay theſe are grounds of ſuch ſtability, that our Minds may repoſe with greateſt Security and Confidence upon them even in the cloudieſt Day of trouble. Not only your Eternal Salvation, but your Temporal Intereſts are there ſecured. Be quieted therefore in the Confidence of a bleſſed Iſſue.

### *Fifth Conſideration.*

How great and ſure an expedient have the Saints ever found it to their own Peace, to commit all doubtful Iſſues of Providence to the Lord, and devolve all their Cares upon him, *Prov.* 16. 3. *Commit thy Works unto the Lord, and thy Thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed.* By *Works* he means any doubtful, intricate, perplexing buſineſs, about which our Thoughts are rackt and tortur'd; Roll all theſe upon the Lord by Faith, leave them with him, and the preſent immediate Benefit you ſhall have by it (beſides the Comfort in the laſt iſſue) ſhall be Tranquility and Peace in your Thoughts. And who is there of any ſtanding or Experience in Religion that hath not found it ſo?

## The Fifth Caſe.

*How may a Chriſtian work his Heart into a reſigning frame unto the Will of God, when ſad Providences approach him, and preſage great Troubles and Afflictions coming on towards him?*

For the right ſtating and reſolving of this important *Caſe*, it will be needful to ſhew (1.) What is not included and intended in the Queſtion. (2.) What it doth ſuppoſe and include in it, and laſtly, what helps and directions are neceſſary for the due Performance of this great and difficult Duty.

### *Firſt, Negatively.*

As to the firſt, It muſt be premiſed that the Queſtion doth not ſuppoſe the Heart or Will of a Chriſtian to be at his own command and diſpoſe in this Matter: We cannot reſign it, and ſubject it to the Will of God whenever we deſire ſo to do: The *Duty* indeed is *ours*, but the *Power* by which alone we perform it is *God's*: We act as we are acted by the Spirit. It is with our Hearts, as with *Meteors* hanging in the Air, by the influence of the Sun; while that continues they abide above, but when it fails they fall to the Earth: We can do this, and all things elſe be they never ſo difficult, *through Chriſt that ſtrengthens us*, Phil. 4. 13. But *without him we can do nothing*, John 15. 5. He doth not ſay, without me ye can do but little, or without me ye can do nothing but with great difficulty, or without me ye can do nothing perfectly; but without me ye can do nothing at all. And every Chriſtian hath a Witneſs in his own Breaſt to atteſt this Truth: For there are Caſes frequently occurring in the Methods of Providence, in which, notwithſtanding all their Prayers and Deſires, all their Reaſonings and Strivings, they cannot quiet their Hearts fully in the Diſpoſe, and Will of God; but on the contrary do find all their endeavours in this matter, to be but as the rolling of a returning Stone againſt the Hill: Till God ſay to the Heart be ſtill, and to the Will give up, nothing can be done.

### Secondly, *Affirmatively.*

Next, Let us conſider what this Caſe doth ſuppoſe, and include in it, and we ſhall find.

1. That it ſuppoſeth the People of God to have a foreſight of Troubles and Diſtreſſes approaching and drawing near to them: I confeſs 'tis not always ſo, for many of our Afflictions, as well as Comforts, come by way of *ſurprizals* upon us: But oft times we have forewarnings of Troubles both *Publick* and *Perſonal*, before we feel them: As the weather may be diſcerned by the Face of the Sky, when we ſee a Morning Sky red and lowring, this is a natural ſign of a foul and rainy Day, *Matth.* 16 3. And there are as certain ſigns of the Times, whereby we may diſcern when Trouble is near, even at the Door: And theſe forewarnings are given by the Lord to awaken us to our Duties, by which they may either be prevented, *Zeph.* 2, v. 2. or ſanctified and ſweetned to us when they come. Theſe ſigns and notices of approaching troubles are gathered *partly* from the *Obſervation* and Collation of parallel Scripture Caſes and Examples, God generally holding one tenour and ſteddy courſe in the Adminiſtrations of his Providences in all Ages, 1 *Cor.* 10. 6. *partly* from the *Reflections* Chriſtians make upon the Frames and Tempers of their own Hearts, which greatly need awakening, humbling and purging Providences. For let a Chriſtian be but a few Years or

Months without a Rod, and how formal, earthly, dead and vain, will his Heart grow? And ſuch a temper preſages Affliction to them that are beloved of the Lord, as really as the giving or ſweating of the ſtones doth rain. Laſtly, The ordering and diſpoſing of the next Cauſes into a Poſture and Preparation for our Trouble, plainly premoniſheth us that Trouble is at the Door. Thus when the Symptoms of ſickneſs begin to appear upon our own Bodies, the Wiſe of our Boſom, or our Children that are as our own Souls, Providence herein awakens our Expectations of Death and doleful Separations: So when Enemies combine together and plot the Ruine of our Liberties, Eſtates, or Lives, and God ſeemeth to looſe the bridle of Reſtraint upon their Necks, now we cannot but be alarmed with the near approach of Troubles, eſpecially when at the ſame time our Conſcience ſhall reflect upon the abuſe and non improvement of theſe our threatned Comforts.

2. The Caſe before us ſuppoſeth, that theſe Premonitions and fore-runners of Affliction, do uſually very much diſturb the Order and break the Peace of our Souls, they put the mind under great Diſcompoſure, the Thoughts under much Diſtraction, and the Affections into Tumutls and Rebellion.

Ah! how unwilling are we to ſurrender to the Lord the Loan which he lent us! To be diſquieted by troubles when at eaſe in our Enjoyments! How unwelcome are the Meſſengers of Affliction to the beſt Men! We are ready to ſay to them as the Widow to *Elijah*, *What have I to do with thee, O Man (O Meſſenger) of God, art thou come unto me to call my Sin to remembrance, and to ſlay my Son?* 1 *Kings* 17. 18. And this ariſeth partly from the remains of Corruption in the beſt Souls, for though every ſanctified Perſon is come by his own Conſent into the Kingdom, and under the Government and Scepter of Chriſt, and every thought of his Heart *de jure*, and of right, muſt be ſubjected to him, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. Yet *de facto* the Conqueſt and Power of Grace is but incompleat and in part, and natural Corruption like *Jeroboam* with his vain Men, riſeth up againſt it, and cauſeth many Mutinies in the Soul, whilſt Grace like young *Abijah* is weak handed, and cannot reſiſt them. And partly from the advantage Satan makes upon the ſeaſon to irritate and aſſiſt our Corruptions: He knows that which is already in motion, is the more eaſily moved. In this Confuſion and hurry of Thoughts he undiſcernedly ſhuffles in his Temptations. Sometimes aggravating the Evils which we fear, with all the ſinking and overwhelming Circumſtances imaginable. Sometimes divining and fore-caſting ſuch Events and Evils, as (haply) never fall out. Sometimes repining at the diſpoſes of God as more ſevere to us than others. And ſometimes reflecting with very unbelieving and unworthy Thoughts upon the Promiſes of God, and his faithfulneſs in them, by all which the Affliction is made to ſink deep into the Soul before it actually comes. The Thoughts are ſo diſordered, that Duty cannot be duly performed. And the Soul is really weakned, and diſabled to bear its tryal when it comes indeed: Juſt as if a Man ſhould be kept waking and reſtleſs all the Night with the Thoughts of his hard Journey which he muſt Travel to Morrow, and ſo when to Morrow is come, he faints for want of Reſt, Midway his Journey.

3. It is here ſuppoſed to be the Chriſtians great Duty, under the Apprehenſions of approaching Troubles to reſign his Will to God's, and quietly commit the Events and Iſſues of all to him, whatever they may prove. Thus did *David* in the like Caſe and Circumſtances, 2 *Sam.* 15. 25, 26. *And the King ſaid unto* Zadock, *carry back the Ark of God into the City. If I ſhall find favour in the Eyes of the Lord he will bring me back again, and ſhew me both it and his habitation: But if he ſhall thus ſay, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good to him.*

O lovely and truely Chriſtian Temper! *q. d.* go *Zadock*, return with the Ark to its place, though I have not the *ſymbol*, yet I hope I ſhall have the *real preſence* of God with me in this ſad Journey: How he will diſpoſe the Events of this ſad and doubtful Providence I know not: Either I ſhall return again to *Jeruſalem*, or I ſhall not: if I do, then I ſhall ſee it again, and enjoy the Lord in his Ordinances there. If I do not, then I ſhall go to that Place where there is no need or uſe of thoſe things. And either way it will be well for me, I am content to refer all to the Divine Pleaſure, and commit the Iſſue, be it whatever it will be, to the Lord.

And till our Hearts come to the like reſolve, we can have no Peace within. *Commit thy Works unto the Lord, and thy Thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed, Prov.* 16. 3. By Works he means not only every enterprize and buſineſs we *undertake*, but every puzzling, intricate, and doubtful Event we *fear*. Theſe being once committed by an Act of Faith, and our Wills reſigned unto his, beſides the Comfort we ſhall have in the Iſſue, we ſhall have the preſent advantage of a well compoſed, and peaceful Spirit.

But this Reſignation is the difficulty; no doubt of Peace, could we once bring our Hearts to that. And therefore

4. I ſhall here ſubjoyn ſuch Helps and Directions, as may through God's Bleſſing, in the faithful uſe of them, aſſiſt and facilitate this great and difficult Work.

### *Firſt Help.*

And firſt, *Labour to work into your Hearts a deep and fixed ſenſe of the infinite Wiſdom of God, and your own folly and ignorance.* This will make Reſignation eaſie to you: Whatſoever the Lord doth is by Counſel, *Eph.* 1. 11. his Underſtanding is infinite, *Pſal.* 147. 5. his Thoughts are very deep, *Pſal.* 92. 5. but as for Man, yea the wiſeſt among Men, how little doth his Underſtanding penetrate the Works and Deſigns of Providence? And how oft are we forced to retract our raſh Opinions, and confeſs our Miſtakes? Acknowledging that if Providence had not ſeen with better Eyes than ours, and looked farther than we did, we had precipitated our ſelves into a thouſand miſchiefs, which by its Wiſdom and Care we have eſcaped. It's well for us that the *ſeven Eyes of Providence* are ever awake, and looking out for our good. Now if one Creature can and ought to be guided and governed by another that is more wiſe and skilful than himſelf, as the *Client* by his learned *Counſel*, the *Patient* by his skilful *Phyſician*, much more ſhould every Creature give up his weak Reaſon, and ſhallow Underſtanding to the infinite Wiſdom of the Omniſcient God.

It's nothing but our Pride and Arrogance over-valuing our Underſtandings that makes Reſignation ſo hard. * Carnal Reaſon ſeems to it ſelf a wiſe Diſputant about the Concerns of the Fleſh, but how often hath Providence baffled it? The more Humility, the more Reſignation.

* *O quam ſapiens argumentatrix ſibi videtur arrogantia humana; præſertim cum aliquid de gaudiis metuit amittere.* Tert.

How few of our Mercies and Comforts have been foreſeen by us? Our own Projects have come to nothing, and that which we never thought on, or contrived hath taken Place; not our choice of the ground, or skill in weighing and delivering the *Bowl*, but ſome unforeſeen Providence, like a rub in the *Green* was that which made the caſt.

*Second Help.*

*Deeply conſider the ſinfulneſs and vanity of torturing your own Thoughts about the Iſſues of doubtful Providences.*

(1.) There is much Sin in ſo doing: For, all our anxious and ſolicitous Emotions, what are they other than the immediate Iſſues and Fruits of Pride and Unbelief? There is not a greater diſcovery of Pride in the World, than in the conteſts of our Wills with the Will of God. It's a preſumptuous invading of God's Prerogative, to dictate to his Providence, and preſcribe to his Wiſdom.

(2.) There is a great deal of Vanity in it: All the thoughtfulneſs in the World will not make one hair white or black: All our diſcontents will not prevail with God to call back (or as the Word may be rendered) make void his Word, *Iſa.* 31. 2. He is in one mind, *Job* 23. 13. The Thoughts of his Mind are from Everlaſting, *Pſalm* 33. 11.

*Third Help.*

*Set before you thoſe choice Scripture Patterns of Submiſſion to the Lords Will in as deep, yea, much deeper Points of ſelf-denial than this before you, and ſhame your ſelves out of this quarrelling Temper with Providence.*

You know what a cloſe Tryal that Providence was to *Abraham*, that called him from his Native Country and Fathers Houſe, to go he knew not whither; and yet it's ſaid in *Iſa.* 41. 2. He came to God's foot, as readily obeying his call, as a Servant when his Maſter knocks for him with his Foot.

*Paul's* Voyage to *Jeruſalem*, had a diſmal aſpect upon himſelf, he could expect nothing but Bonds and Priſons, as he tells us, *Acts* 20. 23. And a great Tryal it was to the *Saints*, who could not tell how to give up ſuch a *Miniſter*, yet he reſigns up his Will to God's, *Acts* 20. 22. And ſo do they, *Acts* 21. 14. *The Will of the Lord be done.*

But far beyond theſe, and all other Patterns, what an Example hath our dear *Lord Jeſus* ſet before us in the deepeſt Point of Self-denial that ever was in the World. When the Father gave the Cup of Sufferings into his Hands in the Garden, *Mark* 14. 36. A Cup of Wrath, the Wrath of the great and terrible God, and that without mixture: The very taſte whereof, put Nature into an Agony and Aſtoniſhment, a ſore Amazement, a bloody Sweat, and forced from him that vehement and ſad cry, *Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs*; yet ſtill with Submiſſion, *nevertheleſs not my Will, but thine be done.* O bleſſed pattern of Obedience, and Reſignation to the Pleaſure of God! What is your Caſe to this?

*Fourth Help.*

*Study the ſingular Benefits and Advantages of a Will reſigned up, and melted into the Will of God.*

(1.) Such a Spirit hath a continual *Sabbath* within it ſelf: The Thoughts are eſtabliſhed, *Prov.* 16. 3. And truly, till a Man come to this, he doth but too much reſemble the *Devil*, who is a reſtleſs Spirit, ſeeking reſt, but finding none.

It was an excellent Expreſſion of *Luther*, to one that was much perplexed in his Spirit about the doubtful Events of ſome Affairs of his that were then depending: *Dominus tua omnia faciat, & tu nihil facias, ſed ſis Sabbatum Chriſti:* (*i. e.*) The Lord ſhall do all for thee, and thou ſhalt do nothing, but be the Sabbath of Chriſt. It is by this means that the Lord *gives his Beloved ſleep*, Pſalm 127. 2. He means not the ſleep of the Body, but of the Spirit. *Fideles* (ſaith One upon that Place) *etſi Vitam agant laborioſam, compoſitis tamen & tranquillis animis in fidei ſilentio ſe continent, ac ſi dormirent:* (*i. e.*) Though Believers live in the midſt of many Troubles here, yet with quiet and compoſed Minds they keep themſelves in the ſilence of Faith, as though they were aſleep.

(2.) Beſides, it fits a Mans Spirit for Communion with God in all his Afflictions, and this alleviates and ſweetens them beyond any thing in the World.

(3.) And ſurely a Man is never nearer the Mercy he deſires, or the Deliverance he expects, (as One truly obſerves) than when his Soul is brought into a ſubmiſſive Temper. *David* was never nearer the Kingdom, than when he became as a weaned Child.

*Fifth Help.*

Laſtly, *Think how repugnant an unſubmiſſive temper is both to your Prayers and Profeſſions.*

You pray that the Will of God may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven, and yet when it ſeems to Croſs your Wills or Intereſts, you ſtruggle and fret againſt it. You profeſs to have committed your Souls to his keeping, and to leave your Eternal Concerns in his Hands; and yet cannot commit things infinitely leſs valuable unto him. How contradictory are theſe Things!

Your Profeſſion, as Chriſtians, ſpeaks you to be led by the Spirit, but this Practice ſpeaks you to follow the perverſe Counſels of your own Spirits. O then regret no more, diſpute no more, but lye down meekly at your Fathers Feet, and ſay in all Caſes and at all Times, *the Will of the Lord be done.*

And thus I have, through the Aid of Providence, performed what I deſigned to ſpeak from this Scripture. I acknowledge, my Performances have been accompanied with much weakneſs, yet have endeavoured to ſpeak of Providence the Things that are right. Bleſſed be the

Lord, who hath thus far aſſiſted and protected me in this Work.

How Providence will diſpoſe of my Life, Liberty, and Labours for Time to come, I know not, but I chearfully commit all to him, who hath hitherto performed all things for me.

# Poſtſcript.

IN Conſideration of the great and manifold Advantages reſulting from an humble and heedful Obſervation of Providence, I cannot but judge it the Concernment of Chriſtians that have Time and Ability for ſuch a Work, to keep written Memorials, or *Journals* of Providences by them; for their own and others uſe and benefit. For want of Collecting and Communicating ſuch Obſervations, not only our ſelves, but the Church of God is damnified and impoveriſhed.

Some ſay, the Art of *Medicine* was thus acquired and perfected: When any one had met with ſome rare *Phyſical Herb*, and accidentally diſcovered the Vertues of it, he would poſt it up in ſome publick Place; and ſo the *Phyſician* attained his skill, by a Collection of thoſe poſted Experiments and Receipts.

I am not for poſting up all that a Chriſtian knows or meets with in his Experience, for (as I have ſaid before) *Non eſt religio, ubi omnia patent.* Religion doth not lay all open; but yet there is a prudent, humble and ſeaſonable Communication of our Experiences and Obſervations of Providence, which is exceeding beneficial both to our Selves and our Brethren.

If Chriſtians in reading the Scriptures, would judiciouſly Collect and Record the Providences they ſhall meet with there, and (if deſtitute of other helps) but add thoſe that have fallen out in their own Time and Experience; O what a precious Treaſure would theſe make? How would it antidote their Souls againſt the ſpreading Atheiſm of theſe Days, and ſatisfie them, beyond what many other Arguments can do, that *The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God.*

Whilſt this Work was under my hand, I was both delighted and aſſiſted by a Pious and Uſeful *Eſſay* of an unknown Author, who hath to very good Purpoſe improved many Scriptural Paſſages of Providence, which ſeem to lye out of the Road of common Obſervation: Some Paſſages I have noted out of it, which have been ſweet to me. And O that Chriſtians would every where ſet themſelves to ſuch Work! Providence carries our Lives, Liberties and Concernments in its hand every Moment. Your Bread is in its *Cupboard*, your Money in its *Purſe*, your Safety in its enfolding *Arms*; and ſure it is the leaſt Part of what you owe, to record the Favours you receive at his Hands. More particularly,

**Mr. T. C. in his *Iſagoge.***

(1.) Truſt not your ſlippery Memories with ſuch a multitude of remarkable Paſſages of Providence as you have, and ſhall meet with in your way to Heaven. It's true, things that greatly affect us, are not eaſily forgotten by us; and yet, how ordinary is it for new Impreſſions to raze out former ones? It was a Saying of that Worthy Man Dr. *Harris*, My Memory (ſaid he) never failed me in all my Life; for indeed, I durſt never truſt it. Written Memorials ſecure us againſt that hazard; and beſides, makes them uſeful to others when we are gone. So that you carry not away all your Treaſure to Heaven with you, but leave theſe choice Legacies to your ſurviving Friends. Certainly it were not ſo great a Loſs, to loſe your Silver, your Goods and Chattels, as it is to loſe your Experiences which God hath this way given you in this World.

(2.) Take heed of claſping up thoſe rich Treaſures in a Book, and thinking it enough to have noted them there: But have frequent recourſe to them, as oft as new Wants, Fears, or Difficulties ariſe, and aſſault you. Now, it's ſeaſonable to conſider and reflect, Was I never ſo diſtreſſed before? Is this the firſt Plunge that ever befel me? *Let me conſider the Days of Old, the Years of Ancient Times*, as *Aſaph* did, *Pſalm* 77. 5.

(3.) Laſtly, Beware of ſlighting former ſtraits and dangers in Compariſon with preſent ones. That which is next us, always appears greateſt to us: And as Time removes us farther and farther from our former Mercies or Dangers, ſo they leſſen in our Eyes, juſt as the Land from which they Sail, doth to *Sea-men*. Know that your dangers have been as great, and your fears no leſs formerly than now. Make it as much your buſineſs, to preſerve the ſenſe and value, as the Memory of former Providences, and the fruit will be ſweet to you.

# A Faithful and Succinct Narrative of ſome Late and Wonderful SEA-DELIVERANCES.

## The PREFACE.

*'TIS a certain Truth, that Religion doth not expoſe all to publick View; and as true, that it doth not impropriate and conceal all within the Limits of a Man's private Breaſt. To expoſe all would be too Phariſaical, and to conceal all would be highly Injurious and Uncharitable; by the former a Man wrongs himſelf, and by the latter many others.*

*Some Works of Providence have a Deſignation for general Uſe and publick Good in the very Nature of them, ſuch I apprehend theſe to be contained in the following Narratives.*

*'Tis ſaid the Art of Phyſick was advanced and perfected in this manner; In the ruder and more ignorant Age of the World, when a Perſon, either by deſign or accident, had diſcovered the Virtue of any Herb or Mineral, the Experiment was poſted up in ſome publick Place for all to read, and take notice of it, till at laſt, out of the multitude of theſe poſted Experiments, an orderly Syſtem was framed, wherein every Thing was reduced to its proper Place and Uſe.*

*I am convinced, that if an orderly Collection were made of the more remarkable and eminent Acts of Divine Providence, it would be an excellent* Compendium *or* Syſtem *of Spiritual* Phyſick *to purge and cure this Atheiſtical Generation, wherein the very Being of a God and Providence are denied by ſome, and left diſputable and uncertain by others.*

*The ſame Senſe and Affection is not to be expected in thoſe that read, as in thoſe that have been the Subject of theſe aſtoniſhing Works of God; nor is it to be ſuppoſed the ſame deep and lively Senſe of the Goodneſs of God will be found in their own Hearts, in reading their own Story, as they found in the Day of their Deliverance: Even Mercies of the higheſt Rank ſuffer Abatements by time, through the Corruption of Nature; but the Reader would put himſelf into the Caſe of the concerned, and they who are perſonally concerned in it, would review it with ſuch an Affection and Senſe as becomes ſuch awful and glorious Works of God. What good Effects and Impreſſions might then be expected from this little Manual?*

*All I ſhall further add is, That as there is not one Circumſtance added or ſtretcht beyond its due Proportion to engage any Man's Affection, ſo I perſwade my ſelf, the true Aim and Deſign of the Concerned is to rear it up as a Stone of Remembrance in Gratitude to their great Deliverer, and to aſſiſt ſo pious a Deſign, is the only Aim of*

Thy Friend and Servant,
JOHN FLAVEL.

## The Firſt NARRATIVE.

ON the 6th. of *May*, 1679. a Ship of *Dartmouth*, called the *Thomas* and *Anne*, *Joſeph Curtis*, of the ſame Town being Maſter, loaden with Salt, Wine, and Brandy, from *Bourneuſe* in *France*, for *Newfoundland*, and being about 24 Leagues off that Coaſt, in Latitude 47 Degres, 40 Minutes, having for many Days ſeen abundance of floating Iſlands of Ice at ſome diſtance: This Morning, ſays the Relater, we diſcern'd a great many lumps of Ice, of various ſizes, ſcattered up and down upon the Sea; the Wind being at N.W. the Weather clear, and hoping to ſee Land before Night, we ſtood in to the Weſtward, now and then bearing up to avoid thoſe little floating Iſlands which came in our way. But about Noon we found our ſelves beſet on every ſide with thouſands of theſe dangerous Enemies, threatning Deſtruction to us from every quarter; and at the ſame time, the Wind fell calm, (except now and then a little Breeze) and ſo continued till almoſt Night.

We now began to apprehend more than ordinary Danger, well knowing how fatal one Blow might prove, and how improbable it was to eſcape many, the Danger being equal on every ſide, whether we ſtood Seaward or Shoreward; had we been thus inviron'd with fixed Rocks, our Hazard had been great, but theſe did float as well as we, and the Calm ſo clipt and pinion'd our Wings, that we could not fly any way from them; ſo that now Ruin ſeem'd inevitable: The Wind ſeem'd to be commiſſionated, to bring us into the midſt of Danger, and there to leave us.

Indeed towards Evening it began to ſpring up at North, but, alas! too late to do us any Service; move we could, but no way from Danger of imminent Deſtruction.

In this Strait we conſulted what Courſe to ſteer. Debates muſt have quick diſpatch, when Danger is at hand. Our Caſe and Reſolve was much like that of the *Lepers* at the Siege of *Samaria*, if we linger here we periſh, if we make ſail and try to extricate our ſelves out of theſe innumerable Difficulties, we can but periſh: And therefore upon Advice, and with general Conſent, we ſtood Shoreward under a ſmall Sail, *viz.* our two Coaſts. About ten at Night, a great Fog began to encompaſs us, which increaſed in a little time to that degree, that we could not ſee the length of our Ship before us, and the Wind freſhed up, and began to blow a briſk gale: Thus all Things ſeem'd to conſpire our Deſtruction; the Fog hood-winked our Eyes that we could not diſcern the Approach of our Enemies, and the Wind put them into a more quick and violent Motion, ſo that now we were in continual

Expectation of a Blow, which we could neither diſcern nor prevent.

All that could be done was done, for immediately we halled up our Foreſail, and drove under our Mainſail and Mizen, our Foreſail being in the Broyleſs, lying a back, hoping that by retarding our Motion, and looking out with all poſſible Vigilance and Care, we might ſhun the Danger. And indeed our Men needed no Cautions or Quicknings to their Watch; the great and imminent danger of Life, was Motive enough to every Man to do his utmoſt that way.

Thus we continued every Man in his proper Poſt about an hour's time, when we eſpied one of theſe Iſlands juſt a head, and ſo near, that we knew not how to eſcape it, unleſs by backing our Mainſail, which was done immediately; but notwithſtanding we received a terrible blow upon the weather Bow, juſt upon the deſcent of the Sea, and ſo it drove away a long the ſide of the Ship.

Hereupon the Carpenter, and ſome others, going down to ſee whether we had received any Damage by this Blow, (whilſt others plied the Pump which would not ſuck) preſently they came up with diſtracted terrible Cries, and the Sentence of Death in their *Looks* as well as *Lips*, ſaying, They found the Cask ſwiming about the Hole, upon the Salt; whereupon we all perceived the Wound to be mortal and incurable, and our Caſe upon the matter deſperate; for we were encompaſſed with thouſands of the like, and what Expectation could remain of Safety in our Boat, when one touch of one only Lump had deſtroyed ſo ſtrong and ſtout a Ship under us? It was very improbable ſo ſmall a *Sconce* ſhould hold out, when our main Fort was ſurrendred upon the firſt Attack. The Night was dark, the Sea boiſterous, our Ship ſinking under us, and our Hopes of Safety with it; yet as Men in Extremity of Danger, we greedily catch'd at the next means of Safety, or rather of prolonging Life a few hours, and therefore all hands to work for Life, we firſt hoiſted out our ſmall Boat, which was a *Norway Yawle*, with a half Strake built upon her, of which indeed we made little Account, but our Eyes were, under God, upon our great Boat, yet not knowing of what uſe the ſmall Boat might be to us in ſo great an Extremity, two Men ſtept into her, to veer her under the Quarter, whilſt the reſt were all buſied in hoiſting out the long Boat; which was done with all Expedition imaginable.

But in this confuſed haſte, it ſo fell out, that either the Boat received ſome Injury, or the Men forgot to put in the *Scuttle*; for no ſooner was ſhe clear of the *Tackles*, and the Men got into her (which it was eaſie to do, the Ship ſinking ſo faſt, that her ſide was almoſt even with the Boat) but preſently ſhe began to fill with Water, and we found our ſelves going down as faſt as the Ship, by whoſe ſide we lay

The *Mate*, in the mean-time, fearing the Ship would be gone, before the long Boat was clear, ſtept into the *Yawle*, which as yet lay under the Ship's Quarter, with the two Men before-mentioned in her, and providentially took with him a ſmall Remnant of Brandy, being about five Pints, and ſo put off in haſte from the Ship, wherein were five Men, who utterly deſpairing of Safety among us, choſe rather to go down with the Ship.

When we were thus ſinking in the Long-boat, the *Yawle* was fallen from us at leaſt half a Cables length; we were thirteen of us gotten into the Long boat, and finding ourſelves almoſt gone, we paſſionately cry'd, to the three Men in the *Yawle*, For the Lord's ſake to haſten to us, and ſave us.

They had only two Oars with them, and poor Hearts, they made all haſte to us, tho' they could not but know how much they encreaſed their own Dangers by mingling them with our Extremities; if indeed, either theirs or ours may be ſaid to be capable of an increaſe.

It pleaſed God, our Long-boat continued above Water, till the Bow of the *Yawle*, touch'd her Stern; upon which all that ſat afore in the Head of the Long-boat, running with all haſte to get hold of the *Yawle*, the Long-boat immediately ſunk away after an end, under the *Yawle*, and carried down three of our Company with her; the other ten, ſome of them leapt into the Boat, others hung by the ſide, of which number I was one, with about ſix more in the ſame Condition with me, which by the friendly hands of our compaſſionate Companions were pluckt into the Boat; tho', alas! neither they nor we could reckon our ſelves to have gained any more Advantage hereby, than a few hours to prepare our ſelves for Eternity, which yet was a Mercy above what was granted to our poor Companions that went down by our ſide in a moment.

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In this firſt Scene of Providence, many wonders of Mercy appear'd to us and for us; ſuch was,

1. The enclining of the Hearts of our three Men in the Yawle to adventure to us in ſuch a deſperate State as we were. Had they had time to exerciſe their Reaſon, they would never have come near us, though their deareſt Relations had been among us; for the Principle of Self-preſervation, will make every Man carve firſt for himſelf. No Man ordinarily loving another to that degree, as to die with him for Company, if he have any Means, tho' never ſo ſmall, to eſcape preſent Ruin. But certainly Providence conſulted our Good, by denying them time to conſult there own Reaſon in this Caſe.

2. It was alſo Mercy to us, that our three Companions periſhed when they did, for had they lived but a minute longer, in all probability we had periſhed all together in that minute; for ſhe could receive no more, than ſhe did receive, and had the reſt leapt in or hung by the ſide, as we did, we muſt have been forced to an Act of Cruelty in turning ſome over, or inevitably have ſunk together, for the Boat was as deep with the thirteen that were in her as ever ſhe could ſwim; but the hand of God put them off, who were Supernumeraries, and our hand was not upon them

3. Thoſe three that periſht in the Long-boat were the moſt nimble and active in the whole Company, and in ſuch an Extremity the moſt likely of all to have ſaved themſelves, yet theſe periſhed, when the feebleſt and moſt unactive were preſerved. *Let not the ſtrong Man*

*therefore glory in his Strength,* nor the moſt weak and feeble deſpair of Help from God in Extremity. *He taketh not pleaſure in the Legs of a Man,* Pſal. 147. 10. *The Race is not to the ſwift,* Eccleſ. 9. 11.

4. 'Tis little leſs than a Miracle of Providence, that ſo ſmall a Boat had not overſet, when about ſeven of us hang'd by her ſide, with our Bodies in the Water, in a tumbling Sea, and in the Night too, when we could not ſee what was fit to be done for our Preſervation; ſurely it was the hand of God that ſteddied, and preſerved the Boat and us in that Danger.

5. Upon the whole, we cannot but judge God had a deſign upon us, to glorifie his Mercy, and make his Power and Providence known, in caſting away both our Ship and Long-boat together, (the moſt apt and probable means of our Preſervation, and ſaving us by ſo contemptible and improbable a means as our little Yawle was. Little Things in the Hand, and under the Bleſſing of a great God, produce Effects proportionable to the greateſt and moſt potent Inſtruments, the ſame God who prepar'd a great Fiſh to ſave *Jonah,* can make a little Fiſh as effectual to that end as a Whale, if he pleaſe ſo to order it. As I remember I have read of a Ship that had ſprung a Leak; ſome pious Paſſengers pray, whilſt others ply the Pump, and all to little purpoſe, till at laſt, on a ſudden, they eſpy the Waters within to be at a ſtand, and then take Heart a freſh, and ply the Pump with good Succeſs. They get into their Harbour, the Ship put into the Dock, and upon ſearch, there is found a certain Hole, with a Fiſh ſticking faſt in it, exactly commenſurate to the Hole. God ſhews himſelf great in the ſmalleſt Inſtruments of Preſervation! Our Caſe ſeem'd ſo deſperate, even when we were in Poſſeſſion of our Long-boat, that five of our Company, then deſpairing of Safety, choſe rather to periſh in and with the Ship; three more (as before was noted) of our ableſt Seamen went down with the Long-boat, and thirteen poor forlorn Perſons now left almoſt even with the Sea in a poor ſmall Boat, deſtitute of Compaſs to guide us, or Proviſions to ſuſtain us, in a dark Night, in Extremity of Cold, and among innumerable Mountains of Ice ſurrounding us, which occaſion'd it.

*Mr Cran's* Proſpect of Providence, p. 216.

In this miſerable Caſe we put our Boat's head to Windward, as much as we could, with our two ſmall Oars, being all we had, not expecting to live one hour, by Reaſon of the raging of the Sea, incenſed by a ſtrong Wind, every Surge threatning to ſwallow us up; this was all the Comfort which remained to us, that we had a little time given us to beg mercy, before we went after our eight Companions, to whom that favour was denied.

This Opportunity we endeavoured to improve to that end; but, alas! how confuſedly, by reaſon of the frequent freſh Alarms that every Sea gave us, and the neceſſity of often Conſultations about what was neceſſary to be done; ſome muſt be at work to caſt out Water which brake in continually upon us, and yet we had little opportunity or room for that Work of neceſſity, being wedg'd in ſo faſt, that none could move out of the place in which he was fixed, being like ſo many Statues almoſt immoveable. Yet this was a ſignal Mercy, that though we took in a great deal of Water all this Night, yet no Sea brake full home upon us to fill us at once.

Thus we continued all the firſt Night driving, and keeping our Boat's head to the Windward, which was then at North, as well as we could gueſs by the run of the Sea, for the Night was very dark, not a Star to be ſeen, nor a Compaſs to guide us; the want of which we much lamented. Every Mans Heart was filled with Fear and Sorrow, and thus we paſſed the *Tueſday* Night, admiring the Power and Goodneſs of God when we ſaw the Dawning of the next Morning.

*Wedneſday* the 7th. of *May.*

In the Morning as ſoon as it was light, the Wind blowing ſtill very hard, and a great Sea, we began to look yar about us, and ſaw abundance of floating Iſlands of Ice round about us, and finding the Sea ſo tempeſtuous and lofty, we would fain have ſhelter'd our ſelves if poſſible under ſome of thoſe Mountains, but they afforded us no ſuccour, though we try'd many; for that to Leewards of them, there was a cockling Sea as in a Race, ſo that we there ſhipt more Water than before, and the Cold was unſufferable; ſo that we were forced to lie againſt the Sea, tugging at the Oar, and caſting up our Cries to Heaven for help. Thus we ſat all wet and frozen, ſhivering and gnaſhing our Teeth one upon another; ſeldom or never could the Ocean ſhew a Company of more miſerable and forlorn Wretches, than it had at that time upon its back.

Now it was that we began this Morning to examine our Store, and the total Amount was but the fore-mention'd five Pints of Brandy, and ſix Bisket Cakes among us all, and the Cakes all ſopt like Toaſt in ſalt Water. This we looked upon as the poor Widow upon her handful of Meal, and Cruiſe of Oil, which ſhe was making her laſt Meal upon before ſhe died, 1 *King* 17. 12.

However, we were reſolved to be good Husbands upon a ſmall Stock, Frugality being moſt effectually learnt in the School of Neceſſity. This Morning every one had a Morſel of wet Bread, which had it not been ſoaked before in ſalt Water, there was enough in every one's Eyes to have done it; and after this Meal, which was ended in a Minute, we began to think how to proportion our Brandy, for we durſt truſt the Firkin to no Man's Mouth or Modeſty. It was in a proper Senſe our *Aqua Vitæ*, we had no Dram-Cup to divide it, but ſearching our Pockets, one of the Company found the Bole of a Tobaco-pipe, which though it were neither a very large, comely, or cleanly Cup, yet we were glad of it, it ſerved us as a Meaſure to divide it equally amongſt us; and after this Cordial, when Thirſt encreaſed, every one took a Lump of Ice, (of which we had enough every where at hand) and diſſolv'd it in our Mouths, or rather our Mouths in it, for we were even Jaw fallen and ſtarv'd with the extream Cold, againſt which we had no other but this cold Comfort.

About Noon the Wind began to lin, and towards Night it fell Calm, the Sea pretty

[illegible]

quiet and ſmooth, but no ſight of the Sun, the Sky all cloſe, and ſo continued all the Night, by reaſon of which we could not have the leaſt Benefit or Direction from the Moon or Stars; and therefore only rowed to and agen, ſometimes one away, and ſometimes another, rather to keep ourſelves in exerciſe, than in hope to gain any Port.

Now we began exceedingly to bewail the Want of a Compaſs, without which (the Weather ſo continuing) our Labour was in vain; and now to ſhew to what degree, Hunger, Fear, and Cold, had ſtupified and benumb'd, not the Limbs only, but Brains; a poor Seaman hearing the Lamentations that were made for want of a Compaſs, very ſeriouſly directing his Speech to the Maſter, ſaid, Why, Sir, cannot you make a Compaſs? The Maſter reply'd, Wherewith ſhall I make one? Why, quoth he, with a piece of Chalk upon a Board. Yes, reply'd the Maſter, ſuch a one may be made, but how ſhall we make it work? Nay, quoth he, that I cannot tell.

Had ſuch an occaſion of Mirth offer'd in a Seaſon when our Fancies had been in a Condition to ſport themſelves with it, it might have been an innocent and pleaſant Entertainment to them, but now it had little more power to refreſh them, than the Lumps of Ice had to warm and refreſh our Stomachs: Our Fancies were out of Tune to be pleaſant with any thing, nothing but the ſight of Shore could make us ſmile, but that was out of ſight, and almoſt out of hope, and in this deplorable State we ſpent the following Night, which indeed prov'd Calm, but exceeding Dark, ſo that we could make little or no Progreſs.

*Thurſday* the 8th. of *May.*

Having ſuſtained the Burthens of Cold, Hunger, and Fear, one Night more, by the ſupporting and preſerving Power of God, we had this Morning a little Refreſhment by the moſt welcome ſight of the Sun, a little after his riſing, which though our Religion forbad us to adore, as the Heathens do, yet it taught us to bleſs God for the guiding Uſefulneſs of it to us in ſuch a bewildred State as it looked that morning upon us in: And as an additional Providence to the former, the Wind ſprang up at N. E. and we rowed away due Weſt as we judged, in ſome hopes that we might that day ſee, if not get the Land, but the ſight of the Sun was ſoon cut off from us by a cloſe and lowering Skie which threatned more Danger and Diſtreſs; however, we had the Benefit of Information from the ſight we had of it, to guide our Courſe, which was a great Mercy. Upon this little Encouragement, we put to it with all our might, and made what way poſſible we could, keeping the Wind on our Starboard-Quarter, hoping that it ſtill ſtood upon the ſame Point it did when we ſaw the Sun.

But all this while we had no ſight either of Ship or Land, and towards Night we had much Wind and Rain, and the Sea began to make great, ſo that our flattering Hopes began to vaniſh, our Strength almoſt quite ſpent, a diſmal Night at hand, which then we feared would be our laſt Night in this World. We had rowed by Eſtimation about Eight or Nine Leagues, and paſt by ſeveral Iſlands of Ice, and at laſt met with a great Iſland, whoſe Magnitude, above Water, was far greater than any Cathedral we had ever ſeen; and Night being at hand, we reſolv'd to ſhelter our ſelves under it that Night from the rage and fury of the Seas, which was very great; and indeed it pleaſed God to make it ſomewhat Uſeful to us upon that Account.

O the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God! to make a greater Iſland our ſhelter in a Boat, when one far leſs, had been the occaſion of our Danger and Miſery in the Ship. In this cold Harbour we floated that Night, a Night for ever to be remembered by us. I think never poor Creatures encounter'd more Miſeries together in one Night, the Seas raged, the Rain powered down inceſſantly, the Cold was ſo extream, that we ſat all the Night gnaſhing our Teeth, our Strength ſpent with Famine and continual Labour, a bit of Ice diſſolv'd in our Mouths was all we had to allay our Thirſt; ever and anon, a great piece of the Iſland would fall off into the Sea, with a moſt dreadful Noiſe, which frequently caus'd us to put farther off, and then we were ready to be devoured by the Sea, ſo that we durſt neither come near, nor ſtand far off. In a word, Death and Ruin were before us which way ſoever we looked; if we came too near, the falls of thoſe Rocks of Ice threatned our Death, and beſide the Cold was inſufferable; if we ſtood far off, the Sea threatned to ſwallow us up every Minute; and that middle Diſtance we kept from both, ſeemed only to lengthen our miſerable Lives a few Hours, to die as it were by Inch-meal.

O how little do others, nay how little have we our ſelves been ſenſible of thoſe comfortable Providences which provide Fire, Food, warm Houſes and Beds to reſt in? Never do the Value of thoſe common Mercies appear as they do in ſuch Extremities. The Accommodation of a Beggar in a Barn, was a princely Entertainment to what we found, and yet there was much Mercy mingled with all theſe Judgments, our Breath was yet in our Noſtrils, and there was yet farther ſpace to repent and prepare. God alſo wonderfully ſupported Nature, that it utterly failed not under theſe overwhelming Calamities, tho' we were all ready to periſh, none yet actually periſhed, we yet continued our full Number, tho' ſoon after it was leſſened, as will appear hereafter; this doleful comfortleſs Night we alſo paſs'd by the Care of God over us, a Night of ſhort Fare, but long Hours.

*Friday* the 9th. Day.

And now the *Friday* morning was come, which was ſo long and earneſtly deſired, and to make it the more welcome, it proved pretty fair, the Weather ſomewhat clear, and the Wind freſh in the Eaſter-Board; yea, we alſo had a ſight of the Sun again, which tho' it were far leſs than that of a Shore, yet it deſervedly had its Value with us; then we rowed away Weſt as due as we could judge, and fed our ſelves ſtill with a little hope, though we had nothing elſe left to feed upon.

But after Noon, a very cloſe Sky and thick Weather again, and about that time we met with abundance of Rock-weed, or Oar-weed, which we took up and fed upon. This was but an unſavoury pickled Sallad, but Hunger made it ſweet; it verified that Obſervation experimentally.

> *In time of Famine ccurſeſt Fare contents,*
> *The barking Stomach ſtrains no Complements.*

But towards Night, we were much more refreſhed and chear'd with a ſight of Land as we all ſuppoſed. So it repreſented it ſelf to our view for about half an Hour, at which we were all tranſported with Joy; it put freſh Spirits into our tired Bodies, and every Man's Countenance ſeemed to be enlightned by it. When the *Italians*, after a long and tireſome Voyage, got the firſt ſight of their own Country, the *Poet* deſcribes the Tranſports and Extaſies of Joy into which that ſight caſt them; for with loud and united Voices they cried out, *Italy! Italy!* like Men in a Rapture,

> *Italiam, Italiam læto clamore vocabant.*

But certainly we had much more Reaſon to rejoice than they, had the ground of our Joy been as certain, as the matter of it was ſweet, for they were ſafe in their Ships, but we Shipwreckt, and deſtitute of all Comfort; they were returned from a good Voyage, we had loſt our Goods and Voyage too, and our Lives were often loſt in our own Apprehenſions; they were come nigh their Homes, and Friends, we had no hope ever to ſee them again. And indeed, the greater our Extremities were, the more we ſurfeited our ſelves upon the Comfort of ſuch a ſight, it being as natural to the Soul ſo to do, when it hath been long exerciſed with Fears and Sorrows, as it is to the Body when it hath been long faſting and ſtarved, to ſurfeit upon Food when it comes firſt to it.

But this our exceſſive Joy was ſoon rebated and allayed, for making with all the ſpeed we could towards it, like Men putting forth the laſt Effort and ſtruggle of Nature for Life; after a while we began to doubt whether it were Land or no; and ſurely that fatal Lump of Ice that ſank our Ship, did not give a more dreadful Knock to our Veſſel, than this Doubt did to our Minds, it even ſhatter'd our Hearts with our vain Hopes to pieces; and then the Ebb of our Fears and Sorrows was as low, as the Tyde of our groundleſs Joy was high; for we plainly diſcerned, after half an Hour, that thoſe pleaſant Hills, and indented Shoar which we beheld with ſuch Joy, were nothing elſe but Iſlands of Ice, which gave a colder Damp of Deſpair and Sorrow to our Hearts, than it had done or could do to our benummed Limbs, which by this time were much mortified, and almoſt wholly uſeleſs; and yet as a farther Addition to our Fear and Sorrow (if yet they might be reckon'd capable of any Addition) the Sky again began to lowre, and look full of foul and ſtormy Weather.

And now every Man's Heart deſponded, and all hope ſeemed utterly to periſh from us. We were reduced to that extremity by Cold, Famine, and conſtant Toil and Fear ſo many Days and Nights without Reſt or Refreſhment, no Man being able to move from the Place in which he firſt ſate down, that we concluded a little more time would have made us as ſo many dead Statues fixed in our Places, or as ſo many Carcaſſes dried up in the Sands of which the *Ægyptians* make their *Mummy*; only with this difference, they are ſo dried and parch'd with Heat, but we with Cold.

We were now come nigh to our miſtaken Land, and ſeeing bad Weather appearing again, and Night drawing on, we thought to ſhelter our ſelves again under this Iſland, as we had formerly under others; but found it impoſſible ſo to do, becauſe of the Shoals of Ice that lay off at a diſtance from it, which forbad our approach any nearer. And truly it was a good Providence which ſo ordered it for us, for could we have found Shelter near it, in all likelihood there we had abode all that night, and even yielded our ſelves, as by conſent, into the Hands of Deſpair and Death; whereas, finding no Place there, it put us upon this final Reſolution, That we would once more put to it with that poor Stock of Strength which was left, and tug hard for it that Night, not knowing what God might do for us the next Day; it was yet poſſible we might ſee the Shoar, but if we utterly deſponded, and ceaſed from ſtriving, there was no hope.

And now with renewed Cries to God, our Eyes to Heaven, and Hands to the Oar, we once more made an Eſſay for our Deliverance. It ſeemed to give ſome Footing to our feeble Hopes, that God had already wrought ſo many Wonders of Mercy in our Preſervation, ſo long, and made us yet to overlive ſo many Sentences of Death as we had paſſed (and not without Reaſon) upon our ſelves. Beſide, we knew that Mans Extremity is God's Opportunity, and we knew not but the next day might give us a real and true proſpect of a Shoar, as this had given us a falſe and imaginary one.

In this hope we ſet to it, truſting God for Strength and Safety; and in a World of Danger, Fear, and Weakneſs, we endured one ſad and ſorrowful Night more, concluding that the next Day muſt either give us freſh Hopes of Life, or end our miſerable Days by a double Death, Famine, and Drowning.

It pleaſed God in his merciful Providence, to order the Weather this Night better for us than our Fears; it proved indifferent calm, and now and then we had a view of the Moon, which was of ſome Uſe and Comfort to us; and thus we weather'd out the *Friday* Night alſo, and though all were as dying, yet not one dead Man yet among us.

*Saturday* the 10th. of *May*.

The Morning opening upon us, was entertained with ſome Hope; we looked out far, but what we expected was ſtill out of Sight; but about nine or ten of the Clock we ſaw the Land to our great Joy and Comfort, and grew ſtill more and more confident, that we were not again deceived, and that now our over-eager Deſires did not again impoſe upon our Underſtandings and Judgments. This Sight was to us Life from the Dead. No Circumſtances could make any temporal Mercy ſweeter, than our long and ſad Condition made this to us, and therefore with Hearts overwhelmed with Joy, and Mouths filled with Praiſe, we bleſſed and magnified our great *Deliverer*; and that which further ſtrengthened our Hope was, that the Weather proved indifferent fair, and the Wind Northerly. And as we rowed in with the Land, to our farther Joy we eſpied two Ships, coming away before the Wind from the Northwards. Hereupon we went away directly for their Forefoot, and about Noon ſpake with the headmoſt, which was a French Ship, belonging to *Croſique*, one *Peter Leborrow* Maſter.

This *Peter* proved a benign and courteous Man to us I am ſure he let us out of a kind of Hell, into an Heaven upon Earth, when he received us into his Ship, and did more for us than ever S *Peter* will or can do for them that deveſt not *Paul*, but *Chriſt* himſelf of his Mediatorial Honour and Authority, to cloath *Peter* with it. This good *Samaritan* finding us neither among the Living, nor the Dead, but betwixt both, had Compaſſion on us, and with the help of his Men, rather dragg'd than handed us into the Ship. I knew the Genius of that Nation, and had the Language, but had no Power to complement him, or make any long Narrative of our Troubles to him. He gave us Bread and Wine, and ſuch other things as he had, treating us with much Humanity, and compaſſionating our ſad Condition. And now we taſted the ſweetneſs of theſe good Creatures in a degree peculiar to Men in our Circumſtances, a Sweetneſs which is unknown to them that like *Dives* fare deliciouſly every Day.

We tarried on Board about an Hour, and found our ſelves within two Leagues of the Shoar, and conferring together what part of the Land it was, both he and we concluded it to be *Renouſe*, and finding the *Frenchman* bound for *Plaſentia*, and the Weather calm, we being a little refreſhed, bleſſed God, and thanked the Maſter for his great Civility, we went again into our Boat, hoping in two Hours to be at *Renouſe* among the *Engliſh Planters*; and ſo took our leave of Mr. *Peter*, with more Joy for the deliverance from Dangers paſt, than conſideration of what might be yet to come, for reckoning our ſelves near *Renouſe*, an *Engliſh Plantation*, we concluded our Streights and Wants were as good as over, and that two or three Hours time would bring us to reſt, and a full ſupply of all our Wants; but the kind and conſidering *Maſter* (no doubt directed and guided by an higher Counſel) gave us at parting a ſcore of large Cakes, a dry Fiſh a Fathom of lighted Match, Pipes, Tobaco, and about a Gallon of Wine and Brandy together in our ſmall Cask, before exhauſted, and when we were in our little Boat, taking notice that we had but two Oars, he threw us out one Oar more, to help us the ſooner aſhoar.

This Proviſion, the effect of the Maſter's Care and Kindneſs, or rather of God's gracious Providence inclining his Thoughts to it, was our Preſervation at laſt; and without it, we muſt have all periſhed, for our Hope and Comfort was again built upon a falſe Hypotheſis, we put away from the Ship, and ſtood in for *Renouſe* as faſt as we could Row, and about three of the Clock we got aſhoar, but to our Amazement we found, it was a deſolate Place, about a League to the Weſtward of *Cape Razo*, with a Cove, called *Cripple Cove*; as if it had been ſo denominated *à poſteriori*, for I think it never received ſuch a Company of Cripples ſince it firſt received that Name.

We now were aſhoar, which was the Mercy we ſo much and ſo long deſired, but found our ſelves in as bad caſe upon the Matter, as when we were at Sea. Here was a barren Cove, deſtitute of all Relief and Comfort, far from any Inhabitants or Fiſhery; not a Tree or Buſh to ſhelter us, only we pick'd up ſome few looſe ſticks to make us one Fire, and had a freſh Water River near us, and being unable to fetch any other Place, we were neceſſitated to lodge there that Night; and now we ſaw what a good Providence it was that the kind Maſter had furniſhed us with a little Bread and Wine, but eſpecially with a lighted *Match* to kindle a Fire, for we were all well nigh ſtarved and crippled; we therefore preſently ſcraped together ſome withered Graſs, and with ſwinging the *Match* in it, made it flame, and ſearch'd about the *Cove*, and got ſo much Wood as made us an indifferent good Fire; which being done, our firſt Work was to get off our Shooes and Stockings, to waſh them, and ſee in what caſe our Feet and Legs were: And this proved a more difficult Task than we imagined for they were all prodigiouſly ſwoln, and ſome of them burnt ſadly with the Cold, ſo that we ſtood and went rather like Men upon Stilts, than their own Feet; but there was a Neceſſity to put our benummed Stumps to it, to get in a Fire, which done, we lay round about it in the Ice and Snow, of which the Cove was full, and warmed and dried our ſelves (as well as the Place and Weather would admit) by the Fire, and there we broiled our Fiſh, and ſhar'd that Roaſtmeat, (a dainty we had been long Strangers to) among us, and it was a great Refreſhment to our tired, waſted Bodies. It was well for us we had ſo much time to do theſe things before Night, for towards Night it came in full of Rain and Storm again, and much Wind at Eaſt, and a great Sea fell into the Cove, as it it had reſolv'd to recover and waſh back thoſe Priſoners that were newly eſcaped from it.

Here was a new Diſtreſs befallen us, and not leſs hazardous as to Life than any of the former, we were ſhut up in a Cove from whence there was no Eſcape by Land, the Cliffs being inacceſſible, and our Strength quite ſpent; no putting out for any Plantation by Sea, for a ſtormy Night was in hand, and to lie there we thought would be very dangerous. It being extream cold, full of Ice and Snow, the Rain pouring down furiouſly, quickly put out our Fire, no ſhelter at all from the Fury of the Weather; and to lie but a few Hours expoſed to it, would quickly quite ſtarve ſuch as were three parts ſtarved before.

Here was our Streight, and this Extremity put us upon this Shift, (which was the beſt our Circumſtances admitted) we put our united Strength together, (which God knows was but little) and hall'd up our *Boat* above high Water Mark, and overturned her, and ſo crept, as many of us as could, under her for Shelter, and there lodg'd that Night: A ſad Lodging, and a dreadful Night it proved, but ſtill we comforted our ſelves with this, that the next Morning we ſhould be among our Friends, where we ſhould be better accommodated, and find *Food*, *Phyſick*, and *Chirurgeons* to preſerve our Lives and Limbs. In this hope we weathered out the *Saturday* Night with a world of Difficulty.

*Lord's Day* the 11th. of *May.*

The Morning ſo eagerly deſired came, but, alas, what we hoped for was as far off as ever, for it began with a ſtrong Eaſterly Wind, which rolled in a great Sea into the Cove. Our Fire was out, and we were upon the matter block'd up in this diſmal Hole by abundance of Ice driven in upon us. So that Death ſeem'd cloſely to beleaguer us in this Hold to which we had betaken our ſelves; and indeed there needs no great Aſſault to conquer thoſe who were almoſt dead before.

This was our ſad Condition that Day. A *Sabbath* it was, but without Reſt to us; yet we wanted not the Teaching and Convincing Voice of God in his dreadful Providences, had our Hearts been in a fit Capacity to improve it. We now ſaw how near we were brought to Safety, and even there like to periſh. When we thought all Danger over, then, even then our greateſt Danger befel us. To abide in that ſtarved Condition much longer we could not, and to get out was impoſſible till God ſhould allay the Storm, and change the Wind. Patience and Hope muſt be our Supports, and we thought our Hopes were encouraged by the many Wonders which God had wrought in our Preſervation hitherto. We therefore waited that Day for an Opportunity of Eſcape, but there was none. *Cripple Cove* muſt be our diſmal Lodging one Night more at leaſt, if not our Grave alſo. Towards Night indeed the Wind began to veer to the N. W. but there was no putting out, the Sea was ſo lofty, and the Place block'd up with ſo much Ice. This almoſt put us into utter Deſpair, concluding, that ſo long Continuance in Extremity of cold, which had ſo ſwoln our Legs and Feet, and burnt ſome of them already, would have perfectly mortified them all in one Night more, and that if at laſt God brought us out of this dreadful Place, yet none but Cripples ſhould come out of *Cripple Cove* at laſt; but God had ſhut us up under this Neceſſity, and there was no Eſcape till his Providential Hand ſhould open the Door of a moſt deſired Opportunity. It pleaſed God to ſupport us under the Severities and Miſeries of that Night alſo, and lengthen our Lives unto

*Monday* the 12th. of *May.*

As ſoon as the Morning came we look'd out with eager Deſires, to find, or force our Way thence if it were poſſible. The Wind was this Morning freſh off the Shoar, but ſtill a great Sea came into the *Cove*, and abundance of Ice had block'd it up. But our Neceſſities were ſo preſſing and urgent upon us, that we muſt (like Soldiers in a beſieged *Garriſon*, whoſe Proviſion is ſpent) ſally out and force our Paſſage through all Dangers, or periſh there with Hunger and Cold. But ſo great was the Sea, that it was concluded our Boat could not poſſibly live in it, if we all ventured again in her, and therefore by Conſent eight of us reſolved to venture out, and the other five were content to tarry, ſeeing it could not be otherwiſe, until we ſent help from the firſt Place we could get to fetch them off.

Now we found the Benefit of our third Oar, for no ſooner were we put out, but we found the Sea ſo great, and ſuch a multitude of Ice, that we even wiſh'd our ſelves back with our miſerable Companions again in the *Cove*. However we put hard to it, and by the good Providence of God, at laſt diſintangled our ſelves out of the Ice, but with a world of Difficulty and Danger.

No ſooner was that done, but we laboured hard to get a good Diſtance off from the Shoar, and ſo rowed away to the North. About nine of the Clock little Wind, but within one Hour a Gale ſprang up at North Eaſt, juſt in our Teeth, at which time being got a little to the Northwards of *Glamp Cove*, and ſo faint that we could not poſſibly make any more way forwards, we were forc'd (though with moſt unwilling and heavy Hearts) to bear up and put in there.

We were troubled for our ſelves, and the Diſappointment of our poor Companions, at leaſt the long Delay of their Expectations of Relief, increaſed our Trouble. Poor Hearts! they looked for a Dove with an Olive Branch; but now what would they conclude, but that like the *Raven* ſent out by *Noah*, they ſhould ſee no more of us.

However, it pleaſed God about two in the Afternoon, the Wind ceaſed, immediately we put out of *Glamp Cove*, and rowed along, tho' faint and feeble as we could live, and about an Hour in the Night we all came alive to *Renouſe*, *bleſſed be the Lord*, where ſome crawl'd, and others were helped up to Mr. *Kirk*'s Houſe, Eſquire, who with much Compaſſion and Humanity refreſhed us with ſuch things as the Place afforded.

Immediately we acquainted him with the periſhing State of our 5 Companions left in *Cripple Cove*, begging him paſſionately to get a Boat, Men, and neceſſary Proviſions forthwith, and diſpatch to them; which he promiſed to endeavour, and accordingly next Morning they were to go to them, to fetch them off; but there being a Boat bound that Night for *Trepaſſe*, we ſent them twenty Biſquets, a Flacket of Beer, and a Bottle of *Rum*, which was delivered them timely the next Day. But to our great Trouble it ſo fell out, that partly for want of Men acquainted with the *Cove*, and partly by the Omiſſion of the Maſters of Ships that fiſhed there, the Boat deſigned to fetch them off proceded not the next Day, and foul Weather hindered them the following Day. So that it was *Thurſday* the 15th. of *May* before the Boat departed. Upon the Arrival of the Boat, they found one dead, whom they there buried, and carri d away the remaining four for *Trepaſſe*, the Wind not ſerving to bring them to *Renouſe*.

Being come thither, the *Admiral*, Captain *Berry*, of *Barnſtaple*, called the *Harbour* together, not ſo much to behold a *Prodigy* (though ſcarce a greater had ever been ſeen there) but to contribute to their Relief, and cure, if it were poſſible, by encouraging the *Chirurgions* that were to be preſently emploied about them. There were two or three upon the Place, who did their uttermoſt to preſerve their Lives and Limbs, but found three of them ſo mortified, that they were forced preſently to diſmember two of them, cutting off both Legs from one, and one Leg from another, the third refuſing to be diſmember'd, died, and likewiſe thoſe that ſuffer'd it, in four or five Days; one only of thoſe four recovered.

Thoſe that went in the Boat to *Renouſe* were all in a miſerable Caſe alſo. One of them died in three Weeks time, his Feed and Hands being burnt with the Cold, and the reſt of us in a ſad Condition; one loſt four Toes, the reſt had their Legs as black as a Coal, but by the Goodneſs of God, and ſpeedy uſe of what Means could be had, their Lives were preſerved to declare the Wonders of God among Men. So that of twenty one Perſons that were firſt in the Ship, five went down with the Ship, three periſh'd in the Long Boat, one in the *Cove*, and three more at *Tregaſſe*, and one at *Renouſe*. So that eight only of the twenty one ſurvived, of which Number the unworthy Relater is one; and O that our Lives may be dedicated entirely to his Praiſe, who hath ſo graciouſly, yea, ſo miraculouſly, delivered them out of the Jaws of Death.

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## The Second NARRATIVE.

MAſter *Thomas Read*, yet living to atteſt the Truth of this *Narrative*, (an Abſtract whereof I procured from his neareſt Relations from *Ratcliff*, himſelf at that time being at Sea) was ſome years ſince in *Carolina* Bay in *Newfoundland*, to load Fiſh, with which he deſign'd to go for the *Streights*. The Ship accordingly being loaded, he took up his Powder, and made what room he could in his Bread Room to ſtow away what Fiſh he could, and this being done, the Powder was put down again, and all things being put in order, they went to Supper, and ſo to their Cabbins.

At Supper-time, the Maſter had no diſpoſition at all to eat, he therefore retires himſelf into his Cabbin, to take his reſt, but could not ſleep. Whereupon he called in the Boy, to bring a Light, which no ſooner came, but he perceived Smoak to come out of the Ceiling, which gave him an Apprehenſion of Danger, and taking more notice of it, he haſted out of his Cabbin, and cryed Fire, Fire.

The Mate being by, fear'd it might be in the Gun-Room, and would have gone down immediately to examine it; but before he could ſtir a foot farther, the Ship blew up.

The terrible Blow was given juſt behind the Maſter's back, which rent and carried away all the Cloaths from his back parts, and blew him up upon the Main-yard, where it laid him in a Trance, but ſo equally and exactly poized, that he fell not; the Mate fell alſo upon his back, and lay upon him: but the Maſter recovering at laſt ſome Senſe, and feeling an heavy Weight upon his back, he began to ſtruggle to take hold of the Shrowds, which turn'd over the Mate, who fell into the Sea, and was ſeen no more.

The Ship ſank immediately, and that with ſuch a Noiſe in the Water, that he was forced to climb as faſt, and as high as he could, and ſo to hang till a Boat from another Ship came and ſaved him. Thus one among many was miraculouſly pluckt out of the Jaws of Death, and he ſo bruiſed and weak with the Blow, that it was long before he recovered; yet at laſt his Lameneſs was cured, and he return'd to the Wonder of all Men.

### *Advertiſements.*

1. IN this Relation there is a concurrence of rare and wonderful Circumſtances: As firſt, the indiſpoſedneſs of the Maſter that Evening both to Meat and Sleep, though he knew no Reaſon to hinder him from the one or other. Here ſeems to be a plain preſage of approaching Danger, whilſt as yet there was not the leaſt ſuſpicious Circumſtance in ſight. This ſome aſcribe to a certain unuſual *Craſis* of the Body, others to an overpoiſe of Complection, which is much the ſame: for my own part, I am ſatisfied that ſuch Preſages as this, (the like whereunto hath been obſerved in divers others before their Death, or ſome imminent Danger) is from the Inſpiration of ſome Spirit, in a ſupernatural Way.

*Bodinus* tells us of a good Man of his Time and Acquaintance, who had many remarkable and ſtrange Premonitions given him of approaching Danger; and that one time being in very great Danger, and newly gone to Bed, he was unquiet, and could by no means reſt, but was forced to riſe again, and ſpend the night in Watching and Prayer. The day following he eſcaped the hands of his Perſecutors in a wonderful manner; which being done, in his next ſleep, he ſeem'd to hear a Voice ſaying, *Now ſing*, Qui ſedet in latibulo Altiſſimi: *He that dwelleth in the ſecret place of the moſt High, ſhall abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty.*

(2.) The Providence of God was alſo wonderful in nicking the very minute, wherein he was to be preſerved, which had it been ſlipt, there had been no eſcape from Deſtruction: for had he ſtaid a minute longer in the Cabin, he had been ſhattered to pieces, and had he come out ſooner, he and the Mate had certainly gone down into the Gun Room, and both had periſhed there. O how many ſubſtantial Documents and Inſtructions may that one Circumſtance of Time afford to the wiſe and ſerious Obſervers of Providence!

3. It was little leſs than a Miracle of Providence that the ſame Blow which ſhatter'd a ſtout Ship in pieces, blew others away to Deſtruction in a moment; had its Commiſſion from Heaven only to blow off the Cloaths from his back, and place him in a perfect equipoize upon the Yard of the Ship, where he was ſettled as the Earth it ſelf is, *Ponderibus librata ſuis*; Evenly balanced or poized with its own Weight; the leaſt ſtruggle of a Man deprived of Senſe as he was, had been his Ruine.

I do heartily wiſh a Life made ſo Remarkable by the Wonders of Providence, may be no leſs Remarkable for eminent and ſerious Godlineſs, and that his Life may be devoted to God, which hath been ſo miraculouſly preſerved by him.

# *Antipharmacum Saluberrimum*: Or, A Serious and Seasonable CAVEAT to all the SAINTS in this Hour of Temptation.

## The PREFACE.

Reader,

*AS God hath ſtretched out the* Expanſum *or Firmament of Heaven, over the natural World, ſo hath he ſtretcht out his Word over the rational World; and as in that he hath placed the Stars and Luminaries, to enlighten the Earth, and to be for* Signs, *and for Seaſons,* Gen. 1. 14. *So hath he placed a Conſtellation of Scriptures in this alſo, by which they that are skilful in the Word of Righteouſneſs, may diſcern very much of the Deſigns and Iſſues of thoſe rouling and amazing Providences that are over our heads.*

*And doubtleſs, nothing more ſettles and ſupports the Hearts of Saints, under terrible and tempeſtuous Providences, than to view them in their reference and relation to the World; For of theſe we may ſay as* David *doth,* Pſal. 148. 8. *of the ſtormy Winds, that they fulfill his Word, and are the undoubted accompliſhments of its Predictions and Prophecies.*

*Now to thoſe that heedfully obſerve the Scripture Prophecies, relating to the ruine and deſtruction of Antichriſt, it cannot but appear that their accompliſhment is nigh, and that glorious deſign come even to the birth.* * *But then, as the darkeſt part of the night is that which immediately precedes the dawning of the day, ſo before the Vial of the Lord's Indignation be poured out upon the Throne of the Beaſt, it will be a time of trouble to the Saints, ſuch as never was ſince man was upon the Earth,* Dan 12. 1. †Rev. 11. 7, 8. *The Witneſſes of Jeſus muſt firſt be ſlain, and their dead bodies for a time, lye in the ſtreets of the great City: And as Naturaliſts obſerve, that a Beaſt never bites more furiouſly, and deadly, than when dying; even ſo it is with this Beaſt alſo which hath Iron teeth, and is terrible above all that were before it,* Dan. 7. 7. *and when the ſtrong God ariſeth to judge Babylon, She ſhall be found quite drunk with the Blood of the Saints, and Martyrs of Jeſus,* Rev. 17. 6. *So that we, whoſe lots are fallen into ſuch a day as this, wherein the fierceſt rage of the laſt & moſt furious of all the Beaſts, is falling in a dreadful ſtorm upon all the reformed Churches of Chriſt, had need of a more than ordinary degree of Faith and Patience, to eſtabliſh us in the Truth, and inable us to bear a glorious Teſtimony for the Lord Jeſus.*

*If any Man's heart now ſhall fail him, and to avoid the fury of Antichriſt, ſhall baſely betray the Truth, and forſake the Camp of Chriſt, and receive the mark of the Beaſt, though not in his forehead, yet in his hand by a politick and ſecret Compliance with his Worſhip, that Man is adjudged by the dreadful Sentence of the great God, to drink the Cup of his pure and unmixed Wrath and Indignation,* Rev. 14. 10. *even ſuch as the Devils and damned drink: For we may ſay of that wrath, which is ordinarily poured out upon ſinners in this life, as they ſay of darkneſs* Non dantur puræ tenebræ; *there is no pure or perfect darkneſs here; ſo neither is there any pure unmixed wrath here, it hath in this life an allay of ſpairing mercy in it; but this is pure.*

*To prevent this ſad iſſue, and preſerve thee from this terrible Wrath of the Lamb, are the following Counſels and Cautions deſigned and intended: And Oh, that they might be bleſſed to eſtabliſh the ſliding feet of tempted Saints; For I cannot without trembling obſerve, how many forward Profeſſors begin to give ground already, and fall into a Compliance with Antichriſtian Abominations; ſurely this is the worſt time that ever they could have choſen for it, now that the Day of Vengeance is in the heart of Chriſt againſt Her, and the year of his Redeemed even come; his Righteouſneſs ſo nigh at hand, and his Salvation ready to be revealed.*

*I ſhall detain thee no longer, but intreat thee to weigh theſe things, brought to thy hand by providence, and with the ſpirit of love, to cover the weakneſſes of the Author, who is ſenſible of his own infirmities, and continual need of divine Aſſiſtance, to enable him to ſtand; And to that end earneſtly begs a remembrance in thy Prayers, when thy heart is moſt* * *warmed, enlarged, and raiſed in Communion with thy God.*

Farewel.

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* *Confundetur omne jus, & leges interibunt, non fides in hominibus, nec pax, non pudor, neque ſecuritas, neq; regimen; & hujus confuſionis, hoc erit cauſa, quod Romanum nomen quo nunc regitur orbis, de terra tolletur.* Lactant. pag. 576.

† It is obſervable, that *Rome* in this Prophecy, bears the name of *Egypt* and *Babylon*, in reſpect of the miſery and bondage exerciſed upon Gods People by it; by which alſo, is not obſcurely hinted, the time and manner of their deliverance from it; for both from the one, and the other, were the Jews delivered, when reduced to the greateſt extremity. See *Exod.* 6 9. and *Ezek.* 37. 11, 12.

* *Dulce commercium, ſed breve momentum, cum talis fueris, memento mei.* Bern.

# Antipharmacum Saluberrimum.

*Dear Chriſtians,*

His Bowels yerned, * ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, Bowels are a Metaphor, to ſignifie motherly and tender mercies, *Luke* 1. 78.
† ἐκλελυμένοι καὶ ἐρριμμένοι quite ſpent, tired, and fallen down.
* [*In*] put for [*inſtar.*]
† *forcipes, & mulctra.*

WHen our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, beheld the multitude, he had * *Compaſſion* on them, becauſe they *fainted* †, and were as Sheep having no Shepherd, *Mat.* 9. 36.

After the pattern of thoſe tender Bowels of Chriſt, the chief Shepherd, do the Bowels of Compaſſion infuſed by him into his Miniſters, the under Shepherds, work and move towards the Flock, in like Caſes and Exigencies. *God is my record* (ſaith that great Apoſtle) how greatly I long after you all * [*In*] or after the manner of *the Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt*, Phil. 1. 8.

And truly, conſidering the deep Diſtreſſes, and languiſhing Conditions to which many thouſands of the Lord's Flock are at this Day expoſed, how many among you are wandering from Mountain to Hill, ſeeking Paſture, but finding none; and like thoſe Troops of *Tema*, *Job* 6. 19. return aſhamed, and diſappointed, from thoſe places where you were wont to be refreſhed, enlarged, quickned: And how your pretended Shepherds have taken to themſelves the † Inſtruments of a fooliſh Shepherd, ruling you with force and rigor, *Ezek.* 34. 4. *not ſparing the Flock*, it makes my Heart melt within me, and my Compaſſions for you flow together.

And further, apprehending what a deep and deſperate deſign your Adverſary the Devil hath upon you in this Hour of Temptation, to overthrow your Faith, quench your Love, and undermine the very Foundation of your Profeſſion; and what ſingular and extraordinary Advantages he hath now upon you, engaging you ſingly and apart; your faithful Teachers being removed into Corners, your Societies broken, Dangers threatning on every ſide, carnal Neighbours and Relations, by Perſwaſions, Examples, and dangerous Inſinuations digging about and looſening your Roots, and ſo preparing for your utter ſubverſion, by the next guſt of Temptation: I thought it high time to come in to your Aſſiſtance and Relief, with a Word of Counſel and Support, though I venture for you, as *David's* Worthies did, to bring him the Waters of the Well of *Bethlehem* through the Hoſt of the Philiſtines.

And may I but preſerve the Peace of mine own Conſcience, by diſcharging faithfully a Duty to which it impels me, and have the bleſſing of ſome poor Soul ready to periſh, come upon me, I ſhall little regard the pains or hazzard of this Enterprize for you.

The plain Deſign of theſe few Sheets, is to countermine the Enemy of your Souls in his preſent grand Deſigns againſt you; either in point of ſtability, by unſetling you; or of duty, by affrighting you; or of comfort, by diſcouraging you.

To prevent the ſucceſs of the Tempter, in all or either of theſe, I ſhall offer you my beſt aſſiſtance, under theſe eight enſuing Heads of Advice and Counſel; beſeeching you, by all the dear regard you have to the dreadful and glorious Name of God, which is called upon you, *Epheſ.* 4. 1. *Col.* 1. 10, 11. 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. or to your own precious and immortal Souls, whoſe eternal happineſs is not a little engaged in theſe things, *Matt.* 10. 33. *Gal.* 6. 9. or to the comfort and encouragement of your ſuffering and afflicted Miniſters, and Brethren abroad, a great part of whoſe joy (yea life) lies at your mercy, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 8. *Col.* 2. 5. and is as it were, bound up in your ſtability; that you will heedfully obſerve and embrace theſe Admonitions, according to the weight and evidence that is in them, and let not any fleſhly intereſt in the world, carry you againſt the convictions that may hereby be left upon your Conſciences.

And the firſt Advice or Counſel is this.

## COUNSEL. I.

*Cleave faſt to Chriſt, and the Profeſſion you have formerly made of him, what aſpect ſoever the times have upon you.*

Pſal. 44. 18, 19, 20, 21. *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our ſteps declined from thy Way, though thou haſt ſore broken us in the place of Dragons, and covered us with the ſhadow of death. If we have forgotten the Name of the Lord, or ſtretch'd out our hands to a ſtrange god, ſhall not God ſearch out this? for he knoweth the ſecrets of the heart.* Hence thoſe new Converts, who were turned to the Lord in a time of great temptation and perſecution, were ſo earneſtly perſwaded, *Acts* 11. 23. *That with purpoſe of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*; (*i. e.*) as they had made a good choice, ſo now, to ſtick to their choice, and not repent of it, whatever afterward they ſhould meet with. Oh take heed, leſt after you have lifted up your hand to God, you ſhould lift up your heel againſt him. Though the * Hypocrite will not pray always, yet the † upright Soul abhors to flinch from his duty, let come on him what will. It is now *Autumn* with many flouriſhing Profeſſors, but if thou be a tree planted by the River ſide, thy leaf ſhall not wither, *Pſal.* 1. You look for Happineſs as long as God is in Heaven, and be ſure God looks for holineſs, as long as you be on Earth. What Duty is more importunately urged upon you by every part of the Goſpel, than Stability? The Preceptive part peremptorily requires it. See *Rev.* 2. 10. *Heb.* 4. 14. *Rev.* 3. 11. theſe be commands flowing from Soveraignty, cloathed with the higheſt Authority. The Minatory part urges us: See *Heb.* 10. 38 *Mat.* 10. 33. *Rev.* 21. 8 and theſe dreadful threats are diſcharged againſt the Soul, and levelled at the very breaſt of the Apoſtate. The Promiſſory part marvellouſly encourages to it, a ſweet voice ſeems to come down from Heaven in theſe Promiſes, ſaying, *Good Souls hold faſt, if ever you hope to poſſeſs the Glory that is here, hold faſt*, *Gal.* 6. 9. *Mat.* 10. 22. *Rev.* 3. 12, 21. *Rev.* 21. 7.

* *Job* 27. 10.
† *Dan.* 6. 10. *Om- nia de- præſum- prætu- gam, odium impetum totius bis ſu- Luther.*

Now, leſt all this ſhould leave but a floating and ineffectual conviction upon you, give me leave to follow it a little farther, and endeavour to work it in by a few warming Conſiderations upon your hearts.

1. Conſider, God hath hanged the whole weight of Eternal Happineſs upon this Wyer; ſo that the deepeſt, deareſt. and everlaſting intereſt of thy Soul, is bound up in thy Perſeverance, *Rom.* 2. 7. *Gal.* 6. 9. *Heb.* 3. 14. and if ſo, methinks this ſhould make thee cling faſt, deſpiſe dangers, face the ſtorm and make a ſtand for Chriſt, let come on thee what will: For conſider Soul, what compariſon betwixt a moment ſuffering, and this Eternal Glory? *Rom.* 8. 18. 2 *Cor.* 4. 16, 17, 18. Oh that vaſt Eternity! that amazing Word! which none but He that was from Eternity, and is to Eternity, comprehenſively underſtands: When a Soul is ſwallowed up in it, yea, or when it ſits in a dying hour trembling, upon the brink of it, how are its apprehenſions of preſent things altered!

2. Conſider how conſtant and faithful Jeſus Chriſt was to thee, when he conflicted in the days of his fleſh, with ſufferings, dangers, and difficulties infinitely beyond thine; and what a motive that ſhould be, to perſwade thee to a bold and conſtant owning of him in this day of thy tryal? 1 *Tim.* 6. 12, 13, 14. *Fight the good Fight of Faith, lay hold on eternal Life, whereunto thou art alſo called, and haſt profeſſed a good Profeſſion before many witneſſes. I give thee charge in the ſight of God, who quickneth all things, and before Jeſus Chriſt, who before Pontius Pilate witneſſeth a good Confeſſion, that thou keep this Commandment without ſpot.* He flincht not when the Terrors of Death and Hell beſet him round: He was faithful to the truſt committed to him, till death beat the laſt breath out of his breaſt. If thou now ſtart from him, may not he ſay to thee, as that *Roman* Souldier ſaid to his General, who refuſed his Petition after the War was ended, *Well* (ſaith he) *I did not ſerve you ſo at the Battel of* Actium.

3. Never imagine to be owned and acknowledged by him, in that great Day, if thou diſſert his Cauſe and Intereſt now, *Mat.* 10. 33. *He that is aſhamed of Me before men, of him will I be aſhamed,* when I come in my Father's Glory, and mine own Glory, and the Glory of the Holy Angels. Oh Sirs, one of theſe days the Lord will break out of Heaven with a * ſhout, accompanied with † myriads of Angels, and ten thouſands of his Saints, thoſe gliſtering Courtiers of Heaven, * the Heavens and Earth in a dreadful Conflagration round about him; † the Graves ſhall open, the Sea and the Earth give up their dead: * Thou ſhalt ſee him aſcend the awful ſeat of Judgment, † his faithful Ones ſitting on the Bench as Aſſeſſors with him: * All fleſh gathered before him, † even multitudes, multitudes in that Valley of Deciſion; and then to be publickly diſowned by him in the Face of that great Aſſembly, and proclaimed a Traytor and Delinquent to him, that fearedſt not to deny Him, and betray his Truths into his Enemies hands, becauſe of the Frowns of a poor Worm that ſhall die, and be made as Graſs: Oh what Confuſion and everlaſting Shame ſhall cover thee! This, this is the Portion of all ſuch from the hand of the Lord; 2 *Tim.* 2. 12. *If we deny him, he alſo will deny us.*

Theſ. 4. 16.
de 14.
Pet. 3. 10.
.5.28.
at. 25. 31.
Cor. 6. 2.
t. 25, 32.
oel 3. 14.

4. Conſider e'er thou let go thy Profeſſion, how remarkably the righteous Hand of Heaven hath met with and paid home the Apoſtate, even in this Life; which nevertheleſs, is but as a few drops upon them before the cloud diſſolve, and the whole ſtorm falls, but as the perboiling of them, before they be roaſted in the eternal Flames. See what is become of *Judas, Mat.* 27. 3, 4, 5. compared with *Acts* 1. 18. Poor *Spira,* though I determine not of his final State, yet what a living Monument of Wrath was he, whiles he lived; *I feel* (ſaid he) *the very Torments of Hell in my Soul. Lucian* and *Julian,* two ſcoffing Apoſtates, the one torn to pieces by Dogs; the other, when mortally wounded by a Dart, flings up his Blood towards Heaven in a way of Revenge, and crys, *Thou haſt overcome, O* Galilean.

5 Suppoſe thou eſcape ſuch a Stroak, yet never expect a comfortable Hour in this World any more, unleſs the Lord give thee unfeigned Repentance to Life, which in ſuch Caſes is but ſeldom: Thou mayeſt have as much Comfort in thy Enjoyments here, for which thou haſt ſold Chriſt, as *Judas* had in his Thirty Pieces, or *Spira* in his Wife and Children; *Mark* 8. 35. *Whoſoever will ſave his Live, ſhall loſe it* (*i. e.*) at leaſt, its Comfort.

## COUNSEL II.

*Touch not with Idolatry and Superſtition; under what Name or Notion ſoever it be preſented to you.*

1 Joh. 5. 21. *Little Children, keep your ſelves from Idols.* Here you had need be exceeding cautelous, and * circumſpect, (1.) becauſe it is a creeping thing, which works in it ſelf by plauſible Pretences and Inſinuations, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. *Epheſ.* 4. 14. *Col.* 2 23. In which reſpect [*Myſtery*] is written in the Whores forehead, *Rev.* 17. 5. For as Dr. *Uſher* well obſerves, *The Roman Apoſtacy ſtole into the Church diſguiſed, and by degrees.* It is a Myſtery of Iniquity (ſaith the Apoſtle) and a working Myſtery, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 7. *Iniquitas ſed Myſtica, pietatis, & fidelitatis nomine palliata*; (*i. e.*) Iniquity, but a myſtical Iniquity, becauſe palliated, and cloaked under the Name and Pretence of Piety and Fidelity. Idolatrous Practices have a ſhew of Wiſdom, *Col.* 2. 23. (*i. e.* ſaith *Davenant* on the Place) *They are more modeſt than to pretend an immediate Revelation of the Spirit*: Yet leſt their Placets and Inventions, ſhould want a pretext of divine Wiſdom, they are wont to ſay, that their Doctrines and Traditions are not indeed conſigned to writing by the Apoſtles, but delivered by lively Voice, according to that, *We ſpeak Wiſdom among them that are perfect*: And by the Name of this Wiſdom, every one calls his own Fictions. Saith *Irenæus, lib.* 3. *cap.* 3. *Thus ſometimes under the pretext of Wiſdom, Order, Decency, Apoſtolical Traditions, Antiquity, the Power of the Church,* &c. *it ſteals upon men * inſenſibly, eſpecially being ſo advantaged by the pronity of corrupt Nature to it.* To this purpoſe it is obſervable, that Babylon, the Mother of Harlots, is ſaid, *Rev.* 17. 4. to give the Wine of her Fornication in a golden Cup. Wine in it ſelf is temptingly pleaſant, but more, when

* *qui cavet ne decipiatur, vir cavet, cum etiam cavet, & cum caviſſe ratus eſt ſæpe is cautor captus eſt.*

Davenant in loc.

* *Peditentim, uſu ipſo, & tacita doctorum approbatione cæpit eſſe in pratio, hoc* [illegible] *ate, ſenſim ſine ſenſu creſcente.*

preſented in a golden Cup; the * Brims whereof are ſugared and ſweetned, to make it the more grateful. Therefore little Children, I mean you ſimple, plain, credulous Souls, apt to be taken with fine gliſtering Things, look to your ſelves; (2.) becauſe nothing more provokes and inflames the fierce Wrath of the Lord, who is a jealous God, than this doth; it makes his anger to come up in his Face, as that Expreſſion is, *Ezek.* 38. 18. and kindles conſuming wrath, *Ezek.* 43. 7, 8, 9. Upon this account the bleſſed God complains, after the manner of Men, as if his Heart were broken, *Ezek.* 6. 9. *I am* [*broken*] *with their whoriſh Heart, and with their* [*eyes*] *which go a whoring after their Idols.* If it be but an unchaſte glance upon an Idol, it goes to the very heart of God: when he ſeeth his People yielding to the temptations of it, he ſhreeks as it were, and crys out, *Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate*; Oh if there be in you the Hearts of Children, do not do that, which doth as it were break the heart of your Father.

* *Velati pueris abſynthia tetra medentes, Cum dare conantur prius oras pocula circum: Contingunt dulci mellis, flavoq; liquore.*

Queſt. *But what mean you by Idolatry and Superſtition? we hope there are no ſuch things practiſed among us; Pagans and Papiſts may be guilty of it?*

*Sol.* Give me leave here to open theſe things unto you, and then perhaps you may ſee them nearer to you, than you are aware of; and that this Caution is a word in Seaſon.

**What Idolatry is.**

*Idolatry* then, according to the true and generally received Definition of it, is, * A religious Worſhip, given either to that which is not the true God, or to the true God himſelf, but otherwiſe than he hath preſcribed in his Word. From hence we plainly ſee that worſhip may be idolatrous two ways; (1.) In reſpect of the Object, if it have any thing beſides the true God for its Object, it's groſs Idolatry; ſuch as the firſt Commandment condemns. Pagan Idolatry, which the Light of the Goſpel hath long ſince profligated, and expelled out of theſe parts of the World. Or, (2.) in reſpect of the Manner, when we worſhip the true God, but in a way and manner which he hath not preſcribed in his Word, but is invented and deviſed by our ſelves; and this is condemned as Idolatry in the † ſecond Commandment; *Thou ſhalt not* [*make to thy ſelf*;] (*i. e.*) out of thine own Brain, or of thine own head, any [*graven Image*] under which Title all humane Inventions, corrupting the pure and ſimple Worſhip of God, are prohibited, as *idolatrous*; for * Images are here by a Synecdoche put for all falſe ways of worſhipping God, as the beſt Expoſitors tell us. See *Ames. Medulla*, lib. 2. p. 334. *Holland* on the ſecond Com. *Willet, Hexapla* in loc. This inventing or making to our ſelves, is that which makes it Idolatry, *Amos* 5. 26. *Numb.* 15. 39. Hence the Molten Calf became an Idol to the Iſraelites, not becauſe it was the Object of their Worſhip; for it's evident, it was *Jehovah*, the true God, they intended to worſhip by it; as appears from *Exod.* 32. 4, 5. *To morrow is a feaſt to the Lord.* And as Dr. *Willet* obſerves, it had been impoſſible, that ſo good a Man as *Aaron*, would have yielded to them, if they had intended to worſhip it as a God: But yet it being a way or manner of worſhipping the true God, which was of their own deviſing, it became Idolatry. And this Worſhip of God in ways of our own invention, becomes idolatrous upon a double Ground: (1.) As it is Will-worſhip; (*i. e.*) ſuch Worſhip as hath no other Ground, or Warrant, but the Will of Man, † *Col.* 2. 23. and ſo dethrones God, by ſetting up the Will of the Creature above his, and beſtowing the peculiar Honour, and incommunicable Sovereignty, and Glory of the Bleſſed God, upon the Creature: For the abſolute Sovereignty of God, which is his Glory, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. is manifeſted in two things eſpecially; In his Decrees, *Rom.* 9. 20. and in his Laws, *Iſa.* 33. 22. *James* 4. 12. The Lord is our King, and Lawgiver; and there is one Lawgiver. Now by preſcribing any thing by our own Authority, in the Worſhip of God, the Commands of God are made void, *Mat.* 15. 6 his Royal Law is ſlighted, the Throne of God invaded by the Creature; who will be a Lawgiver too, which can no more be born, than the Heavens can bear two Suns; and God is hereby forgotten; as *Hoſ.* 8. 14. *Iſrael hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth Temples*; (*i. e.*) by building [*Temples*] when God had appointed but one Temple. This is as *Melancton* obſerves, *Cum Deo certare, aliud inſtituendo*; To ſtrive with God, by inſtituting ſomething of our own. And *Chryſoſtom* notes, *Hom.* 2. in *Rom.* That *it is a greater Sin, in God's Worſhip, to do what we ſhould not, than to omit what we ſhould: For*, ſaith he, *by the one we ſhew the difficulty of the Law; but by the other, we charge the Law and Law-giver with folly; make our ſelves wiſer than God: In the one we ſhew our weakneſs, in not doing the Will of God; but in the other, our impudence to controul the Wiſdom of God.* And it is, as *Lactantius* phraſes it, *lib.* 3. *cap.* 13. *Summan arrogantiam, ſibi vendicare quod humana conditio non recipit*: The higheſt Arrogance, to challenge that to our ſelves, which the Condition of a Creature is not capable of. And upon this Account it is, that the Indignation and Wrath of God ſmoaks ſo dreadfully againſt ſuch Uſurpers, as in the ſad Story of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, you ſee, becauſe God is a jealous God: And Jealouſie is the Rage of a Man. *Zelotes eſt, nolens habere conſortium in amando*, can endure no corrival. This God looks upon as the greateſt, and moſt daring Wickedneſs, that a Creature can lightly commit. *Hoſ.* 9. 15. All their Wickedneſs is in *Gilgal.* [כל *pro ſummo*] (*i. e.*) the hight of their Wickedneſs is there, becauſe there they worſhip'd him according to their own Devices; which was ſuch an Affront to the Wiſdom and Sovereignty of God, that he could by no means bear it. This is called, a ſetting our Threſhold beſides the Lord's Threſhold, *Ezek.* 43. 8. and the nearer this comes to him, the more it provokes him: Therefore it is ſaid in the ſame Text, *There was a Wall betwixt me and them*; (*i. e.*) either, it cauſed a Wall of ſeparation betwixt me and them; as it's generally expounded; or elſe it notes, how God is provoked, by bringing their own Inventions ſo near him: For in the *Hebrew* it is, *There was but a Wall betwixt me and them.* And hence it is evident

* *Cultus Religioſus qui exhibetur rei, quæ non eſt verus deus: vel etiam ipſi vero Deo, ſed aliter quam ipſe præſcripſit in Verbo ſuo.* Ravanelus.

† *Eſt autem idololatria, cum vel fingitur eſſe Deus, & colitur pro Deo quod non eſt, vel cum verus Deus colitur aliter quam vult coli.* Pareus. Com in *Rom.* 1 23.

* In this command the Queſtion is anſwered, which hath ſo diſquieted the Church in all ages. ſc. Who ſhal preſcribe the Form of God's Worſhip, ſhall Angels? ſhall Men? ſhall the Church? ſhall Councils? The Anſwer is, that when we have choſen Jehovah for our God, and rejected all falſe Gods, according to his firſt Law, leſt our minds ſhould invent him any ſervice, he hath here preſcribed Laws himſelf, for his own moſt divine and ſpiritual Service. *Holland's* Fourfold State of Man, pag. (*mihi*) 31.

† *Deum amare quidem cultorem voluntarium, hic eſt cum qui lætus & lubens ea facit quæ ipſe fieri juſſit, ſed odiſſe cultum voluntarium, hoc eſt, illa opera quæ pro immediato Dei cultu illi offeruntur cum ab ipſo non fuerint præſcripta & mandata ad hunc finem, hoc enim eſt fornicari in inventionibus ſuis.* Pſal. 106. 39. Daven. in loc.

evident, that doctrinal, ſymbolical Ceremonies, I mean ſuch Rites and Ceremonies, as are brought into the Worſhip of God, with a ſpiritual Signification, meerly upon the Authority of Man, are idolatrous Mixtures and Additions, and ſuch, by which the Lord is dreadfully provoked. It's true, Men pretend Order and Decency, and the Power of the Church in ſuch Caſes: But as Learned *Ameſius* well notes; * *Thoſe things which pertain to order and decency, are not ſo left to the Will of man, that they may under that Name, obtrude what they pleaſe upon the Churches.* All the Liberty that Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 15. 40. gives us, is but this, To obſerve and perform thoſe things which God hath inſtituted, in an orderly and comely manner; and not to innovate new Things, what, and as many as we pleaſe. And then (2.) it becomes Idolatrous upon this Ground alſo, becauſe this daring Impudence of Men, in worſhipping God in their own way, argues groſs and carnal Notions and Conceptions of God. When we deviſe a carnal pompous way of Worſhip for him, it's an argument we have ſet up an Idol-god firſt in our Imaginations, one like our ſelves, and utterly unlike the true God; who is a moſt ſimple, pure, ſpiritual Being; and as ſuch, will be worſhipped, *Joh.* 4. 24. But by deviſing ſuch a fleſhly way of Worſhip, I ſay, it is manifeſt, we have fanſied to our ſelves another God, altogether different from that God, revealed to us in the Word. Hence it was that *Joſhuah* told the People, *Joſh.* 24. 19 *Ye cannot ſerve the Lord, for he is a jealous God, and will not forgive your ſins*; q. d. you cannot ſerve the true God, till you have gotten right Apprehenſions of him: You fanſie to your ſelves a God made up all of Mercy, as if he had no Juſtice nor Righteouſneſs, to call you to an Account for your ſins; and ſo do but worſhip an Idol, formed in your own Imagination, inſtead of the true God. And if the Thing be duely weighed, it will appear as well Idolatry to ſubmit to, and acknowledge the * Sovereign Authority of a Creature, in appointing Laws for worſhip; or falling down before an imaginary God, or Idol, formed in our own Phantaſie; as to bow to, and worſhip a graven Image, or the ſtock of a Tree.

* *Illa igitur quæ pertinent ad ordinem & decorem, non ita relinquuntur hominum arbitrio, ut poſſint quod ipſis libet, ſub illo nomine Eccleſiis obtrudere.* Medulla, p. 345.

* *Hinc implicite & per interpretationem Dei ipſius, illum nobis deum conſtituimus & honorem Deo debitum deferimus illi, cujus authoritati vel inſtitutis noſmetipſos ſubjicimus in religioſo cultu.* Ameſ. Medulla, *lib.* 2. *p.* 335.

Now hence you may come to ſee at once, both the Nature of this ſecond ſort of Idolatry, and alſo the riſe and original of it; which is nothing elſe but the proud and carnal Heart of Man, which not willing to contain it ſelf within the Limits of the Word wherein a plain, ſimple, and ſpiritual way of Worſhip is ruled out; invents to it ſelf, new Rites, Ceremonies, and Ways of worſhipping God, more ſutable and pleaſing to the Fleſh. And hence it is, that Idolatry is in Scripture, reckoned a Work of the Fleſh, *Gal.* 5. 20. becauſe man naturally having a proud Heart, and a working Imagination, which depending upon Senſe, and not elevated and rectified by Faith, firſt forms to its ſelf carnal Conceptions and Notions of God; and then deviſeth a way of Worſhip ſuitable to thoſe Notions of him. So that as one well obſerves; † *This is the Fountain and Principle of all Error, that men think that thoſe which pleaſe them, muſt needs pleaſe God; and what diſpleaſeth them, muſt alſo diſpleaſe him.* So that this Brat, *Idolatry*, is begotten betwixt a proud carnal Heart, and the Devil; who ſince he cannot draw Men to the former ſort of Idolatry, endeavours all he can to entangle and defile them with this, and that partly out of malice to God, knowing what a dear thing his Worſhip is to him, and partly out of a Deſign of ruining ſuch as he can intice to it: For he knows their Sorrows ſhall be multiplied, *Pſal.* 16. 4. and God ſeldom lets it eſcape without ſome remarkable Stroak.

† *Erroris hoc eſt Principium quod quæ nobis placent, Deo etiam placere putamus; & quæ nobis diſplicent Deo etiam diſplicere putamus.*

Upon the whole then, you plainly ſee, Worſhip may be right as to its Object, and yet Idolatrous in reſpect of the Manner; becauſe the aſſuming of a deſpotical Power in this Caſe, is not only a ſlighting of that νόμον Βασίλικον, that royal Law, but as high a piece of Treaſon againſt Jeſus Chriſt, as can lightly be committed by a Creature. I will ſhut up this with two worthy and full Teſtimonies to the Truth of the Point in hand. The firſt is *Melancton* in loc. *Com. de Ceremon. Humanis.* His Words are theſe, and they are grave and weighty.

*Accedit & hoc, quod Epiſcopi arrogant ſibi poteſtatem condendi traditiones, quam tamen non concedit eis, Evangelium,* &c. *non eſt leve crimen tentare Deum, eſt enim non infirmitate labi, ſed contemptu Dei, propoſito ipſius verbo, quaſi cum eo certare, aliud inſtituendo,* ϗ φιλονικεῖν, *& illius ſapientiæ noſtram anteferre.* The Biſhops arrogate to themſelves a Power of making Traditions, which the Goſpel hath not given them. It is no ſmall Crime to tempt God, for this is not to ſlide by infirmity, but by contempt of God, his Word being ſet before them as it were to contend with it, by inſtituting another thing, and overcome it. This is to prefer our Wiſdom to his.

Phil. Melan. in loc. com. p. 631, 632.

And a little after (having given ſome Inſtances of it) he proceeds thus;

*Tales fuerunt & ſunt fontes cultus idolorum. Hæc ſunt arcana mala, quæ politica ſapientia non poteſt judicare, ſed nos in Eccleſia, ea conſiderare debemus; ut moniti, ſubjiciamus nos verbo Dei, nec noſtris opinionibus regi velimus.* Such have been, and are the Fountain of the Worſhip of Idols. Theſe are ſecret Evils, which political Wiſdom cannot judge: but we in the Church, ought to conſider theſe Things, that being warned, we may ſubmit our ſelves to the Word of God, and not be willing to be ruled by our own Opinions, *&c.*

To this I ſhall add the moſt worthy Teſtimony of that Right Honourable Lord *Brook.*

‘ A Biſhop's wearing a Surplice, Cope,
‘ Mitre, uſing the Croſs, bowing to the Al-
‘ tar, *&c.* (though they may be Errors) yet
‘ all, or one of theſe make him not a Pope,
‘ or Popling, or properly Antichriſtian; but
‘ receiving theſe from the Pope's Dictates,
‘ doing them becauſe he commands, acknow-
‘ ledging his Power in commanding them,
‘ preſſing them on others in ſuch a deſpotical
‘ Power, makes a true Pope, a real Anti-
‘ chriſt: Nor may our Biſhops evade by this,
‘ which I eaſily ſee will be anſwered, That
‘ though indeed they do, and command theſe
‘ Things; yet they neither do them from the

Lord *Brook's* Treatiſe of Epiſcopacy, p. 60, 61.

‘ Pope's Command, nor command them in the Pope's Power.

‘ Though I ſhould grant this, which yet many wiſe Men will not grant (for our Biſhops firſt Power come from the Pope; and of late alſo, we have found Letters, Advice, Commands, Dictates from the Pope, to ſome of our Biſhops, and that in matters of greateſt Conſequence, both for Church and State:) But grant all this they ſay, yet they may be Antichriſtian, and ſo ſuch (*in re*) as the Pope is; though not literally *Romaviſts*, except they do or command in the Power of *Rome*. This I ſhall be bold to affirm, and maintain, till I ſee better Reaſon, that he, (who ever he be) that Commands the leaſt Title of Doctrine, or Diſcipline, meerly *ex imperio voluntatis*, in his own Power and Authority, without Licence or Warrant from Scripture, or right Reaſon (where the Scripture hath been ſilent) though the thing he ſo commandeth, ſhould happen to be good in it ſelf, yet he in his ſo Commanding, is not only Tyrannical, but Antichriſtian, properly Antichriſtian, encroaching on the Royal Office of Chriſt; which is truly High-Treaſon againſt God, and moſt properly Antichriſtianiſm.

By all which, you ſee where the Idolatry of Worſhip lies: The inſtituting of any, though the ſmalleſt part of Worſhip, in and by our own Authority, without Scripture Warrant, makes it Idolatrous, as well as if we worſhipped an Idol. And hence it is, that God gives his People the ſame Call from this latter ſort of *Romiſh* Idolatry; See *Rev.* 18. 4. as he doth from the more groſs Pagan Idolatry, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. So that if that Worſhip you perform to God, be corrupted by a mixture of meer humane, doctrinal, ſymbolical Rites, and Ceremonies which God hath not appointed in his Worſhip, by the Word; though your Worſhip be right for the Object, yet it is idolatrous in the Manner. Here you had need to be adviſed, and careful, for you are upon a ticklish Point.

**What Superſtition is,**

And for Superſtition, that is nothing elſe, but an *exceſs in Religion*. For the better underſtanding whereof, conſider three Things.

1. That all and every part of God's inſtituted Worſhip, depends intirely upon his own Sovereign Will and Pleaſure: So that no Man can appoint any part of it, but God alone, foraſmuch as no Man knows either what will be acceptable to God, but God himſelf; that which is highly eſteemed among Men, is an Abomination to God: Beſides, none can give Efficacy to a Creature, as Bread, Wine, Water, or raiſe them up to ſuch high ſupernatural Ends and uſes, but God.

2. The Will of God, which is the Foundation and Rule of his Worſhip, is only revealed to us in the Scriptures, whence it is manifeſt, that in Worſhip, all men are bound to keep cloſe to the Word, and beſides the Reaſon that is in the Thing it ſelf, the Command is expreſs, *Exod.* 23. 13. *Deut:* 4. 2. *Gal.* 6. 10. [τῷ κάνονι τούτῳ] according to this Canon, or Rule: This is true Canonical Obedience. So *Rom.* 12. 7. [λογικὴ λατρεία] is properly Word-Service; (*i. e.*) ſuch as the Word preſcribes.

3. Hence then you may ſee the Door at which Superſtition enters, even Addition of new and uncommanded Things. When we invent new Rites and Ceremonies, and bring them into the Worſhip of God, with a ſpiritual Signification and Uſe, this is Superſtition: being [*Supra Statutum*] ſomething above and beyond what God appoints and requires. And as all the Water in *Tyber*, cannot waſh the Papiſts from the Filth of their Idolatry and Superſtition, in their *Maſs*, *Altars*, *Surplice*, *Croſs*, &c. So neither can any thing beſides the Blood of Jeſus, cleanſe us from the ſame, if we do like them.

Having thus opened the nature of Idolatry and Superſtition to you, I ſhall reinforce that Apoſtolical Caution upon you; *Little Children, keep your ſelves from Idols*; I beſeech you get Senſes exerciſed, *Heb.* 5. 14. and ſuffer not your ſelves to be abuſed by an eaſie Credulity: *The ſimple believeth every word*, Prov. 14. 15. There is no Idolatry or Superſtition in *Rome* ſo groſs, but is gloſs'd over with plauſible Pretences, and many ſubtile * Diſtinctions invented to defend it. But take not you any thing upon truſt in God's Worſhip; be like thoſe well-bred *Beræans*, *Acts* 17. 11. examine the Grounds of your practice. It was a good Saying of Sir *Thomas Moor*, *I will pin my Faith* (ſaid he) *upon no Man's ſleeve, becauſe I know not whither he will carry it.* See that you be provoked with an Anſwer, if God ſhould ſpeak to you, when you are at your *Divine Service*, as he did to *Elijah*, 1 *Kings* 19. 9. when he was hid in the Cave at *Horeb*, *What doſt thou here*, Elijah? Or as to the *Jews*, *Iſa.* 1. 12. *Who hath required this at your hands?* See that you be able by the Word, to juſtifie your practice: And as you love your Souls, defile them not with Idolatry or Superſtition. And the rather;

* *Additio corrumpens, & conſervans. Additio accidentalium, & eſſentialium.*

Arg. 1.

Becauſe, ſhould you be found in a falſe way of Worſhip, you betray a ſpecial Truſt committed to you by the Lord.

Chriſtians, unto you hath the Lord committed his precious Goſpel-Truths and Appointments, as precious Treaſure, to defend and keep for him, *Rev.* 3. 10. *Jude* 3. 1 *Phil.* 7. 17. and one ſpecial Means of its Preſervation, is by witneſſing againſt all thoſe Errors and Innovations, that corrupt and endanger it: O ſee that none of Chriſt's Jewels be embezled, if you can help it. You your ſelves have committed a Truſt to Jeſus Chriſt, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. and expect he ſhould be faithful in what you have committed to him; and he expects the ſame from you. Oh! conſider what precious Things the pure Inſtitutions of Chriſt are: All the Good in this World, cannot compenſate the loſs of one of them. *Let Heaven ruſh* (ſaid Luther) *rather than one crumb of Truth ſhould periſh.* Oh what hard Things have the Saints in all Generations ſuffered, to preſerve and tranſmit it to us: And ſhall we now betray it? Would not the Generations to come curſe us, and abhor our Remembrance? And then to ſpeak nothing of any ſolemn Bond or Engagement under which you have put your Souls to the contrary.

Arg

Shall we not hereby oppoſe and croſs the great Deſign which God is carrying on in the World, by his preſent Providences? Oh 'twill be ſad to be found oppoſing God's Deſign?

Now

*Tali con- ſſione ad rimam hriſti ad- ventum vi- m para- it, tali e- iam ad ſe- undam. Magna ſan- hac fecit rerum mu- tationes, ſed reſtat, longe major* Grotius.

Now what is that but, by *ſhaking Heaven and Earth, to remove the Things that are [*made*; ] *viz.* by Man invented in his Worſhip, *Heb.* 12. 27. To pluck up by the Roots, every [*Plant*; ] (*i. e.*) Ceremony and Tradition not of his planting, *Mat.* 15. 13 Are not all theſe Things appointed to Perdition? *Col.* 2. 22. and dareſt thou then by thy Preſence, or pleading for them, go about to ſupport and eſtabliſh them, and ſo ſtrive againſt God? Oh conſider it ſadly.

*Arg.* 3. Is it not dangerous to be found amongſt Idolaters? Doth not Judgment ſometimes ſweep away the whole Community and Neighbourhood of ſuch Sinners? Read 1 *Sam.* 6. 19, 20. 1 *Chron.* 15. 13. And hath not God given thee timely warning of the Danger before it come? *Rev.* 18. 4. And is it not more than ordinary dangerous, to be found among them now, when God is preparing his Troops to invade *Babylon*; I mean ready to pour forth the Vials of his Wrath upon Her?

Arg. 4. And may not your Example have a miſchievous Influence upon others? May it not harden ſinners in their ways? and even compel and draw away the weak Chriſtian? *Gal.* 2. 13, 14. and ſo draw the Guilt of their ſins upon thine own ſoul? and what a dreadful thing is that! † Actors and Conſenters are alike guilty and puniſhable: Oh you have too much perſonal guilt of your own, add not the guilt of others ſins to it: nay, by this means thou mayeſt be ſinning in another, when thou lyeſt in the Duſt.

*† Acceſſori- um ſequitur naturam Principa- lis. Agentes & Conſen- tientes, pari pæna plectuntur.*

Laſtly, conſider how careful God hath always been to keep his People off, at the greateſt diſtance from Idolatry. Compare theſe Scriptures, 2 *King* 17. 15. *Ezek.* 44. 20. *Numb.* 32. 38. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 22 *Heb* 4. 1. O let theſe Arguments be impartially weighed, and let not any low fleſhly Intereſt, be ſet up to oppoſe them.

## *COUNSEL* III.

*Beware of ſuch Perſons as are Factors and Agents for Antichriſt, and keep off from ſuch a Miniſtry, the tendency and ſcope of which, is to entice and draw you to Idolatry,* Mat. 7. 15. and 10. 17. Phil. 3. 2. Col. 2. 8.

*It is not ny deſign o aſperſe ny godly perſon, hat by the revalency of temptation ay join ith hem; the ord I ope will cover ich out f the nare: but ſpeak of e body, nd generality of hem.

There is a *generation of men now abroad, skilful to deſtroy Souls, who would make Merchandiſe of you, and by good words and fair ſpeeches, deceive the hearts of the ſimple [ἀκακῶν,] ſuch as mean well, but want prudence to diſcern ſuch as mean ill. Theſe are of two ſorts; the generality of them are by a righteous hand of God, given over to ſuch diſſoluteneſs and debauchery, that their folly and madneſs, is made manifeſt to all men, 2 *Tim.* 3. 9. And others that have gifts and parts, how few are there of them, but imploy them in defending abominable Superſtitions, and perſwading their Congregations to ſubmit to them: So that you have your choice, whether you will drink poyſon mixt with water, or infuſed into brisk and generous wine, which will give it a ſpeedier acceſs to the ſpirits. Theſe are † Wells without water, deceiving the hope of weary and thirſty Souls: Clouds they are without rain, that ſend not forth one gracious ſhower to refreſh the Inheritance of the Lord: The beſt of them is a bryar, and the moſt upright of them ſharper than a thorn hedge, *Mic.* 7. 4.

I believe there be many among you that are ſharp ſet, and by this time have felt the miſery of a ſpiritual famine. 'Tis bread you come for, but your Father hath ſhut up houſe, and is gone for a time, the Glory is departed; they are become Wells without water, breaſts without milk: is there not a vanity in theſe, as well as in the creatures, when God is withdrawn from them? We may ſay concerning them, as *Iſaac* did to his father, *Gen.* 22. 7. *Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the Sacrifice?* Here you may ſee the skin, and ſhadow of an Ordinance, but where is the power? where is the life, quickening, and ſoul refreſhment, that was wont to accompany them? Ah poor *England!* what haſt thou loſt! what a Miniſtry haſt thou ſinned away! waſt thou not renowned among the Nations for the power, and purity of Ordinances? were not thy Miniſters as ſheep coming up from the waſhing, whereof every one bare twins, and none was barren among them? How was the Lord Jeſus lifted up in thy Miniſtry, that all might ſee the Neceſſity, Beauty and Excellency of him! and did not the pangs of the *New-Birth*, frequently come upon Souls in thine Aſſemblies? But alas, thoſe days are over, they are gone, they are gone; ah wo is us, that we muſt ſay, *So it was!* Well then, what will you do in this caſe? will you ſeek the living among the dead? will you ſuck empty breaſts, whence you can draw nothing but wind or blood? O no, but rather ſay, as *Cant.* 1. 7. *Tell me, O thou whom my ſoul loveth, where thou feedeſt, were thou makeſt thy Flocks to reſt at noon; for why ſhould I be as one that turns aſide by the flocks of thy companions?* Theſe Companions of Chriſt, muſt be none of yours.

Arg. 1. Becauſe it is the manifeſt drift, and deſign of their Miniſtry, to unteach, and beguile you of thoſe precious Goſpel-Truths which you have formerly received, and learnt. This ſome of them have not ſhun'd to declare in the face of their Congregations; and nothing is more apparent, than that it is the deſign they all manage. I appeal to your own obſervations, what is more common with them, than to tell you, you have been miſguided by your Teachers theſe twenty years, and now muſt return to the good Old Way, which themſelves are utterly unacquainted with?

Pet. Martyr

Now what do you by attendance on ſuch a Miniſtry, but run your Souls upon a temptation to unſettlement, and Apoſtacy? and dig a grave (as I may ſay) to bury all the precious Truths you have learn'd under your former faithful Miniſters? Who may ſigh over you, and ſay as *Peter Martyr* did, when he was in *Oxford*, at the coming in of Queen *Mary*; he heard a College-Bell ring to Maſs, and looking out at his Study window, ſaw the Scholars flocking apace to it, being ſtruck to the heart with this ſight, he brake out into this expreſſion, *Hæc una notula* (ſaid he) *omnem meam doctrinam evertit*; (*i. e.*) This Bell rings a paſſing-peal to all my Doctrine: and upon ſerious conſideration, this will appear to be no ſmall evil. For you cannot but be convinced, that it is your duty to be immoveably fixed in the Truths of the Goſpel which you have received, and to ſuffer no man to ſpoil you of them: if you doubt that, read 2 *Pet.* 3. 17, 18. *Col.* 1. 23. *Epheſ.* 3. 17. *Col.* 2. 6, 7. 1 *Cor.* 15. 58.

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† *Jactant epantq; ripturam, ſed eam non intelligunt, imo pervertunt aperiunt quaſi ntes ſcientiæ, qui aquam non habent doctrinarum, præmittunt imbrem, lut nubes prophetiæ.* Hieron. contra Jov.

And if this be your ſin, to be moved away from it, then it muſt needs be your duty, to avoid the temptations, means and occaſions of ſuch unſettlement. And this is that which is intended in all thoſe cautions given in the Word, and but lately recited.

I am againſt the Prophets that [*ſteal*] the Word, every man from his neighbour, *Jer.* 23. 30. He means the falſe true Prophets that enticed the People from thoſe Truths, which the Prophets had taught them. There be ſpiritual Cut-purſes abroad, pray look to your ſelves: The old *Chemarims* are revived again in this Generation: The word, *Zeph.* 1. 4. is conceived to come from כמר *incaluit*; (*i.e.*) men more zealous and hot than ordinary, for their ſuperſtitious Traditions; inflam'd with deſires to draw you to it: *Ut multitudine ſequacium, ſeſe efferunt:* Which the Apoſtle engliſhes, *Gal.* 6. 13. that they may glory in your fleſh: And therefore beware of men.

Arg. 2. Doth not your attendance upon, and following of ſuch a Miniſtry, help to midwife and bring forth all thoſe evils with which their Miniſtry travails and is in pain to be delivered of? could they do any hurt, if they were generally declined and avoided? their ſtrength lyeth in you: As a great Commander once ſaid to his Souldiers, *That he flew upon their Wings.* Hence it was the *Phariſees* were ſo often diſappointed in their attempts to lay hands upon Chriſt; they had a ſtrong deſign to do it, but the Text ſaith, *They could not becauſe of the People*, *Mark* 14. 2. *Acts* 4. 21. So the falſe Teachers in *Jeroboam's* time, *Hoſ.* 7. 6, 7. were as hot as an Oven, with deſires and deſigns to draw the People to falſe Worſhip, but the People were a great Lump, and could not preſently be leavened; and therefore in the mean time, till that were done, the Baker ſlept, and ceaſed from raiſing. This for a time, obſtructed the deſign. But here is the miſery, the people are *materia diſpoſita*, matter fit for them to work into any form, if they give them but an heat or two in a plauſible Sermon, they are malleable, and fit to be hammered into any ſhape, *Jer.* 5. *ult.* *The People love to have it ſo:* And *Amos* 4. 5. This liketh you, *O houſe of Iſrael.* Fear of Perſecution makes them comply with any thing, *Gal.* 6. 12.

*Mark.* 14. 2.
*Acts* 4. 21.

Arg. 3. Can you attend lawfully and comfortably upon ſuch a miniſtry, upon which you cannot pray for, or expect a bleſſing? doubtleſs, you will readily confeſs you may not. And can you pray for, or expect a bleſſing, where you have no promiſe in all the Book of God, to warrant or encourage you ſo to do? 'tis as clear you cannot. Now produce but one promiſe made to the labours of ſuch as God hath not ſent. A curſe upon their labours you may find, *Jer.* 23. 32. and upon their gifts and parts. And a prohibition of hearing them, you may find, *Jer.* 23. 16. But no promiſe of a bleſſing; that only attends a Miniſtry of Chriſts own ſending, *Mat.* 28. 19, 20.

Object. *But hath not Chriſt ſent them? how ſhall we be ſatisfied in that?*

Sol. Conſider what is requiſite and neceſſary in the ſending, or due Call of a Miniſter. (1.) Whether it be perſonal Qualifications, deſcribed, 1 *Tim.* 3. 7. 2 *Tim.* 3. 16, 17. 1 *Tim.* 3. 2. 2 *Tim.* 2. 2. *John* 21. 15, 16, 17. (2.) Or free Election by the Church, to which the Miniſtry is given. See *Acts* 1. 23, 24. *Acts* 6. 5. (3.) Or (according to true Presbyterian Principles) Ordination, by Faſting, Prayer, and Impoſition of Hands, *Acts* 6. 6. and 13. 3. and 14. 23. 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. and 4. 14. 2 *Tim.* 1. 6.

If the Sending or Call of a Miniſter, conſiſt in all or either of theſe, then judge your ſelves whether theſe men are ſent. For their Gifts and qualifications neceſſary to fit them for ſuch a work, let their Congregations witneſs, who are fed upon husks, and ſtarved under them.

For their Election by the Church, let the Godly in their reſpective Pariſhes witneſs, whether they were elected by them, or obtruded upon them, and ſo ſtand upon the ruines of their own lawful and godly Paſtours.

And for their Ordination, their own Canons may inform you: Wherein it is ordered; (1.) That they be made Deacons; (2.) Then after a years ſpace, they muſt be preſented to the Biſhop, or his Suffragan, by an Arch Deacon or his Deputy, ſaying *Reverend Father in God, I preſent theſe perſons to be admitted to the Order of Prieſthood.* (3.) Then after the Letany and ſome Collects, the *Prelate* asketh them, *Do you think in your hearts, that you be truly called according to the Will of Chriſt, and the Order of this Church of* England, *to the Miniſtry of Prieſthood?* and every one of them anſwers, *I think it.* (4.) Then they promiſe reverently, to obey their Ordinary and other chief Miniſters of the Church. (5.) And then kneeling down at the Prelates feet, he, with the Prieſts preſent, lay their hands on their heads, ſaying, *Receive the holy Ghoſt. Whoſe ſins thou doſt forgive, they are forgiven; and whoſe ſins thou doſt retain, they are retained: and be thou a faithful Diſpenſer of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments, In the Name of the Father, Son and holy Ghoſt.* Amen. (6.) Then delivering to each of them a Bible, he ſaith, *Take thou Authority to preach the Word of God, and to adminiſter the holy Sacraments, in the Congregation where thou ſhalt be ſo appointed.* (7.) And after all this, by the Canons of 1603. none of them are to be admitted to any Eccleſiaſtical Living, or ſuffered to preach, except he be licenſed ſo to do, by the Arch-Biſhop, or Biſhop of the Dioceſs, and ſhall ſubſcribe, *That the Book of Common-Prayer, and of ordering Biſhops, Prieſts and Deacons, contains in it nothing contrary to the Word of God, and that it may be lawfully uſed, and that he himſelf will uſe the ſame; And that he alloweth the Book of Articles of Religion.* (8.) And then laſtly, having abjured the Covenant, &c. he is a compleat Prieſt to all Intents and Purpoſes.

Judge now what a fair and regular Call here is to the Miniſtry. I remember *Aquinas* tells us, that, *If the Artificers Hand were his Rule, he could never work amiſs.* And ſo, if the Prelates Hand be the Rule of Ordination, they cannot but be well ordained; but if the Scriptures be indeed the Rule, I am at a loſs where to find a Text parallel to this Practice, unleſs it be that in 2 *Chron.* 13. 9. which, I confeſs, ſuits it to an hairs breadth.

Object. *But this will invalidate and nullifie the Call of our former ancient and godly Miniſters, for they came in the ſame way: Yet God hath owned them, and they have made full proof of their Miniſtry.*

*Sol.* Not at all. For (1.) though it muſt be confeſt (and themſelves will not deny, but there were many grand Irregularities in their Ordination; yet it was (comparatively) a time of ignorance and darkneſs; and in ſuch caſes, God is more indulgent, and the ſin receives not ſuch aggravations, *Acts* 17. 30. *Heb.* 5. 2. *Heb.* 6. 5, 6, 7. *Jam.* 4. 17. (2.) As hard as the terms then were, they are harder now by far; ſeveral things ſince that, have intervened, which are conſiderable. (3.) They were holy men, qualified with Graces, and Gifts, able and apt to teach, which is mainly conſiderable in a Miniſter's Call. (4.) Laſtly, they generally came into their places at the deſire, and upon the call, of the moſt godly Perſons in the places where they lived. And this, if they had no more, makes them true Miniſters (in the judgment of many judicious Divines) altho' their Epiſcopal Ordination ſhould be a nullity. Let us hear what is ſaid in this caſe by others. *Ameſius*, his words are theſe, ſpeaking to this queſtion; In whom is this right, and power of calling the Miniſters? he anſwers; (1.) *Summum jus vocationis, eſt penes Chriſtum ſolum, qui eſt Eccleſiæ caput, & Miniſterij auctor, ac Dominus Miniſtrorum.* (2.) *Jus delegatum non poteſt proprie eſſe vel Epiſcoporum Diœceſanorum vel Patronorum, vel Magiſtratuum, qua ſunt tales; quia Chriſtus qui Miniſterium inſtituit, de iſtis ordinibus nihil ſingulare præſcripſit, nihil novi juris ipſis communicavit, & Eccleſiam ſine illis optime ordinatam reliquit.* (3.) *Jus delegatum eſt penes Eccleſiam illam totam, cui Miniſter vocandus debet inſervire,* &c. (1.) The chief right of calling, is the Power of Chriſt alone, who is Head of the Church, Author of the Miniſtry, and Lord of Miniſters. (2.) The delegated right cannot properly be, either of dioceſan Biſhops, or Patrons, or Magiſtrates (as ſuch) becauſe Chriſt, who inſtituted the Miniſtry, preſcribed nothing ſingular, concerning thoſe Orders, communicated nothing of any new right to them, and left his Church well ordered without them. (3.) The delegated Right is in the power of that whole Church, to which the Miniſter that is to be called, ought to ſerve, *&c.* which he proves by many weighty Arguments. To this I ſhall join the Teſtimony of that bleſſed man, now with God, Mr. *Jer. Burroughs*, his words are theſe; “For “their calling, I make no queſtion, but there “are many Miniſters in *England*, as they were, “and as they are, that are the true Miniſters “of Jeſus Chriſt, and have a true Call from “Chriſt.

Ameſ. Caſ. conſci. lib. 4. p. 233.

rroughs the th. of t. 28. Book, 110.

“Object. *But how can that be? they hold* “*their ſtanding from the Biſhops, and ſo from* “*Antichriſt.*

*Anſw.* “Take it for granted, that their Au- “thority from the Biſhops was wholly naught, “and ſinful, yet that doth not follow, but that “many Miniſters, that had their Ordination “from them, are true Miniſters of Chriſt: “Why? not becauſe of that they had from “them, but they had their calling likewiſe “from the People of God, as well as in a “ſeeming way from them: for we will take “that for granted, that that they had from “them, there was ſuch corruption in it, that “they ſinned againſt God; but yet mark, “that doth not nullifie their Call, becauſe they “had ſomewhat ſuper-added, wherein they “ſinned againſt God. This he farther illuſtrates in the ſame place by this ſimilitude, *If a man have two Deeds or Evidences for a piece of Land, and one be naught, yet if the other be good and ſound, he hath a true Title.* Mr. *Collings* alſo, anſwering this Objection, *Miniſters had their Ordination from Biſhops, and they from* Rome. Rome *is no true Church, and hath no true Miniſtry; and thoſe that were not Miniſters themſelves, could not make others:* Having inferr'd ſeveral abſurdities from the Objection, gives this Anſwer; “Suppoſe the Reformers had no Or- “dination, but the Call of the People, it “was a plain caſe of neceſſity; and they “had power doubtleſs, to reſtore that Ordi- “nance to the Church again.

Mr. *Colling's vindiciæ Miniſt.* p. 73.

So that as long as they were holy men, ſo eminently qualified, and fairly called by good People, far be it from me, to queſtion the validity of their Call. But the Caſe before us, differs Heaven-wide from this.

Object. *But they are not worſe than the Scribes and Phariſees were? yet Chriſt commands his Diſciples to hear them,* Mat 23. 2, 3.

*Sol.* Becauſe this is the *Achilean* Argument, I ſhall endeavour to ſatisfie you in this Scripture, and deſtroy the Argument commonly drawn from this place, by theſe plain and (as I judge) ſatisfactory replies to it.

1. Thoſe that infer from this Text a duty or a liberty of attending on, or joyning with a prophane and corrupt Miniſtry, do thereby (though perhaps unawares) gratifie the Popiſh Cauſe and Intereſt; for from this very Text, they draw many of their Arguments to condemn our ſeparation from them, and alſo to convince us of the neceſſity of obeying the Mandates of their Prelates, and hearing their Jeſuits and Monks, notwithſtanding their corruptions in worſhip, and filthy ſodomitical lives. *Huc enim torquent verba Chriſti*, ſaith *Calvin*, To this ſence they wreſt the words of Chriſt. And to the ſame ſence *Pareus* ſpeaks, *Ut hodie Papa, & Epiſcopi clamant, omnia, omnia ſervate;* As the Pope and the Biſhops cry out at this day, all things, all things they bid you do, obſerve and do. So that by taking the words in ſuch a large unlimitted ſenſe, we do the Cauſe of Chriſt more diſſervice, than we are aware of.

2. It is further conſiderable, that the Arguments drawn from this Text, are commonly fallacious, taking it for granted, that religious hearing, as an act of worſhip, is here injoyned; whereas there is not a ſyllable of any ſuch thing in the Text: Indeed Chriſt bids them obſerve and do whatſoever they bid them; but it doth not thence follow, they ſhould Religiouſly attend on their Miniſtry: (1.) Becauſe it's evident, theſe Scribes and Phariſees ſuſtained a double capacity; they were Expoſitors of the Law, that we allow; and they

were alſo of the Sanedrim, in a civil capacity, as Rulers; that appears from, *John* 3. 1. 10. *Acts* 5. 34. In this civil capacity, they are moſt properly ſaid, to ſit in *Moſes*'s Seat; for the 70 Elders which made up this Sanedrim came in upon a civil ſcore at firſt, as appears from, *Numb.* 11. 16, 17. and ſo were joyned with *Moſes* in the Government. Now then, this command ſeems moſt properly to reſpect them as Rulers; who in that capacity both opened the judicial Laws of *Moſes*, and enjoyned the people to obey them. (2.) Becauſe Chriſt had before warned them, to take heed of their leaven (*i. e.*) their Doctrine, *Mat.* 16. 6, 12. and told them they were blind Guides, and what the fatal iſſue of them and their Diſciples that followed them, would be, *Mat.* 15. 14. both ſhould fall into the ditch; and that their worſhip was vain, *Mat.* 15. 9. and it is not like he would afterwards encourage them to attend on it.

3. But admit it were ſo, that Chriſt gives them liberty to hear them as Miniſters, though they were corrupt, yet it is no good conſequence, that therefore we may hear any Miniſters, though never ſo corrupt in principles and practice now. And the reaſon which deſtroys this conſequence, is this, becauſe there is a vaſt difference betwixt the infant State of the Goſpel-Church in the days of Chriſt on earth, and its more perfect State after his death; we know the firſt Tabernacle was then ſtanding, the Veil of the Temple not then rent in twain, the Goſpel Miniſtry not then inſtituted: and therefore during that State, as Chriſt himſelf ſubmitted to the Ordinances of the Law (*for it became him to fulfill all Righteouſneſs:* (ſo did his Diſciples ſubmit to them alſo: yea, and he exhorts others alſo to obſerve the rites appointed by it; as *Mat.* 8. 4. bids him that was cleanſed, to go and ſhew himſelf to the Prieſt, and offer his gift which the law of *Moſes* required. But ſince the death of Chriſt, and the taking down of that firſt Tabernacle, and the inſtitution of the Goſpel-Miniſtry, none of theſe Precepts bind: for, as Judicious *Pareus* on the place notes, this was but [*Mandatum temporale*] a temporal Command; which ceaſed to oblige upon the commiſſionating and full inſtruction of the New Goſpel-Miniſtry: *And then its manifeſt* (ſaith he) *they made a Separation from the Phariſees, and the Jewiſh Synagogue.*

Now we are to attend upon no Miniſtry, but of Chriſt's inſtitution; for to them only hath he promiſed his Preſence, *Mat.* 28. *ult.* and none can preach (*i. e.*) lawfully except he be ſent, *Rom.* 10. And I have proved before, theſe are not his Miniſtry, nor ſent by him.

## COUNSEL IV.

*Give your uttermoſt diligence to promote Religion, and the Power of Godlineſs, in your reſpective Families, and Neighbourhoods; and the rather do this with all your might, becauſe the ordinary and more publick means of their Converſion and Edification, is cut off.*

This Counſel conſiſts of two Branches; the firſt concerns your Families, the ſecond your Neighbours; a word diſtinctly to each.

1. As to your Families, O ſhine as Lights there; lay out your Talents as many ways as they may poſſibly be improveable for the good of all about you, eſpecially thoſe under your guardianſhip and charge, *Exod.* 20. 10. By this the Power of Godlineſs muſt be diſcovered in you, and begotten and kept alive in them. The Jews have a Tradition, that the Fire of the Altar was miraculouſly preſerved under ground, during the *Babyloniſh* Captivity. I am ſure this is the way to preſerve Religion alive, now the publick ordinary means are ceaſed. Precepts are not wanting to inforce this duty upon you; *Deut.* 4. 9, 10. & 6. 6, 7. *Exod.* 12. 24, 26, 27. *Joſh.* 4. 6, 7, 21, 22. *Pſal.* 78. 5, 6. *Prov.* 22. 6. *Epheſ.* 6. 4. nor yet worthy Examples to encourage to it; *Gen.* 18. 19. 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. *Prov.* 31. 26. 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. 2 *Joh.* 1. 4. *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* had a Church in their Houſe, 1 *Cor.* 16. 19. *Nymphas* and *Philemon* in theirs, *Col.* 4. 15. *Philem.* 2. *Hence it is,* ſaith * *Davenant* on the place, *that the Apoſtle ſends a ſpecial Salutation to them, by name; becauſe of their ſingular Piety, which manifeſted it ſelf in their Family Government.* And indeed, how freſh and glorious a remembrance in the Scriptures have thoſe worthy Saints unto this day, and ſo ſhall have where-ever the Goſpel is preached, unto the end of the World, who have burned with an holy Zeal, not only to offer up themſelves, but their Families alſo unto God! *David* well underſtood how near this Duty lay to the heart of Religion, when he puts his ſoul under the bond of ſuch a ſolemn engagement to the Lord, *Pſal.* 101. 2. It doth not a little affect me to read what a † learned man obſerves of the *Jews*; *Although Religion be miſerably deformed among them, yet it ſeems there are ſome prints of their ancient Family Diſcipline to this day remaining among them*; *for* (ſaith he) *they are ſo careful to teach their Children in their tender years, the Law, and Books of Moſes, and after that their Talmudical Traditions, as that their skill in Judaiſm at* 17. *exceeds the knowledge of many among us in Chriſtianity, at* 70. Nay, the very *Jeſuits* boaſt themſelves, the grand Conſervators of the *Romiſh* Religion, in that they are Catechizers. Oh let this Provoke Chriſtians! we ſee how light breaks out more and more in every age; as *Luther* ſaid, *I ſee more than bleſſed* Auſtin *ſaw; and they that come after me, will ſee more than I ſee.* And we have great hopes and expectations of the young Generation, that they may enter into the good Land, though we ſhould die in this Wilderneſs. O then let us labour to prepare and make them ready for the Lord; and that not only by inſtructing them in the Principles of Religion in a Catechiſtical way (though that be an Ordinance of God, and of ſingular uſe in its kind) but by endeavouring to the utmoſt, by Counſels, Perſuaſions, Prayers for, and with them, to have the Power of Godlineſs wrought in their hearts, to travail with them again in pain, till Chriſt be formed in them. And to this Duty, theſe Arguments among many others, may perſuade.

Arg. 1. From the relation it ſelf, which is betwixt you and them, look but into your own Bowels, and you ſhall find arguments enough to provoke your utmoſt care and induſtry for their good: What is a Child but a piece of your e Ex-rtation Catech. the Mi-ers of the Iſle of ight. p. 17.

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* *Adjungit ſpecialem Salutationem, ob ſpecialem & eximiam hujus viri pietatem, equum enim eſt extraordinarium illis deferre honorem, quorum egregia virtus præ cæteris eminet & effulget in Eccleſia.* Dav. in Loc.

† *Buxtorf.* in Synag. Judaic. Cap. 3.

your ſelf (as one ſaith) wrapt up in another skin? what an ineſtimable value doth nature it ſelf teach you to ſet upon them? The life of *Jacob* is ſaid to be bound up in *Benjamin*'s, *Gen.* 44. 30. This dear and ardent affection to them, we uſe to expreſs by our earneſt deſires of them, till we have them, *Gen.* 15. 2. *What wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go childleſs*, ſaid *Abraham*, *Gen.* 30. 1. *Give me Children, or elſe I die*, ſaid *Rachel*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 10, 11. How earneſtly did *Hannah* pray in the bitterneſs of her Soul, for a Child. Alſo by the ſingular contentment we take in them, when we have them, *John* 16. 21. and the wonderful tenderneſs of our affections to them, and earneſt deſires to keep them, no value can be ſet upon a Child, *Gen.* 42. 36, 38. *Luke* 8. 41, 42. *John* 7. 47, 49. Alſo by our ſympathizing with them in all conditions; their comfort is ours, *Gen.* 45. 27, 28. and their miſery is ours, *Mark* 9. 22. And laſtly, by our extream grief when we loſe them, *Gen.* 37. 33, 34, 35. *Mat.* 2. 18.

Now are they ſuch near and dear things to you, Oh then how many motives doth this dear and tender relation wrap up in it, to endeavour the eternal Salvation of their poor Souls! 'tis the Soul of the Child, that is the Child; and if that periſh for want of Knowledge, where is the mercy of having Children? Surely an untimely birth is better than they: Ah when you ſhall ſeem them enemies to God, thoſe that came out of your bowels to be in rebellion againſt him; will it not make you take up *Job*'s wiſh, and apply it to them, Job 3. 1, 5. let the day periſh wherein they were born, and the night in which it was ſaid they are conceived, let the darkneſs and the ſhadow of death ſtain it; let a cloud dwell upon it, let the blackneſs of the day terrifie it, why died they not from the womb? why did they not give up the Ghoſt when they came out of the belly? why did the knees prevent them? or why the breaſts that they ſhould ſuck? Ah if you have the hearts of Parents in you, think how ſad a conſideration this will be to you, that thoſe who are ſo dear to you, ſhould be the objects of God's Wrath; thoſe you have been ſo tender over, and have ſo often put into your boſoms, muſt underlie eternal torments, and their bed be made in Hell? if you have any good thing your ſelves, you cannot with-hold it from them; if you be feaſted abroad, and they pining at home, the greateſt Dainties do you no good. Why now, unleſs they be taught the knowledge of Chriſt, and a ſaving change paſs upon them, when you ſhall ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* in the Kingdom of God, abundantly ſatisfied with the Fatneſs of his Houſe, and drinking of the Rivers of his Pleaſure, they ſhall be ſhut out: Nature teacheth you to feel the pains of their bodies, and cannot Grace teach you to ſympathize with the miſery of their poor wretched Souls? Well, the day is coming, if they die Chriſtleſs, that they will wiſh they had been the generation of *Tygers*, or off-ſpring of *Dragons*, rather than your Children: and when you can have them no more, you know who muſt, and will.

g. 2. From that exceeding Joy, it muſt needs be to a godly Parent, to ſee his Children, and Relations gracious. May not every godly Parent ſay as *John* did of the Children of the Elect Lady, *I have no greater joy, than to ſee them walk in the Truth*, 2 *John* 1. 4. Is it pleaſing to you to ſee your own image in them? and will it not much more delight you, to ſee the Image of Chriſt in them? Grace doubles the relation, and ſo muſt needs exceedingly increaſe your joy in them. This is the true way to build up the Felicity of your iſſue. How many anxious thoughts and ſollicitous cares will this diſcharge thy heart of! O if thou leave them in the Covenant of Grace, thy heart may be at reſt concerning them; if thou leave them not a groat, they ſhall not want a father to care for them when thou art in the duſt. Beſides, Grace will effectually teach them the duties of their Relation to you, while you live; hereby you will provide, not only for their eternal good, but your own joy alſo.

The work lies now upon your hand more than ever, as I hinted before; and truely you have many ſingular advantages above all others, to do the work. (1.) You are continually with them, and ſo may take the fitteſt ſeaſons to drop your admonitions upon them, *Deut.* 6. 6 7. (2) You beſt know their tempers and diſpoſitions, and ſo can apply your ſelves with more advantage to them. (3.) You have the deepeſt intereſt in their hearts and affections, which is a great matter, this will make your words, (eſpecially if dropt upon them with much affection) ſink deep. Oh what Child can chuſe but relent, while a Parent is ſpeaking with a melting heart to him, about his Eternal concernments. I remember *Auſtine* writes of his Mother *Monica*, that ſhe planted the Precepts of Life in his mind by her words, watred them with her Tears, and nouriſhed them with her Example. A precious pattern for all Mothers. Arg. 3.

Methinks theſe Arguments ſhould excite you to your duty; O if you have in you the bowels of Parents, let them impel you to it; you cannot plead danger here, as in other duties; againſt ſuch there is [*yet*] no Law.

2. As to your Neighbourhood. You ſhould ſtudy to be uſeful in your generation; are there any poor carnal Neighbours about you? O viſit them, and be ever dropping ſome ſerious words of Counſel upon them: how do you know but there may be ſome ſleeping conviction left upon them by the Miniſtry they once ſate under, which you may be inſtrumental to awaken? And are their any that fear the Lord near you, O be often together, ſtrengthen the hands that hang down. The Jews have a Proverb, that *One dry ſtick will ſet two green ones on fire.* A lively Chriſtian may be of ſingular uſe in ſuch a day as this. In *Mal.* 3. 16. we find what the practice of Chriſtians was in an evil day, as it appears that was, by the 15*th verſe*, *They that work wickedneſs, are ſet up, yea they that tempt God, are even delivered.* And yet, *Then they that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name.* — *And they ſhall be mine*, &c. Oh how well doth God take it, when his People will not be terrified from their Duty by the fear of men! *The Lord hearkned and heard it*; *They they did not*

*whiſper ſo in one anothers ear* (ſaith a modern Divine) *but God over-heard them*, the Lord liſtned, as it were, at the key-hole, he was under the window, and kept it upon record; a book of remembrance was written. Oh how pleaſant is it to God, to ſee his ſecret ones making hard ſhifts to get together to worſhip him! *Cant.* 2. 14. *Oh my Dove that art in the Clefts of the Rocks, in the ſecret places of the Stairs; let me ſee thy Countenance, let me hear thy Voice; for ſweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comely.* What are theſe *Clefts of Rocks, and ſecret places of the Stairs, but thoſe ſecret retiring places, where the People of God get together in difficult times to ſeek their God? there they †poured out their Souls together in broken-hearted confeſſions of ſin. *The Primitive Chriſtians*, ſaith *Hilary*, *were not to be ſought*, in Tectis & exteriori Pompa, (i. e) *in Palaces and outward Pomp, but rather in Deſerts and Mountains, in Dens and Caves of the Earth*; as Heb. 11. 38. *In Queen* Mary's *time*, (ſaith Mr. Fox) *there were ſometimes* 40, *ſometimes an* 100, *ſometime* 200, *came together as they could, in private places in* London, *for mutual edification.*

* *Non in domicilio ſed in latibulo verſatur.* Brightman in loc.

† *Hoc eſt illud os totum oppletum lachrymis cujusin aſpectu tam mirifice delectatur Deus*; *ibid.* *Acts & Mon. fol.* 1881.

And though men call this by hard names, and load it with reproach, as if it were Faction and Sedition, yet it undergoes another cenſure in Heaven. I remember **Tertullian*, about 1400 years ago, in his Apology vindicates this Practice of theirs, againſt the Calumnies of the Heathen; *When good Men meet together* (ſaith he) *it is not to be called a faction, but a Court. And on the contrary, the name of Faction is to be applied to them, who conſpire in hatred againſt good and honeſt men. And what place is accounted ſo honourable, and abounds with delights, as the Courts of Princes?* Yea, let us hear what a †Biſhop of our own ſpeaks of ſuch Meetings; *Sometimes* (ſaith he) *the rage of Perſecution ſuffers not the Church to meet in the publick ſight of all, but forces them as it were to creep into private Holes*; as Rev. 12. 6. as *Athanaſius* and other Orthodox Chriſtians, were fain to ſeek hiding places from the *Arrians.*

* *Cum boni, cum probi coeunt, non eſt factio dicenda, ſed Curia, & e contrario, illis nomen factionis accommodandum eſt, qui in odium bonorum & proborum conſpirant.* Ter. Apol. cap. 39.

† *Quævis collectio fidelium, etiam ſi ob paucitatem ſuam intra, privatæ domus parietes includi poſſit, etiamſi ob furorem hoſtium nocturnos conventus agant, eſt vera eccleſia.* Dav. in Loc. p. 410.

Every Meeting of the Faithful, although for their fewneſs, they may be included within the walls of a Private Houſe, although by the fury of the Enemies, they keep their meeting by night, yet it is a true Church. Thus Biſhop *Davenant*. And truly if the Saints had nothing elſe but the gracious Preſence of Chriſt, (which is by promiſe engaged to be among them) it were enough to oppoſe to all the difficulties and dangers attending on ſuch a Duty. What a ſweet Promiſe is that, *Mat.* 18. 20. *Where two two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midſt of them: That is?* ſaith *Cameron*, *not only with them, but as a Preſident among them*: Chriſt will be there to defend, teach and bleſs them. How often hath this Promiſe been made good to the experiences of the Saints? *John* 20. 19. *Then the ſame day at evening, being the firſt day of the week, when the doors were ſhut, where the Diſciples were aſſembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jeſus and ſtood in the midſt of them and ſaith unto them, Peace be unto you.* Oh if Jeſus be in the midſt of you, no matter how many Enemies combine againſt you: If he ſpeak peace to you, no matter who prepares war againſt you: 'tis worth the venturing far, to meet with Jeſus Chriſt, and enjoy fellowſhip with him in ſuch Duties.

And beſides, this is the way to prevent the decay and cooling of thy affections: In times of abounding iniquity, the love of many will wax cold, *but he that endureth to the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.* Lo it is but an [*He*] (ſaith one upon the Text) a ſingle man, a very few, that hold out in compariſon of the Apoſtates. The whole world went wandring after the Beaſt, *Rev.* 13. 3, 4. Such was the paucity and obſcurity of Chriſtians in the *Arrian* Times, that *Baſil* crys out, *An Eccleſias ſuas prorſus dereliquit Dominus?* Hath the Lord utterly forſaken his Churches? the ſhip of the Church was then almoſt overwhelmed, ſaith *Hierom*; when the ſtorm is at its height, thou ſhalt ſee Profeſſors fall like the leaves in Autumn, or as rotten fruit in a windy day. The Dragon's Tail ſhall ſweep down the third part of the Stars. Now to fix thee in ſuch a day, the Communion of Saints is of ſingular uſe, they do wedge in and faſten one another; all the enemies rage could not ſever them; in the Primitive times, *Acts* 4. 23. being let go, they went to their Company: * *Two* (ſaith Solomon) *are better than one, becauſe they have a good reward for their labour, for if they fall, the one will help up his fellow: But woe to him that is alone*, Eccleſ. 4. 9, 10. *If two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone?* Communion with ſpiritual Chriſtians, affords this double benefit; if one ſtumble, yea fall, another will recover him; if ones affections grow chill, another's zeal will warm them again: the benefit of ſuch Society, is unſpeakable, and truly the nearer you keep to God, the cloſer you will cleave to one another, as lines are nearer at the center.

* *In Spirituali ſocietate, hoc etiam locum præcipue habet, ut maturis cohortationibus animorum in pietate frigus & Congelationem inductū Dei zelo repellamus.* Cartwright in loc.

## COUNSEL V.

*Study to keep your ſelves pure from the Corruptions of the preſent World.*

It is not only a great ſin, but an ill ſign, to be carried away with the ſtreams of the times. A Sin, becauſe directly oppoſite to the Command, *Rom.* 12. 2. *Be not conformed to this World*, [τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ,] to this age; the meaning is, do not get into the garb of the Times. And an ill Sign, becauſe the Scripture makes it the character of a wicked man, *Epheſ.* 2. 2. *They walk according to the courſe of this World.* In the original [κατ᾽ αἰῶνα] accord to the age, as the manner of the Times went: it is as dangerous living in ill company, as breathing in an infectious air; for as * one obſerves well, No *Peſt doth ſooner infect the air, than Sin infects and defiles the mind*: it is as hard a matter to preſerve your ſelves from guilt among wicked men, as it is to keep your ſelves clean, where many dirty dogs are leaping and fawning upon you: the diſeaſes of the ſoul are very catching. How great a commendation was it to *Noah*, that he was upright, and walked with God, when all fleſh had corrupted their ways! And how beautiful a ſight is it to ſee Chriſtians ſhine as Lights in the midſt of a crooked and

* *Peccatum adeo facile alios invadit, ut nulla Peſtis tantopere aerem inficere poteſt.* Chem. H

*Nemo erat ſibi ipſi ſe dementia ſpargit in proximos.* Seneca.

and perverſe Generation! *Phil.* 2. 15. to continue a Lily among Thorns. The World is a Sea, and every particular Perſon in it a drop; now to ſee a drop of Water in the Sea carried in a counter Motion to the Tyde, is marvellous. Chriſtians are a diſtinct Company of themſelves, *Acts* 4. 23. *You are of another world*, Joh. 17. 14. and your converſes ſhould be in Heaven, *Col* 3. 1, 2. and with heavenly Spirits, *Pſal.* 16. 3. Oh how hard is it to eſcape Partnerſhip with them in Sin, if we converſe unneceſſarily among them! If fine Bread be in the ſame Oven with courſe. the finer Partakes of that which is courſe, but the courſe ſeldom partakes of the fine: If you lay bright and clean Armour among that which is ruſty, the ruſty Armour communicates its ruſt to the clean, but the bright communicates not its Brightneſs to the ruſty. There are more ways than one, by which thou mayeſt be involved into Guilt by them. Suppoſe thou conſenteſt not with them, much leſs inſtigateſt them to ſin, yet mayeſt thou be defiled by their Sin, if it be but by thy ſilence when thou oughteſt to reprove them, *Lev.* 5. 1. or by not being ſo grieved, and tenderly affected with their Sins, as thou oughteſt, 1 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2. Thus did *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 136. And *Lot*, 2 *Pet.* 2.7, 8. that they might free their own Souls. From this I might diſwade you by many Arguments: As,

Arg. 1.

The expreſs Command of God laid upon you; he hath forbidden you to follow a * multitude to do evil, *Exod.* 23. 2. it may be underſtood either of Multitude or Magnitude. Many Men, or great Men (for the Will of God is not revealed to men with reſpect either to their Numbers, or Greatneſs; but his ſecret is with them that fear him;) to go in the way of evil Men, *Prov.* 4. 14. to have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, *Eph.* 5. 11. to ſave your ſelves from this untoward Generation, *Acts* 2. 40. with many of like Importance. And this is Reaſon enough to make you cautelous, ſeeing God hath given ſuch expreſs Prohibitions in this Caſe.

רבים * It may ſignifie either *quantitatem continuam*, or *diſcretam*; either *magnitudinem*, or *multitudinem*.

Arg. 2.

The ſpecial Eye of Favour which God hath always caſt upon ſuch as have been upright in their Generation, and kept themſelves pure from the Corruptions of the Times they lived in. *Noah* walked with God, when the Earth was overſpred with an Inundation of Wickedneſs, *Gen.* 6. 9. and *Noah* is ſaved by the Lord when the Earth is overwhelmed with an Inundation of Water, *Gen.* 6. 8. *Lot* his righteous Soul is vexed with the filthy Converſation of the *Sodomites*, and he is graciouſly exempted from the Deſolation that came upon them, *Gen.* 19. 16. he would not join hands with ſinners, and God will take him by the hand, as a Friend to reſcue him out of the Danger. *Elijah* will walk with and appear for God, when he could ſee none to ſtand by him, when Idolatry had over-ſpread the Face of the whole Country; and what miraculous and wonderful Providences did he experience in his Protections and Suſtentations! Either the Lord will hide him in the Grave, from the Troubles that ſhall be among the Living, *Iſa.* 57. 1. (ſo *Auguſtin* was taken away a little before the Sacking of *Hippo*; *Pareus* a little before the Taking of *Heidelburg*; *Luther* before the Wars brake forth in *Germany*; *Methuſelah* juſt before the Flood) or elſe he ſets ſome ſpecial Mark upon them, that they may be diſtinguiſh'd in the general Calamity, *Ezek.* 9. 4, 5. *Go through the midſt of Jeruſalem, and ſet a mark upon the Foreheads of them that ſigh, and that cry for all the Abominations that be done in the midſt thereof.* And to the other he ſaid, *Go after him, and ſmite, let not your eye ſpare, neither have ye pity.* So *Rev.* 7. before the Vials come to be poured out upon the Earth, the Servants of God are ſealed; even ſuch as had kept themſelves pure from Antichriſtian Polutions.

Arg. 3.

The Danger we run our ſelves into thereby, Dangers I ſay, not only of Deſtruction (for *a Companion of Fools ſhall be deſtroyed*, Prov. 13. 20.) but of Defilement alſo; the Devil hath his Agents and Factors in every Corner, to entice you to ſin, and you have corrupt Hearts, as apt to receive Impreſſions from the Examples and Perſwaſions of Sinners, as Tinder is to receive Fire; and it is no Wiſdom you know, for him that carries Gunpowder about him, to come too near the Fire, where the Sparks fly.

Now to prevent this Danger of being infected with the Sins and Evils of the Time, I ſhall lay down a few Directions.

1. If you would prevent Infection in theſe evil days, begin every day with God; ſeaſon your Hearts every Morning by Communion with the Lord. This was *David*'s practice, *Pſal.* 139. 18. *When I awake, I am ſtill with thee.* It was bleſſed Counſel which a worthy Perſon gives in this caſe; *Before earthly things* (ſaith he) *break in upon us, and we receive impreſſions from abroad, 'tis good to Seaſon the Heart with Thoughts of God, and to conſecrate the early and virgin Operations of the Mind, before they are proſtituted to baſer Objects. When the World gets the ſtart of Religion in the Morning, it can hardly overtake it all the day; and ſo the Heart is habituated to Vanity all the day long: But when we begin with God, we take him along with us to all the Buſineſſes and Comforts of the day; which being ſeaſoned with his Love and Fear, are the more ſweet and ſavoury to us.*

Mr. T. Caſe in Epiſtle to the Morning Exerciſe.

2. Be choice in your Company. Chriſt indeed converſed frequently with Publicans and Sinners, but it was ſtill in order to their Good, and there was no danger of receiving any Evil from them, there was nothing in him to faſten a Temptation upon; but we can ſeldom get off without a Taint.

3. Quicken up your Zeal for God; this will be a ſpur to the diſcharge of your Duty in all Places, Times, and Companies. *Love* (ſaith Mr. *Gurnal*) *ever goes armed with Zeal, this is her Dagger ſhe draws againſt all Oppoſers of Truth. Qui non zelat non amat.* Many times we hear the Name of God prophan'd, and dare not take as much liberty and boldneſs to reprove ſin, as they do to commit it; whence is this but from the want of Zeal? O it would make thee, as it did *Jonathan*, to caſt a Kingdom at thy Heels, to appear againſt Sin: And me thinks thy Intereſt in God, ſhould provoke thy Zeal. We muſt not neglect the Duty of a Friend, for fear of incurring the ſuſpicion of an Enemy: 'Tis better loſe the Smiles than the

Souls of Men: If thou diſcharge thy Duty, the ſin is his; if not, 'tis thine too.

4. Furniſh your Hearts with ſuch Principles, as are Antidotes and Preſervatives againſt Infections. As Phyſicians adviſe in Times of Infection, to carry ſome Preſervatives ſtill about you. Of this ſort I ſhall commend four or five, and ſhut up this Head.

1. Nothing muſt lie nearer thy Heart, if thou be a Chriſtian, than the Glory of thy God; all ends, Intereſts and Deſigns, muſt be ſubjected to that; and whatſoever cannot be ſubordinated, muſt be rejected. If this Principle were but well ſetled upon the Heart, what brave Spirits would it breed and raiſe in thy Breaſt! It would untie thy Tongue, like *Cræſus* his dumb Son, to plead for thy Father. It was a brave Speech of *Hierom*, in an evil day, when the rage of the Enemy was great againſt the Name and People of God; *O that they would turn their Weapons upon me, and be ſatisfied with my Blood.* And a ſweet one is that of *Bernard* to the ſame purpoſe, *Malo in nos murmur hominum, quam in Deum*; Rather let their reproach fall on Us, than on God. *Bonum eſt mihi ſi dignetur Deus, me uti pro Clypeo*; I ſhould account it a Mercy, if God would vouchſafe to uſe me as a Shield. Much like that of *David, The Reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen on me.* If God's Glory be thy principal End, thus it will ſubject all other Ends and Intereſts to it, and then it will open thy Mouth to plead for him, and appear in all the Concernments of his Name.

2. The Peace of thine own Conſcience, is to be preferred to the favour of any Man, and will abundantly recompence the frowns of Men. *This is our rejoycing, even the Teſtimony of our Conſcience.* This is the ſweeteſt Friend, Sacrifice it not to any Man's Luſt or Will.

3. The greateſt Expreſſion of Love to another, is to hate his ſin. Prov. 27. 6. *Faithful are the Wounds of a Friend*; and the greateſt Injury to another, is to connive at his Wickedneſs, *Lev.* 19 17.

4. No Man ſhall be a Loſer at laſt, by being faithful to God, and to his Duty; if you have no reward from men, yet to be ſure you ſhall from God; and yet God ſo orders it oftentimes, that men ſhall love you the better for your Faithfulneſs; Prov. 28. 23. *He that rebukes a man, afterwards ſhall find more favour than he that flatters with his Lips.*

5. A Chriſtian ſhould do that, and nothing but that now, which he judges will be comfortable to him in a Calm Review at Death and Judgment: This would make you accurate Chriſtians indeed. O treaſure up theſe Principles, and live in the daily Exerciſe of them.

## COUNSEL VI.

*Prepare for fiery Tryals, whilſt the Lord gives you ſuch a gracious Seaſon of Peace and Liberty.*

Eccleſ. 8. 5. *A wiſe man's heart diſcerneth both Time and Judgment.* And indeed it is a ſpecial Point of Wiſdom, to apprehend and improve Seaſons aright. Chriſtian, thou muſt uſe thy foreſeeing Faculties, to diſcover Dangers at a * diſtance, and ſo prevent Surprizals; *A prudent man foreſeeth the Evil*, Prov. 22. 3. yea, ſenſe it ſelf teacheth the brute Beaſts to get to the Hedge, when a Storm is coming; and canſt not thou foreſee a Storm in the Clouds, do they not gather blacker and blacker over thy Head? O prepare for it; get thy ſuffering Graces, thy winter Garments on. *Put them in mind* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *to be ready to every good Work*, Tit. 3. 1. be it active or paſſive Obedience, you muſt be ready for it. Bleſſed *Paul* had fitted and provided himſelf, *Acts* 21. 13. *I am* [*ready*] *not only to be bound, but to die at Jeruſalem for the Name of the Lord Jeſus*; he had, as I may ſay, laid his Neck on the Block beforehand, 2 *Tim.* 4. 6. *I am ready*, ſaith he, *to be offered up.* Thus Chriſt was ready for his Sufferings, *Loe I come*, ſaith he, *upon the Fathers Call*, Pſal. 40. 7. And as this is an Argument of an Heart truly gracious, ſo is it a ſingular Advantage to the Chriſtian when Troubles come; it is as the Shooe, *Epheſ.* 6. 15. *and your feet ſhod with the Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace.* Ah when you come off theſe Plains of Peace and Liberty, into the hard rugged Paths of Suffering, you will find what a Benefit it will be to you, to be well ſhod with this Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace. *Habakkuk* had it, *chap.* 3. 16. *I trembled in my ſelf, that I might reſt in the day of Trouble*: And then when Difficulties and Straits came, he could go away ſinging under them, *ver* 17. *Though the Fig-tree*, &c. yea, he could walk ſecurely through the Thickets of Trouble, and over the craggy Rocks and Precipices of Danger, as is intimated, *ver.* 19. *The Lord God is my ſtrength, and he will make my Feet like Hinds Feet*, (*i. e.*) to paſs with eaſe, *per montes, per rupta*, in ſuch ways of difficulty as would diſtract others: *and he will ſet me upon my high places*; (*i. e.*) † he will enable me to go without fear over mountains of Trouble. O Chriſtian, how ſoon a Storm may riſe thou knoweſt not, *Gen.* 22. 2. *Acts* 12. 1. to be ſure it will not be long, the Heavens are black, and ſome drops already fallen: Prepare therefore for it, and have your ſuffering Graces ready.

Queſt. *But what are they? and how muſt they be prepared?*

*Sol.* Though every Grace is neceſſary in its Place, and in the courſe of a Chriſtians Converſation, comes to take his turn; as every Spoak in a Wheel bears a ſtreſs, and is of uſe in the whole turn and round thereof; yet as thoſe Spoaks which are undermoſt at preſent, do preſent Service, ſo thoſe Graces which are now exerciſed, and are to bear the preſent Burden of this Day, are ſuch as theſe.

1. *Faith.* This hath a precedency given it to all other Graces; as in point of juſtification, ſo of ſuſtentation in a ſuffering hour; *Epheſ.* 6. 16. *Above all, taking the ſhield of Faith*: This is like the liver-vein, this goes to Chriſt, and conveys Blood and Life to the Soul from him; now *the Juſt ſhall live by Faith*, *Heb.* 10. 38. It was by Faith thoſe renowned Worthies, *Heb.* 11. performed ſuch glorious Actions. By Faith it is that a poor Chriſtian gets

* *Non faci inveniuntur præ dia in ad verſitate quæ non fuerint in pace quæſita.* Aug.

† *Libere & abſque metu incedere in locis excelſis.*

gets a glimpſe of the inviſible God, and Glory, which marvellouſly ſupports him under diſtreſſes, *Heb.* 11. 27. 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. By this the Soul is filled with peace and inward tranquility, *Rom.* 5 1, 2. And that is a ſingular preparation for ſuffering, *Eph* 6. 15. *Smite Lord, ſmite* (ſaid *Luther*) *for my ſins are forgiven me.* By Faith a poor Soul rouls its ſelf and it's burden upon God, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. and ſo quits and diſcharges it ſelf of all that anxiety and perplexity of ſpirit, which puts the ſinking weight into affliction. Oh then look to thy Faith, ſee it be not only alive, but *lively*; keep that Grace in thy heart, and thou ſhalt do well.

*Feri Domine feri, nam à peccatis meis abſolutus ſum.* Luth.

2. *Patience*; a Grace fitted for the purpoſe: It is not only a grace it ſelf, but the Conſervatory of other graces. As God hath placed Temperance on the right hand of Godlineſs, to defend it from injury by the flatteries and allurements of the world, ſo hath he placed Patience on the left, to defend it from the wrong it might receive by adverſity, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 6. a grace ſo neceſſary in an evil day, that the Spirit hath ſet it in equipage with Faith it ſelf *Heb.* 6. 12. and the Crown promiſed to it, *Rom* 2. 7. 'Tis an hardy Grace, bred by tribulation, *Rom.* 5. 3. will make a Chriſtian long-winded in his race to Glory. Oh then beg that you may be ſtrengthened with all might in the Inner-man, unto all Patience; if not, though you may be ſet out with much ſeeming gallantry of reſolution, yet you muſt needs faint in the way, and fall ſhort at laſt.

3. *Holy Courage* and *Magnanimity.* This Grace muſt now ſay in thy heart, as *Elijah* once did; *As the Lord lives I will ſhew my ſelf.* How conſpicuous hath this Grace been in thoſe worthy Hero's that are paſt on before us. See *Dan.* 3. 16, 17. *Heb.* 11. *per. tot.* *Acts.* 20. 24. and 21. 13. When *Valens* the Emperor endeavoured to draw *Baſil* from the faith, he firſt offers him great preferments, but his ſpirit was raiſed above that; *Offer theſe things* (ſaid he) *to Children*: then he tries him by threatnings of grievous torments, but his ſpirit was above that alſo; *Threaten theſe things* (ſaid he) *to your purple Gallants, that give themſelves to pleaſure.* The ſame *Baſil* relates the anſwer of the forty Martyrs (whoſe ſtory he writes:) When the Perſecutors, ſaith he, offered them great Preferments to draw them from Chriſt, this was their anſwer; *Why offer you to us theſe ſmall things of the World, when you know the whole World is contemned by us?* One of the Nobles of *Julian* preſent at the tormenting of *Marcus* Biſhop of *Arethuſa* was forced to ſay, *We are aſhamed,* O Emperor, *the Chriſtians laugh at your Cruelty and grow the more reſolute. Our very Women and Children, not to ſpeak of Men* (ſaith *Lactantius*) *do overcome their Tormentors and the fire cannot fetch ſo much as a ſigh from them.* The ſame glorious Spirit of courage for the Lord Jeſus, reſted alſo upon *Luther*, † *Zuinglius*, and thoſe bleſſed Souls that freely offered themſelves to the Lord in *Queen Mary*'s time. And truely, Chriſtian, not only neceſſity which lies upon thee, ſhould provoke courage, for there is no retreating, unleſs thou reſolve to Periſh, *Heb.* 10. 38. but methinks the infinite Excellency of Chriſt, in whoſe Cauſe and Quarrel thou art engaged, exacts it of thee, and ſhould make thee lay down all at his feet, not by conſtraint, but willingly looking upon it as thy privilege, *Phil.* 1. 29.

† *Libere & abſque metu incedere in locis excelſis.*

† *Quas non portet mortes præligere, quod non ſupplicium potius ferre, imo in quam profundam inferni abyſſum non intrare, quam contra conſcientiam atteſtari.* Zuing. 3 Epiſt.

4. Laſtly to name no more, *Self-denial* muſt now be promoted; *If any Man will come after me, he muſt deny himſelf*, *Mark* 8. 34 both ſinful ſelf, which muſt abſolutely and univerſally be denyed; and *natural*, yea *religious* Self, which muſt reſpectively and in ſome caſes be denyed alſo. The want of this, hath been the down fall and ruine of many an eminent Profeſſor. The moſt dangerous nick and opportunity of temptation, is when a Man is tryed in his darling luſt; now he falls by the root, if that be not mortified. This was the ruine of *Judas*; Covetouſneſs was his predominant luſt; and when he was tryed there, he falls immediately, *Mat.* 26. 16. *What will you give me, and I will betray him?* This overturned *Demas* alſo. Oh conſider theſe things.

## COVNSEL VII.

*Get your hearts deeply affected with Sions Miſery, and ſtrive earneſtly with the Lord on its behalf.*

*Pſal.* 137. 5. *If I forget thee, O Jeruſalem, let my Tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.* The pouring out of this Spirit of compaſſion, will be a token for good to us: *Pſal.* 102. 13. *Thou wilt ariſe and have mercy upon Sion, for the time to favour her yea the ſet time is come:* But how knew he that? *for thy Servants take pleaſure in her Stones, and favour the duſt thereof.* Upon which words one gloſſeth thus; 'It is as if he 'ſhould ſay, would you have me give an ac'count of my hope and confidence, that God 'will ariſe and have mercy upon Sion; why '(ſaith he) do you not ſee the Servants of God 'every where troubled for Sion, and be'moan Sion, and weep over her, crying out 'over her ruines, *O is this Sion?* What, 'the City of our Solemnities? what, ſhe 'that was the praiſe and beauty of the 'whole Earth? Ah Lord who can hold his 'peace at ſuch a ſight as this? Oh who can 'look upon Sion with dry eyes? are theſe her 'ſtones that lie thus ſcattered in the duſt? Oh 'it is a thouſand pities to ſee Sion in ſuch a ſad 'and mournful condition? Oh that our head 'were waters, and our eyes Rivers of tears! 'Come, Sirs, what ſhall we do for Sion? is 'there nothing we can do by our Counſels, 'our Prayers for the repairing of theſe 'breaches? Oh thus it ſhould be with us at this day: *Non ſunt iſta litigandi ſed orandi tempora*, as Mr. *Perkins* ſaid of his day, Theſe are not times of ſtriving, but praying, its no time now to ſtrive with one another, but to unite our ſtrength, and like the true generation of *Jacob*, to be ſtriving with our God. To be minding the World, and ſeeking of great things for our ſelves now, is no ſmall evil: God expects his Saints ſhould now be cloathed in Black, and walk as true Mourners under the great and ſore rebukes of their Father: Should we now make Mirth? *Ezek.* 21. 10. *It contemneth the rod of my Son, as every Tree.* God brings it in as an heavy charge upon the People, *Amos* 6. 6. that they are not grieved for the

Mr. *Caſe* in *England's* Encouragements; p. 74.

Afflictions of *Joſeph*; or as the Hebrew, over the rentings and tearings in pieces of *Joſeph*, that is the Church. It is a lively Alluſion to the ſad Lamentation that old *Jacob* made over the ſuppoſed renting of his dear *Joſeph*, *Gen.* 42. 21. *Joſeph is not*, I will go down to the grave to my Son Mourning: But his Brethren ſaw the anguiſh of his Soul, and pitied him not. And may not many of the Lords own People, charge the ſame thing upon their hearts at this day, that they did upon themſelves, *We are verily guilty* (ſay they) *concerning our Brother Joſeph.* Ah! have we not heard of the anguiſh of Sion and the ſore diſtreſs upon many of her Children at this day, and yet have not been ſo tenderly touch'd with the due ſenſe of it? Oh write that Man bowelleſs, that hath no compaſſion in his ſpirit now for Sion: you may promiſe to your ſelf immunity from the common calamity, but God hath ſaid, *Amos* 6. 7. *You ſhall go captive with the firſt that go captive.* Ah! is this a time, as God ſaid to *Baruk*, *Jer* 45. to ſeek great things for your ſelves, it is enough if you have your life for a prey: are you now building and feathering your neſts, when the Ax of Judgment lies at the root of that Tree you build in, to cut it down? Surely we may ſay of ſuch deſigns now, as *Huſhai* did of the counſel of *Achitophel*, *It is not good at this time.* In that day did the Lord call to mourning; and is there not as loud a Call at this day? *The Voice of the Rod cryeth to the City*, *Micah* 6. 9. Oh be not deaf to that cry: now go to the Lord with an holy importunity, under a quick ſenſe of Sions miſery, and give him no reſt till he ariſe and have mercy on her. And among many other, theſe Arguments may perſwade to it.

Arg. 1. The gracious Nature of that God to whom you go for help and mercy; Oh remember you lie down at the feet of a tender-hearted Father, willing be overcome by you: *Amos* 4. 12. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, and becauſe I will do thus, prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael*, (*i. e.*) in a way of humiliation to prevent him. So *Luke* 18. 7. And ſhall not God avenge his [*own elect*] that cry unto him day and night, though he bear long with them? mark the motive [*his own*] *q. d.* Can a Father ſhut up the bowels of mercy from his own fleſh? how much leſs God to whoſe compaſſions, the moſt dear and tender affections of all the Parents in the world, is but as a drop to the Ocean. This *Jonah* well underſtood, *Jonah* 4. 2. *Was not this my ſaying when I was yet in my Country, therefore I fled before unto* Tarſhiſh, *for I knew that thou art a gracious God, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the evil*; *q. d.* yea Lord, I knew beforehand what it would come to; I muſt go to *Niniveh*, and denounce thy Judgments againſt it, and then if they do but humble themſelves a little, thy Mercies and Compaſſions are ſo tender and abundant, that thou canſt not ſmite them, if they do but come upon the knee, the rod falls out of thy hand; I knew it would be ſo, I was perſwaded before hand, that Free-Grace would make me appear as a lyar to them, therefore I fled to *Tarſhiſh*. Oh what a Motive is this to bring you upon the knee before God at this day!

Arg. 2. Conſider how dear an Intereſt it is that you eſpouſe and plead for, dear to God, and therefore the greater probability of ſucceſs; you may ſay to God, as *Mary* and *Martha* did to Chriſt concerning their brother *Lazarus*, *Lord he whom thou loveſt is ſick.* Ah the Intereſt of his Son, which I perſwade you to plead with him, lies near his heart, and dear to you, if you be real Saints: for alas, what joy can you have to ſurvive Sions proſperity? would you not in ſuch a caſe ſay as the Prophet, 1 *Kings* 19. 4. *Ah Lord God, it is enough, take away my life alſo.* O therefore ſtrive with God for it.

Arg. 3. Conſider how much you have contributed to the provoking and procuring cauſe of its preſent miſery; 'tis Sions own Sons and Daughters that have procured this unto her; and ſhall there be none among all the Sons ſhe hath brought up to take her by the hand, and comfort her? 'tis our conteſts and wrangling one with another, our barrenneſs under the Goſpel, our abuſe of deliverances, and moſt precious Goſpel-Enjoyments, that have procured all this: Ah Sirs! will you not ſtrive to pray back the Mercies, you have helped to ſin away?

Arg. 4. Thoſe that are moſt deeply humbled, and do moſt fervently interceed for Sion now, ſhall have a peculiar ſhare in her Joy when the Lord reſtores it: *When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream'd, then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with ſinging*, Pſal. 126. 1, 2. But who were theſe that laugh and rejoyce at Sions mercy? were they not ſuch as had mourned for her; yes, yes, they that thus reap in joy, are ſuch as had before ſown in tears, *ver.* 5. 6. to ſuch indeed the Promiſe is made, *Iſa.* 57. 18. and 66. 10. Rejoyce for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her. Let theſe things affect your Souls.

## COUNSEL VIII.

*That ſeeing a Day of great trouble is approaching, and all outward comforts, ready to take their farewel of you, you would now give all diligence to clear up your title to Christ, and intereſt in that Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken.*

If ever we had need to make all honeſt haſt to Heaven, and to clear up our intereſt in it, this is the time, what have we beſides this to oppoſe to all our troubles here? what will you do when all earthly comforts are fled? and are they not upon the wing? when it comes to reſiſting to blood, and giving up all, can you fadge with ſuch work as this, while your ſpirits are dubious and cloudy in this point? O my friends believe it, its nothing but this that can make a Saint triumph and glory in Abuſes and Tribulations, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16, 17, 18. *Heb.* 10. 34. *Rom.* 5. 1, 2, 3. And little do you imagin how inſupportable troubles are, when the ſpirit is low and dubious in point of Intereſt. The Devil, like a true coward, falls upon a poor Saint, when he is proſtrate in his ſpirit, and under trouble, then he pours in diſcouragements from all hands; he loves to fall upon them, as *Simeon* and *Levi* did upon the *Shechemites* when they were ſore, *Gen.* 34. 25. Satan knows men will hardly part with their preſent ſenſible comforts, till they be aſſured of better: It's eaſier without doubt, for an aſſured Chiſtian to lay down his neck for Chriſt, than for another to part with a piece of his Eſtate, or bear a reproach for him: and truly whether we conſult ſafety or comfort, whether we conſider the ineffable ſweetneſs of that Peace and Joy begotten by aſſurance; or the Miſery of being ſubjected in a day of trouble to the miſgivings, doubts and fears of a perplexed ſpirit, you will find that all theſe conſiderations do put a neceſſity, a ſolemnity, a glory upon this work: But oh the difficulties and dangers attending it! what judgment, faithfulneſs, reſolution, watchfulneſs doth it require! ſuch is the darkneſs, deceitfulneſs, inconſtancy of the heart; and ſuch the malice, policy, and diligence of Satan to improve it, that he who attempts this work, had need both to watch his ſeaſons for it, frequently to look up to God for guidance and illumination; and to ſpend many ſad and ſerious thoughts before he determine this buſineſs.

To the end therefore, that this moſt weighty and important Work may not miſcarry in thy hands, I intreat thee carefully to obſerve theſe ſix Directions following.

### *Direction* 1.

Be ſure thou try thy ſelf by ſound and approved Marks of Sincerity, and not by ſuch as are only probable and common to hypocrites, for theſe will fail when any ſtreſs is laid upon them, and like the Reeds of *Egypt*, pierce into thine hand.

To help thee herein, I have collected the beſt Scripture-Marks illuſtrated and prepar'd for thy uſe, by the labours of ſome of our moſt skilful Heart-Anatomiſts. The ſubſtance of which I ſhall here tranſcribe, leſt you ſhould not have the books at hand.

*Four Signs of a ſincere Heart, by Mr.* Gurnal, *in the ſecond part of his Treatiſe on* Epheſ. 6. p. 127, &c.

1ſt. *Mark.* A ſincere heart, is a *new heart*, *Ezek.* 11. 19. whereas it was formerly divided among the creatures, now it is gathered into God: It hath but one deſign, which above all it purſues; and that is to approve it ſelf to God; as one that having many pieces of old ſilver lying by him, which he intends to put into one bowl; he firſt reſolves to caſt it anew, and to that end throws it into the fire to melt, and ſo at laſt ſhuts up all in one piece.

2d. *Mark.* A ſincere heart, is a *ſimple plain heart*; 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. and this Simplicity appears in three things. (1.) In ranſacking it ſelf, in which it is exceeding diligent, and fearful of a miſtake, willing to know the worſt of himſelf; in judging it ſelf, when the ſin is found, he proceeds to ſentence a luſt, as well as to ſearch diligently for it. (2.) In plain dealing with God as well as with it ſelf; An hypocrite asks what he would not thank God to give him, but a ſincere Soul is deeply affected, when his Prayers are not anſwered, and uſes the means to obtain his deſires. (3.) In plain dealing with men, he will not ſubject his conſcience to fleſhly intereſts, nor ſhape his courſe to the times.

3d. *Mark*. The ſincere Chriſtian is *uniform*; and that (1.) As to the object; (2.) The ſubject; (3.) The circumſtances of his obedience. For the firſt, his heart lies cloſe to the whole Law of God, *Pſal.* 26. 11. Hath reſpect to all the Commands: As for the ſubject, the whole man (ſo far as renewed) moves one way; Judgment, Will, Affections, move uniformly: As to circumſtances, he is holy in all times, places, &c.

4th. *Mark*. The ſincere Chriſtian, is *progreſſive*, is not content with any meaſure of Grace, *Phil.* 3. 13, 15, never at his journeys end, till he get to Heaven, *Pſal.* 17. 15.

### *Five Marks of Uprightneſs, by Mr.* Obadiah Sedgwick, *in his Anatomy of Uprightneſs*, p. 202, &c.

1ſt. *Mark*. If a man be upright, he will moſtly ſtrive for an inward reformation of his heart, *Pſal.* 119. 10. *Jam.* 4. 8. *Rom.* 1. 9. it is not ſufficient his outward actions look well, unleſs his heart were better: Oh, ſaith he, that this heart were better, more holy, more humble, more believing: The principal regard of the hypocrite is to externals.

2d. *Mark*. If a man be upright, a little holineſs will not ſerve his turn, *Phil.* 3. 12, 13, 14, 15.

3d. *Mark*. A perſon may know his uprightneſs by the conſcionable diſpoſition of his heart about all ſins, *Pſal.* 18. 23. *Job* 1. 1. Hypocrites have ſtill ſome way of wickedneſs. Such a Soul as is upright, will make conſcience of ſecret as well as open ſins, *Job* 31. 26, 27, &c. *Prov.* 12. 5. yea, of the leaſt ſins. *David*'s heart ſmote him for cutting off the skirt of *Saul*'s garment; yea, of ſins, which are in a ſort more connatural to him, *Pſal.* 18. 23. In a word, Uprightneſs appears in nine things about ſins. (1.) It will endure Tryal, *Pſal.* 139. 23. (2.) It will often try it ſelf. (3.) It ſcares it ſelf, and is ſuſpicious. (4.) It will bleſs God for being kept from ſin: As *David* did for *Abigail*'s Counſel. (5.) It is more ſevere againſt its own ſins, than anothers. (6.) It condemns ſin in all; in Parents, as *Jonathan* in *Saul*: in Children as *Jacob* in *Simeon* and *Levi*: In great ones, as *John Baptiſt* in *Herod*. (7.) It grieves for its own ſins, and the ſins of others alſo. Rivers of Water ran down *David*'s Eyes upon that account. (8.) It's more moved for ſins againſt God, than injuries done to it ſelf: As *David* cannot bear *Goliah*'s Blaſphemies, yet can bear *Shimei*'s railings. (9.) Abſtinence ſufficeth not without hatred; and hatred ſufficeth not without mortification.

4. *Mark*. Uprightneſs is known by a Man's diſpoſition about holy Duties, and in holy Duties, five things manifeſt the uprightneſs of the heart.

1. *Univerſality*. *Pſal.* 119. 6. *Acts.* 24 16. *Heb.* 13. 18. An Hypocrite's obedience cannot be univerſal, becauſe his grounds and motives are but particular.

(2.) By its *conſtancy*, *Job* 2. 3. ſtill he holdeth faſt his integrity. There are three times in which an hypocrite may expreſs great forwardneſs; (1.) When ſtraits of Conſcience are on him, *Iſa.* 26. 16. (2.) When duties are not dangerous, *Mat.* 13. 5, 6, 20. (3.) In the preſence of others; as *Joaſh*, while *Jehojadah* lived.

3. By *ſimplicity* of obedience, when a Man looks not at himſelf, but at God's Command, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. and 5. 14.

4. By the *ſpirituality* of obedience, when the very heart and Soul, the ſpirit and affections act themſelves, and cooperate with our ſervices, 1 *Cor.* 14, 15. *Rom.* 1. 9. *Eph.* 6. 5, 6.

5. By the *Humility* of obedience. Hypocrites are proud of their work. When God enlarges the heart, a Saint may rejoyce; but the Hypocrite will boaſt. A Saint gives all to God, 1 *Chron.* 29. 13, 14.

5. *Mark*. A fifth tryal of Uprightneſs is, if the bent and purpoſe of the heart be unto God, *Pſal.* 119. 5. *Pſal.* 40. 8. 1 *Chron.* 19. 31. *Acts* 11. 23. and this bent or purpoſe of the heart implies three things. (1.) An inward deſire, joyned with love, *Pſal.* 119. 5. (2.) An habitual inclination, not a ſuddain pang, *Pſal.* 119. 20. (3.) An active purpoſe, *Acts.* 24. 16.

*Six Tryals of Sincerity; ſuch as no Hypocrite in the World can have*; *By Mr.* Sydenham, *in his Treatiſe of Hypocriſie.*

*Trial* 1. To hate Sin as Sin, to hate it in its whole Nature, in its firſt Motions, not becauſe it troubles the Conſcience, or brings me to Hell, or renders me unſutable to my Deſigns and Relations in the World, but as it is ſin.

*Trial* 2. No Hypocrite can delight to be made aſhamed by God in its Duties, to be made purely Nothing in its own Eyes, and the Eyes of others. This a ſincere Soul can do, he can take pleaſure in the Lord's humbling of him. An Hypocrite cannot endure to be outſhined; the Principle that acts him, is Self-love: But a Saint loves to be laid low before God.

*Trial* 3. No Hypocrite can bleſs God, and love him from his Heart: When God ſmites him in his deareſt Enjoyments, or neareſt Luſts; ſtrike him in any thing that the Eye or Heart of him is upon, and he ſecretly hates Chriſt. Now a Saint in ſuch a Caſe, will cling to Chriſt, he cannot but love him for all that.

*Trial* 4. No Hypocrite can love the Perſon of Chriſt, nor a Saint, as a Saint; he only loves to be pardoned by him, and have ſome comfort from him; but never finds his Heart to work in Love to Chriſt, and have Union with him, as the ground of all his Comforts. And ſo, for a Saint, loves him not as ſuch, but as ſo and ſo tempered and qualified.

*Trial* 5. No Hypocrite can go on in any ſpiritual Work or Service for Chriſt with any Contentment, without ſenſible Comforts, or outward Reſpects, the wind of Men fill his Sails: But a Saint can take pleaſure in the pooreſt Work of Chriſt, wherein he is leaſt ſeen.

*Trial* 6. No Hypocrite in the World can long to be like Chriſt, as to be reſpected by Chriſt; he cannot love the Holineſs of Chriſt, as the good things he gets by Chriſt: But a ſincere Heart, if he have never ſo much Comfort, yet if he be not like Chriſt, is not pleaſed. And this is the firſt Direction, try by ſound Evidences of Sincerity.

### *Direction* 2.

Make choice of the fitteſt Seaſons for this great Work, and ſet about this, when you find your Hearts in the moſt quiet and ſeriouſeſt Frame; for as he that will ſee his Face in a Glaſs, muſt be fixed, and not in motion; or in the Water, muſt not diſturb or make any commotion in it; ſo is it in this caſe; *Pſal.* 4. 4. *Commune with your own Heart upon your Bed, and be ſtill.*

### *Direction* 3.

Endeavour to caſt out and watch againſt *Self-love*, leſt thy Heart being prepoſſeſt thereby, thy Judgment be blinded, and become partial in paſſing Sentence upon thy Eſtate: Labour to bring thy Heart to be willing to know the worſt of it ſelf; yea, and if thou haſt all this while been deceived, to bleſs the Lord, that now at laſt thy Miſtake is diſcovered, and to be willing to lay the Foundation new again. This you muſt do, for he that will put on the Perſon of a Judge, muſt put off the Perſon of a Friend.

### *Direction* 4.

Labour to keep upon thy Heart a deep and lively Sence of the approaching Judgment, throughout this Work, knowing what a potent Influence this hath upon the Conſcience to make it deliberate, ſerious, and faithful in its Work; and therefore demand of thine own Conſcience, upon the Reſolution of each Queſtion, Whether it will own and ſtand to that it now ſpeaks in the great day, when the Counſels of all Hearts ſhall be made manifeſt.

### *Direction* 5.

Go to the Lord by Prayer when thou art going about this Work, and earneſtly beg Guidance and Aſſiſtance from him therein: It is the Work of the Spirit to ſeal and aſſure thee; and he hath promiſed him to that purpoſe to ſuch as ſeek him, *Luke* 11. 13. *John* 14. 26.

### *Direction* 6.

Condemn not thy ſelf preſently for an Hypocrite, upon the Diſcoveries of thy many Weakneſſes and Imperfections in Obedience; theſe ſhould humble, but not diſcourage thee; it is not thine inevitable Weakneſſes, thy ſenſible Dulneſs, thy lamented Roavings, thine oppoſed Diſtractions, thy miſtaken Unbelief (as one well notes) that argues thee Chriſtleſs, or excludes thee from the Promiſes, *Numb.* 15. 27, 28, 29, 30. *Heb.* 5. 2. theſe break not the Bond of the Covenant: the Lord expects no Angelical Perfection from you in this Eſtate, but looks at your Sincerity, and knows, as a Father, how to pity your lamented Infirmities, *Pſal.* 103. 11, 12, 13, 14.

# CONCLUSION.

AND now I have given you my beſt Advice and Counſel to preſerve you from the Snares and Evils that are, and are coming upon the World; what uſe you will make of it, I know not. I doubt not but it will find a welcome Reception among humble and hungry Souls, though the full and wanton Soul deſpiſe it. *He that hearkeneth unto Counſel* (ſaith *Solomon*) *is wiſe*, Prov. 12. 15. And if thy Heart be ſhut by Pride or Intereſt againſt it, it is an ominous Sign to thy Soul, 2 *Chron.* 25. 16. and preſages Ruin. Which ſad Event, I ſhall beg the Lord in Mercy to avert.

# TYDINGS FROM ROME: OR England's Alarm.

Ezek. 3. 17. Acts 28. 28.

EVERY faithful Miniſter of Chriſt ſuſtains the relation of a Watchman unto the Nation wherein he lives, as well as of a Paſtor to the particular flock over which the Holy Ghoſt hath ſet him; and therefore not only ought to be of a publick ſpirit, to obſerve the firſt approaches of National Calamities; but alſo of a couragious and faithful ſpirit, to give warning of them. Being thus a debtor to my dear native Country, and hearing round about me the noiſe of bloody *Papiſts* rallying together, and preparing themſelves to make a ſlaughter; and finding the fears and jealouſies of the Nation (lately awakened by the flames of *London*, and the inſtruments of cruelty there diſcovered) beginning to abate, though their dangers are ſtill encreaſing upon them; I could not but preſent to the publick view, theſe awakening *Conſiderations* and *Counſels* following; If haply thereby true zeal for the *Proteſtant* Intereſt might be provoked, and the growing deſign of the common enemy detected and retarded.

Eſth. 8. 6,

For alas! *How can I endure to ſee the evil that ſhall come upon my people, and upon my kindred?* As *Eſther* ſaid in a like caſe of common danger: yea, were I ſure of perſonal ſafety in ſuch a day of ſlaughter and deſolation, yet how terrible a thing would it be to ſtand upon the ſhore, and ſee ſo glorious a Veſſel as *England* is, to be caſt away! The Golden Candleſtick removed, and the doctrines of Devils preached and profeſſed in thoſe places where Jeſus Chriſt hath been ſo purely and ſweetly Worſhipped.

Iſa. 62. 6.

*O England*! God hath ſet Watchmen upon thy walls, who will not hold their peace day nor night: And though men have endeavoured to muzzel and gagg them, yet like *Craſſus* his dumb Son, they will cry out when they ſee thee in danger.

If thou enquire of thy Watchmen in this night of thy trouble, as it is *Iſa.* 21. 11, 12. * *Watchmen, what of the night*? They all with one voice return thee the ſame anſwer, *The morning cometh, and alſo the night.* There is indeed a glorious morning of ſalvation and mercy which will ſhortly dawn upon thee *England*; But before that, there will be a night of diſmal darkneſs and diſtreſs upon thy children: *For we have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace; We ſee every man with his hands upon his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleneſs: Alas! For that day is great, ſo that none is like it, it is even the day of* Jacob's *trouble; but he ſhall be delivered out of it.* They ſpeak unto thee as *Elijah* ſpake to *Ahab*, *Ariſe, get thee up, for there is a ſound of abundance of rain*; and there came a ſhower indeed: And that there is a ſound of judgment and wrath coming upon us, will appear, if you have any regard either, *firſt*, to the *predictions* of friends; or *Secondly*, to the *preparations* of enemys; or *Thirdly*, to the *preſent ſtate and poſture of* things among our ſelves at this day.

* *Fingit reſpondere Cuſtodem deſperatis civibus, & augere dolorem.* Luth.

*Venit quidem mane; verum ſimul cum illo venit nox iſta craſſior at terribilior.* Muſcul. *in loc.*

1 King. 18. 41.

1. As for the Predictions of Friends, you have had many, both ordinary and extraordinay.

Firſt *Ordinary*, Upon the obſervations which the Meſſengers of God have made of your Barrenneſs, Wantonneſs, and unchriſtian diviſions, under the fulleſt Goſpel-light and liberty, that ever was enjoyed by an unthankful Nation; amongſt which I cannot omit what a grave and worthy Divine upon the grounds fore-mentioned for divers years paſt, gave us warning of: And O that we had been ſo wiſe and happy to have improved ſuch a ſeaſonable admonition! His words were theſe:

*Gurnels* Chriſtian Armour, *2d. part, page* 429.

“Conſider where you are, and among whom; “are you not in your enemies quarters? If you “fall out, what do you but kindle a fire for “them to warm their hands by? *Aha! ſo would* “*we have it*, ſay they; The ſea of their rage will “weaken this bank faſt enough, you need not “cut it for them. The unſeaſonableneſs of the “ſtrife betwixt *Abrahams* herdsmen and *Lots*, is “aggravated by the neer neighbourhood of the “Heathens to them, *Gen.* 13. 7. *And there was* “*ſtrife betwixt them, and the Cananites and Peri*“*zites dwelt in the land*. To fall out when theſe I“dolaters look on, this would be Town-talk “preſently, and put themſelves and their Reli“gion both to ſhame. And I pray who have “been in our land all the while the people of “God have been ſcuffling? Thoſe that have cu“riouſly obſerved every uncomely behaviour ſa-

‘ among them, and told all the world of it; ſuch as have wit and malice enough to make uſe of it for their wicked purpoſes; they ſtand on tip-toe to be at work, only we are not yet quite laid up and diſabled (by the ſoreneſs of thoſe our wounds which we have given our ſelves) from withſtanding their fury; they hope it will come to that, and then they will cure us of our own Wounds, by giving one if they can, that ſhall go deep enough, to the Heart of our Life, Goſpel, and all. O Chriſtians! ſhall *Herod* and *Pilate* put you to ſhame? They clapt up a peace to ſtrengthen their hands againſt Chriſt; and will not you unite againſt your common Enemy? 'Tis an ill time for Mariners to be fighting, when an enemy is boring a hole at the bottom of the Ship.

How often have you been told both from the Pulpit and Preſs, what the ſad fruit and iſſue of theſe things would be? and as God hath given you timely warnings of this enemy by your faithful Watchmen in an ordinary way, ſo hath he vouchſafed us ſome extrordinary ones too, amongſt which I cannot here omit a ſtrange and remarkable paſſage, which for divers years ſince fell from the pen of an Engliſh Prophet; and becauſe I live to ſee one part thereof ſadly verified, and the other diſpoſing it ſelf towards its accompliſhment (if Providence ſtep not out of its ordinary path to prevent it) I ſhall tranſcribe ſome of the moſt remarkable and bearing paſſages of it for you; my Author having reproved the wantonneſs and vanity of profeſſors, particularly thoſe of *London*, breaks forth into this threatning and terrible prediction.

Mr. Reeves *Gods Plea for* Niniveh; *printed about eight years ſince.*

‘ *London* was *Troy novant*, it is *Troy le grand*; it will be *Troy l'extinct*. p. 217. I ſee you bringing Pickaxes to digg down your own walls, and Springing mines to blow up your own houſes, and kindling ſparks that will ſet all in a flame, *p.* 215. they which were rich owners, muſt then wander abroad for relief, and be glad to beg gratuities, or be glad to kiſs the feet of the Adverſarie for an Alms, out of his own fulneſs; and happy were I, if I could here make an end, and the laſt poſt were arrived. But after all other extremities, Conſcience at laſt comes to her puniſhment, this muſt be made a captive. Men are not only lockt out of their houſes, but out of their Temples; their goods are not only enforced from them, but they are deprived of the Pearl; their Liberties are not only loſt, but the freedom of the ordinances, pure doctrine, worſhip and Faith are in bondage, and the ſoul enthralled. Men that will not permute a God, and ſuffer their faith to be new ſtamped, muſt either run, or dye for it: Your looking-glaſs will be ſnatcht away, your bright diamond ſhiver'd in pieces; this goodly City of yours all in ſheards; ye may ſeek for a threſhold of your ancient dwellings, for a pillar of your pleaſant habitations and not find them; nothing left but naked ſtreets, or naked fields of ſhelter, *&c.* But this is but the miſery of Stonework, of Arches, Dormans and Roofs; but what will you ſay, when it comes to skin-work, Arms, Necks and Bowels? Ye which have walked the ſtreets in ſtate, may then run the ſtreets in diſtractions, with one Leg, or half an Arm, they may beg the preſervation of the reſt of your members: What inventions will ye then be put to, to ſave your lives? Your tears will not reſcue, nor your gold redeem you; but your veins muſt weep, as well as your eyes; and your ſides be watered, as well as your cheeks; when they allow you no ſhowers of rain, but ſhowers of blood to waſh your ſtreets; when you ſhall ſee no men in your Corporation, but the mangled Citizen; and hear no noiſe in the ſtreet, but the cryes, and ſhreeks, yells, and pants of gaſping, dying men: When ye ſhall ſee your kindred ſlain in one place, your wives in another, your children in a third, and your ſelves at laſt (it may be) cut in two, to encreaſe the number of the dead carcaſſes.

‘ As populous as ye are, ye ſhall then be numbred to the Sword; as puiſſant as ye are, the valiant ſhall be ſwept away; as fine fed as ye are, ye ſhall be fed with your own fleſh, and made drunk with your own blood; your Polititians can no longer help you, but have their ſubtil brains daſht in pieces with yours; nor your Lecturers can no longer ſave you; but you muſt meet together at the Congregation near the *Shambles*, when this great City ſhall be but a great Chopping-Bord to quarter out the limbs of ſinners, or the great Altar whereon a whole City is to be ſacrificed. Oh doleful day! when your breaſts ſhall try the points of Spears, your ſides the keenneſs of Swords, your heads the weight of Poll-axes, your Bodies made footſtools, and your dead Carcaſſes ſtepping-ſtones for truculent foes, to tread and trample on; when there will no be pity upon the Aged, nor compaſſion upon the young, but heaps upon heaps; tumbling of Garments in blood, and Swords made fat with ſlaughter. Oh! ſee what a Crimſon City, Crimſon Sins will make!

‘ Or if you do eſcape the dint of the Sword, and your lives be given you for a prey; Shall not your goods be made a prey? Yes, ſome may be reſerved out of the greateſt Maſſacre; when men are weary with killing, a retreat may be ſounded, and men called off from the ſlaughter; yet can ye then challenge your own Houſes, or bring your Keys to your old Cheſts? No, your Title's gone, your Intereſt loſt, ye have traded your ſelves out of your Eſtates, or ſinned your ſelves out of your Proprieties: The Enemy is now houſekeeper, Landholder; ye have forfeited all to the Sword; farwel Inheritances, Purchaſes, Leaſes, Wares, Wardrobe, Furniture, Jewels. As you have gotten theſe goods unjuſtly, ſo they ſhall be taken away unjuſtly; and if they be not ſlain in the heap, yet they do but live to ſee their own miſery; their ſins have made them Bankrupts, they are undone, ruin'd.

‘ And Oh! if the loſs of money were the greateſt miſchief; But there is a treaſure of greater value in danger; there is not an abſolute conqueſt made, till the inner man be in fetters; thou muſt be a ſlave in principles. Oh! It is an hard thing at that time to be a *Jew* inwardly, to keep the girdle of truth about thy loins; thou muſt then bare the fruit of the degenerate plant, or ſtrange vine; pour out the drink-offerings of other Sacrifices, follow the ſorcery of the Miſtreſs of witchcrafts, or learn Magick with them that are brought up in the doctrine of Devils; thou muſt limp with the halting age; fit thy mouth to anſwer the general ſhout, That great is *Diana* of the *Epheſians*; thou muſt taunt thy own Father, ſpit in the face of thine own Mother, and hiſs away all thy true Brethren; thou muſt be devorced from thy own faith, though never ſo chaſte; and deny *Sarah* to be thy Wife,

‘ though thy Eſpouſals with her were never ſo
‘ ſolemn. There will be no ſafety for incontami-
‘ nate faith; thou wilt be either a *Nicodemus*
‘ to come to Chriſt by night; or if with *Daniel*
‘ thou open the windows towards *Jeruſalem*, thou
‘ wilt be caſt into the Den of Lyons. Thus far he.

r. *Uſher*. An inundation of *Popery* was alſo predicted by the learned * Biſhop of *Armagh*, immediately before his death, as is well known to many. And where is the heart that hath any ſpiritual ſenſe or tenderneſs in it, that trembles not in a fearful expectation of theſe things? *Surely, the Lord will* mos 3.7. *do nothing, but he revealeth his Secrets to his Servants the Prophets*. This is one ground of fear.

2. And your fears cannot chuſe but encreaſe, when you conſider the preparation and progreſs theſe Enemies have already made; Have they been ſleeping, think you, all this while? No, no, they have digged as deep as Hell in their Counſels, their Numbers among us are already formidable, their combinations ſtrong, their Confidences high, and their Foreign Aſſiſtants ready. *As the keepers of a field, ſo are our enemies round a-* er. 4. 17. a. 9 11. *bout us; the Syrans before, and the Philiſtines behind to devour* England *with open mouth*. Two conſiderable Advantages they have already obtained: ( *Firſt* ) The removal of ſo many able and Godly Miniſters out of the way. This is done to their hands by a ſad Providence: It is an old and true obſervation, that whoſoever will attempt the overthrow of Religion, muſt begin with the Miniſtry Firſt. *Theſe are ſet for the defence of the Goſpel*. It was the Counſel that *Adam Contzen* ( a Deep-pated *Ahithophel* of theirs) long ſince gave in this caſe; Suppreſs ( ſaith he ) the Miniſters; ( *Et error cui patrocinium deerit, ſine pugna concedet*; ) and then the error that hath none to patronize it, will fall of it ſelf: So he calls the precious truth of Jeſus Chriſt; I dare not affirm that this was intentionally done to open a door of opportunity to them; but that eventually 'tis like to prove ſo; who that exerciſes reaſon ſees not? When ſo many pious Miniſters went off the Stage, it was apparent enough what an opportunity theſe men had to aſcend it, and act their part.

2. Secondly, The deſtruction of our famous City, the ſtrength and glory of the Nation, which they have laid in the duſt; A deſign no doubt, contrived in the Popiſh Conclave: They well enough knew how able *London* was to give check to their deſigns.

My heart bleedeth for thee *London*, to ſee thee made *of a City an Heap, of a defenced City a Ruine; a Palace of Strangers to be no City*. And if they can have their Will, that which follows in the Text ſhould be Added; *It ſhall never be Built*. If Parliaments will hearken to them, they will perſwade like *Rehum* and *Shimſhai*, *Ezra*. 4. 14. That it may ſtill lye in its Aſhes, and upon the ſame pretenſions, *let ſearch be made* ( ſay they ) *in the Book of records of thy Fathers, ſo ſhalt thou find in the Book of records, and know, that this City is a rebellious City, and hurtful unto Kings and Provinces, and that they have moved ſedition within the ſame of old time; for which cauſe it was Deſtroyed*. But I truſt the Lord will make our Rulers wiſe, to diſcover their Bloody intentions, how ſpeciouſly ſo ever Palliated with pretences of Loyalty and Fidelity.

Lamen- ion for don. But mean while *London* is ruin'd! That Goodly Mountain laid waſte! The moſt Glorious City in all reſpects, that ever the Sun look'd upon, now a diſolate Wilderneſs! O *London*! Who can ſufficiently bewail thy Miſery! For mine own part, as the Orator Solemnizing a ſad Funeral, deſired to have learned Mortality from another Subject, rather than that of *Scaliger*: So ( might it have pleaſed the Lord ) I ſhould have been glad to have learned the vanity of all Worldly Glory from another Example, than that of *London*.

*How doth the City ſit Solitary, that was full of* Lam. 1. 1. *People? She that was great among the Nations, and Princeſs among the Provinces! O London!* Thou Lam. 2. 15. ſealedſt up the ſumme, and waſt perfect in Beauty: *Thou waſt perfect in thy way from the day thou* Ezek. 28. 15. *waſt created, until Iniquity was found in thee. Thy* Ezek. 16. 14. *renown went forth among the* Heathen *for thy beauty, for it was perfect through the comelineſs thy God had put upon thee. But thy Heart was lifted up becauſe of* Ezek. 28. 17. *thy Beauty, thou didſt corrupt thy Wiſdom by reaſon of thy brightneſs. Therefore the Lord hath caſt thee* Ezek. 28. 18. *to the ground, and brought forth a fire from the midſt of thee, which hath brought thee to aſhes*. London *hath grievouſly ſinned, therefore is ſhe removed*; All Lam. 1. 8. that knew thee among the People, are aſtoniſhed at thee, thou art a terror to them. *London* may now ſit down by her Siſter *Jeruſalem* in the duſt, Lam. 1. 12. and ſay, *Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by, ſee and behold, was there ever any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger! They* Lam. 1. 21. *have heard that I ſigh, there is none to comfort me: All mine enemies have heard of my trouble, they are glad that thou haſt done it; thou wilt bring the day that thou haſt called, and they ſhall be like unto me. Let all their Wickedneſs come before thee, and doe* ver. 22. *unto them as thou haſt done unto me. Mine enemies* Jer. 51. 34. *have devoured me, they have cruſhed me, and made me an empty veſſel; they have ſwallowed me up like a Dragon. The violence done unto me and to my fleſh be* ver. 35. *upon* Babylon, *ſhall the inhabitents of* London *ſay*. Pſal. 137. 7. *Remember O Lord, the Inhabitants of* Babylon, *in the day of* London, *who ſaid, Raſe it, raſe it even* ver. 8. *to the Foundations. O daughter of* Babylon, *that art to be deſtroyed, happy ſhall he be, that rewardeth thee, as thou haſt ſerved us.*

Let no man think that I endeavor to obſcure the righteous Hand of God, which is to be own'd and trembled at in ſuch a judgment. Though *London* muſt accknowledge his Juſtice in all that is come upon her; yet the Wickedneſs of Inſtruments, is not in the leaſt to be excuſed thereby. God and man may concurre in the ſame action, and yet neither his Holineſs have any fellowſhip with their Wickedneſs; nor their Injuſtice be excuſed by his Righteouſneſs; *Idem quod duo faciunt non eſt idem*; *His work is perfect, for all his ways are judgement; a God of truth, and without iniquity; juſt and right is he, they have corrupted themſelves*, Deut. 32. 4, 5. Wilt thou not confeſs, *London*, that thy ſins were the ſparks that kindled thy flames? Doubtleſs thou wilt, ſuch was thy Pride, Epicuriſme, Formality, and Barrenneſs, under ſuch precious waterings as thou once enjoyedſt, above all the Cities in the World, that thou mayeſt ſay, it is of the Lords Merey thine Inhabitants had not all periſhed with their Habitations; and that God had not made thee like *Sodom*; for what couldſt thou expect when thy *Lots* were going, but that devouring flames were coming?

But to return from this ſad ( though neceſſary) digreſſion; hereby it is manifeſt the common

Enemy hath obtained a ſingular and long expected advantage to their deſign ; often have they in vain attempted it ; but now God hath delivered it into their hands : Well might they rejoyce ( as they did ) to ſee its flames aſcend, and drink healths to its Aſhes. For upon divers politick conſiderations it might eaſily be demonſtrated, that their Cauſe and Intereſt is revived and warm'd by that fire.

3. Laſtly, It cannot but much more heighten our fears, if we conſider the ſad poſture we are in at this day of our Eminent Danger. Three or four ſad particulars I ſhall here ſuggeſt, and let none think it to be a laying open of our nakedneſs and weakneſs to the Enemies ; for I ſhall tell them no News, in telling you that.

1. They are much encouraged, in that the Ceremonies of their Religion find ſuch acceptation among us : It was long ſince obſerved, That as the morning uſhers in the day, ſo the Ceremonies of any Religion, ſerve to bring in the Religion it ſelf ; if we are heartily reſolved againſt Popery, What do we with their Garments, Geſtures, Altars, Croſſes, Liturgies, and Officers among us ? Upon this Reaſon the Divines of *Hamburg* withſtood the Ceremonies of the *INTERIM* ; of which they give this accompt to *Melancthon*. 'Theſe Indifferent things ( ſay they ) 'are nothing elſe but the ſeeds of corruption, the 'nerves of Papiſtical Superſtition, and the little 'paſſages, by which the Adverſaries endeavour 'to creep into our Churches, that they may turn 'them off the foundation. To the ſame purpoſe the Divines of *Saxony* ſpeak ; 'Satan ( ſay they ) 'from thoſe ſmall beginnings of the Ceremonies, 'makes progreſs to the corruption of Doctrine it 'ſelf. If any ſay, theſe are but groundleſs ſurmiſes, a fighting with our own ſhadows ; the Papiſts themſelves are more charitable than ſuch Objectors ; and cannot but know, that although we uſe theſe Ceremonies, yet not in the ſame ſenſe that they do. Pray hear what a *Jeſuit* hath obſerved concerning it. 'Proteſtantiſme ( ſaith Mr. '*Chillingworth* in his Preface, Sect. 20. ) waxeth 'weary of it ſelf, the profeſſors of it, they eſpecially of greateſt Worth, Learning and Authority, Love, Temper and Moderation ; and are 'at this time more unreſolved where to faſten, 'than at the Infancy of their Church. Their 'Churches begin to look with a new Face, their 'Walls to ſpeak a new Language, their Doctrines 'to be altered in many things. If it be again objected, this is but the groundleſs conſtruction of a peeviſh Adverſary. To conclude the controverſie ; hear what a Prelate of our own, ſaith in the Caſe, they are the words of the learned Primate of *Ireland*. 'The Kings and Queen of *England* ( ſaith he ) impoſed theſe Ceremonies, that 'thereby they might decline the charge of Schiſmatiks, wherewith the Church of *Rome* laboured 'to brand them, ſeeing it did appear hereby, 'they only left them in ſuch Doctrinal points, 'wherein they left the truth. Again, hereby 'they would teſtifie, how far they would ſtoop 'to win and gain them, by yielding as far as they 'might in their own way : But ( ſaith he ) the 'experience of many years hath ſhew'd, that this 'condeſcention hath rather harden'd them in their 'errors, than brought them to a liking of our 'Religion ; this being their uſual ſaying, if our 'Fleſh be not good, Why do you drink of our 'Broth ?

*Ep. ad Mel.*

*Contet. Saxon. edit* 1560.

Doct. *Uſher*, of the Cerem. *pag.* 209.

And have we not grounds for our fears, think you now ? if we are blamed for our jealouſies, we muſt blame them that give cauſe for them. Would Biſhops caſt out thoſe Popiſh Ceremonies, our fears of Popery would by ſo much be abated ; but thoſe that nurſe up theſe Romiſh Brats, we cannot but ſuſpect to have too much love for that Harlot that begot them.

2. We are at this day perſecuting and ſuppreſſing the faithful in the Land even thoſe that ſtand in the Gap to intercede for it ; and are the moſt conſiderable perſons, both for Parts and Piety, to oppoſe the deſigns of this Enemy. How are we hacking at the Bough we ſtand upon ; and pulling down our Walls, whiles the Enemy lies round about them ? Is this a time to ſtop the mouths of ſo many able and faithful Miniſters ? to drive them into corners, and not only ſo, but to pull them out of thoſe corners too ; and thruſt them out of the breach, where they ſtand with prayers and tears, which are their only Weapons, and the Nations beſt Defence againſt the common Enemy ? Would any Phyſician that regards the life of his Patient, having to do with a weak conſumptive perſon, that hath but little blood, and few ſpirits left, open a vein, and let out a drop thereof ? It may be you look not upon them ſo, but rather as the diſeaſe of *England*, than the good blood thereof : But God judges otherwiſe concerning them : *The innocent preſerve the Iſland, and it is delivered by the pureneſs of his hands*, Job 22. *ult*. You think if you were once rid of theſe, you ſhould quickly be a proſperous Nation : But verily, *except the Lord of Hoſts had left unto us a very ſmall remnant, we ſhould have been as* Sodom, *we ſhould have been like unto* Gomorrah, Iſa. 1. 9.

Ah ! how little do our bold Informers think whoſe work they are doing ! Little do Conſtables think they are breaking down of the Walls and Gates of the Nation ; when breaking up the peaceable Meetings of God's People. Poor men ! did you but ſee how the Papiſts laugh among themſelves, to ſee their work ſo induſtriouſly performed by your hands, it would ſurely cool your courage, and check your irregular zeal : Alas ! they are not ſo much afraid of your Swords, as of theſe mens prayers. That Popiſh *Queen* of *Scotland* ſpake out, and profeſſed, ſhe dreaded more the Prayers of Mr. *Knox* ( a godly *Nonconformiſt* ) than an Army of Ten Thouſand men. And will you ſo officiouſly ſerve them, by diſarming ſo many Ten Thouſands of your friends of their beſt weapons ? Oh ungrateful *England* ! doſt thou thus requite the Saints for all the good they have been inſtruments to procure unto thee ? Wilt thou make them enter an appeal in Heaven againſt thee, in the words of the Prophet ? *Jer.* 18. 20. *Shall evil be recompenſed for good ? for they have digged a pit for our ſouls ; Remember O Lord, how we ſtood before thee to ſpeak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.*

3. Are not the profeſſing part of the Nation at this day divided, both in their Judgments and affections ? and what a ſingular advantage the Enemy hath thereby, is obvious to every conſidering perſon ; we have been often told, That except the ſpirit of *love* did ſpeedily cloſe up thoſe unchriſtian breaches, the common adverſary would enter in at them. It was a worthy ſpeech of *Brentius*, when the Divines of *Germany* were ſcuffling one with another, in the midſt of the Popiſh

party, ‘*Tollendo merito*, &c. Let all quarreling ‘and bitterneſs be laid aſide, and let us ſubject ‘our judgments to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Our ‘Adverſaries yet live, and are daily more bold; ‘night and day they labour to extinguiſh the ‘Light of the Goſpel which is riſen among us, ‘and to bring back the ancient darkneſs; mean ‘while, we, who in the beginning, by the grace ‘of God, profeſſed the Goſpel unanimouſly, turn ‘our weapons one againſt another, and exhibit a ‘grateful ſpectacle to our Enemies; who place ‘more truſt and confidence in our contentions, ‘than in the vain foundation of their own Cauſe; ‘and all their own art and power.

*Procruſtes.*

I have a long time looked upon our contentions as upon a Blazing Comet, portending utter deſolation, if the Lord heal it not ſpeedily. Think upon this, you that fear the Lord, and tremble at his judgments: How have we beaten our fellow-ſervants? unſainted thoſe that jump'd not with us in our opinions? this Saint was too high, and that too low; but here is an Enemy that like *Procruſtes* the Tyrant, will cut you all of a length: If you were Ten Thouſand more than you are, you were no match for them, as long as you lye in this poſture. How eaſily did *Gideon* with his little handful, vanquiſh the huge Hoſte of the *Medianites*; when every man ſet his Sword to the breaſt of his fellow, and inſtead of oppoſing him, ſlew every man his brother? *Judg.* 7. 22. I make no queſtion but the Papiſts have blown up theſe ſparks of diſſention among us, to warm their own fingers by our flames; they have animated and fomented that ſpirit of bitterneſs and wrath among us; as one that ſets two Cocks a fighting, that having kill'd each other, he may ſup upon them both at night. This was the ſad poſture of *Jeruſalem* when the Enemy entred in her Gates. O *England! England!* thy deſtruction is of thy ſelf. *If the hearts of the Fathers be not turned to the Children, and the hearts of the Children to the Fathers, what can we expect, but that God ſhould come and ſmite the earth with a curſe?* Mal. 4. *ult. Lord heal the breaches of* England, *for it ſhaketh*, Pſal. 60. 2.

4. Fourthly and laſtly, That which much appalls and daunts my ſpirit, is, They find us as deeply guilty of the abuſe of the beſt mercies, as ever any Nation was. So that I am afraid this Enemy will prove the *Flagellum Dei*, the Scourge of God, (as *Totilas* of old, from his cruel perſecution of the Chriſtians was called) to avenge our unthankfulneſs for thoſe choice favours, which Heaven hath ſhower'd down upon this ungrateful Nation. Saint *Jerome* ſpeaking of the Churches Enemies, *By our ſins* (ſaith he) *our Enemies are made ſtrong*; and Hiſtory tells us, that when *Veſpaſian* had conquered *Jeruſalem*, he refuſed to have the Crown ſet upon his head, ſaying, *I indeed am the Rod in the hand of God, but it is their ſins only that have ſubdued them.* Upon what Nation under Heaven hath God more richly heap'd his bleſſings, than upon *England*? and what people have more wantonly abuſed them? or more contemptuouſly ſpurned at the tender mercies of him that conferr'd them? What bleſſing is it, which deſerves to be ſtyled matchleſs, tranſcendent, glorious, that *England* hath not enjoyed? If Peace be it, we have had it; if Plenty, we have had it; if the Light of the bleſſed Goſpel ſhining in its Meridian Splendor be it, we have had it: *But Jeſurun waxed fat, and kicked*; O dreadful fore-runner of National ruin! What was it that gave the *Saracens* footing in the Eaſtern Empire, but the wantonneſs of thoſe Churches, abuſing the Light which they enjoyed? How impatiently did the people of God in former times, thirſt for liberty to worſhip God purely! and when they had obtained it, what was the uſe they made of it? *Horreſco referens*, I tremble in ſpeaking it; Did we not play with our Light, fight with our brethren by it, till God blowed out the Candle? and ſo (I wiſh I could ſay) ended the quarrel.

We may ſay of our liberty, as the Philoſopher ſpeaks of waters, *Suis terminis difficile continentur*; They are difficultly kept within their bounds; Why, Brethren, did you think that God could ſuffer ſuch precious Mercies to run at the waſte-ſpout much longer? Did you think he was weary of his mercies, to continue them to ſuch as little regarded them? or that it was not as grievous to the Bleſſed God, that his children ſhould ſmite one another, as to ſee the Enemy ſmiting them? No darkneſs is more formidable than that of an Eclipſe, which aſſaults the very veſſels of light; no taſte more unſavoury, than that of ſweet things when corrupted; and no ſin more hideous, than that which darkens the brightneſs of God's love, and corrupts the ſweetneſs of his mercy. O *England!* thou haſt abuſed a darling attribute of God, thou haſt ſinned againſt the moſt deeply ingraven Principle, and Law of Nature: The very irrational Creatures, yea, the heavieſt and dulleſt among them, the Ox and Aſs are not ſo deficient in gratitude to their Owners, as thou haſt been to thy God, *Iſa.* 1. 3. juſtly therefore may he upbraid thee, and ſay, *Be aſtoniſhed O ye Heavens at this, and be ye horribly afraid*, &c. *Sicne rependis?* Is this thy kindneſs to the God of thy mercies? marvel not then if God pluck up the hedge of his protection from about thee, and let in cruel foes upon thee, to chaſtiſe thee for thine ingratitude; and though he will not make a full end of thee, yet may he ſay concerning thee, as of *Iſrael*, 2 Chro. 12. 7, 8. *I will not utterly deſtroy them, but will grant them ſome deliverance, and my wrath ſhall not be poured out upon* Jeruſalem *by the hand of* Shiſhack; *nevertheleſs they ſhall be his ſervants, that they may know my ſervice, and the ſervice of the Kingdoms of the Countries.* The Lord I truſt will not utterly forſake his dwelling place in *England*; but verily I fear he may permit *Antichriſt* for a time to afflict us, that we may know the difference between the ſweet and eaſie yoke of Chriſt, which we would not endure, and the yoke of *Antichriſt* that ſhall gall our necks and conſciences with cruel ſervitude. And *becauſe we ſerved not the Lord our God with joyfulneſs and gladneſs of heart, for the abundance of all things, that therefore we ſhall ſerve our enemies, which the Lord ſhall ſend againſt us, in hunger, and thirſt, and nakedneſs, and the want of all things*; Deut. 28. 47. That ſo we may return to God with the Church, and ſay, as it is *Iſa.* 26. 19. *O Lord our God, other Lords beſides thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only, will we make mention of thy Name*; and as Hoſ. 2. 7. *I will return to my firſt Husband, for it was better with me then, than now.*

Theſe are ſome of the principal grounds of *Englands* fear at this day, in reference to the Popiſh Party. Let the ſerious and conſidering Reader lay them together, allow them but a juſt and even ballance, and doubtleſs it will hereby appear, That how great ſoever our fears are, yet our dangers much exceed them.

Having thus hinted the grounds of our fears, what remains but that next I addreſs my ſelf to the principal work deſign'd in theſe Papers; which is to call upon *England* to awake out of her deſtructive ſecurity, and not to ſuffer her enemies to ſurpriſe her ſleeping? And I would do it in the words of the Prophet, *Zeph.* 2. 1, 2. *Gather your ſelves together, yea, gather together, O Nation not deſired, before the decree bring forth, before the day paſs as the chaffe, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon thee.* O that I could ſound this Admonition ſo loud, that all in the Nation might hear it! Had I any hopes that theſe poor Papers might be Honoured with a glance of his Majeſties Eye, I would, as it were, proſtrate my ſelf at his feet, and cry as that woman did, 2 *King.* 6. *Help my Lord, O King.*

*An Humble Addreſs to the King.*

Great Sir, The Lord hath done great things for You, and you are ſcarcely capable of doing a greater ſervice for him, and his people, than vigorouſly to withſtand the Attempts and Encroachments of this ſubtil and formidable Enemy; in that it hath pleaſed the Lord to move your heart to ſend forth your Royal Proclamation againſt them, we accept it always, and in all places, with all thankfulneſs; and pray, That he would not only ſecure your Royal Perſon from their attempts, but alſo make you a Shield to his people in theſe Nations.

*Em. Sa.*

*Mariana.*

It is not hid from your Majeſty what a perfidious and Bloody Enemy this is, whoſe principles as well as practice, tend to the ſubverſion both of Kings and Kingdoms. One of them affirms it lawful to Murder any one (though his own Prince) if the Pope hold him excommunicate; and another ſets down rules how it may be done; and thinks poyſoning to be the beſt way. What but Treaſon and Rebellion can flow from thoſe Bloody Doctrines of the Popes temporal juriſdiction over Princes, and his power to diſſolve all Oaths and Tyes of Allegiance? So that neither your Perſon nor Honour can be ſafe in their hands; Or ſhould your Royal Perſon be exempt from danger, yet if this enemy prevail, how many Thouſands of your poor Innocent Subjects may fall by their mercileſs hands; What a field of bood will they make your Kingdom? and ſurely *the Enemy can never countervail the Kings damage* herein, *Esth.* 6. 16. Moſt gladly at your Command, would we offer our lives on the high places of the field againſt them; but to fall by treachery, and be butchered in our beds, is horrible to think.

*An Humble Supplication to the Parliament.*

And O that God would make our Honourable Repreſentatives in Parliament ſtill vigilant to obſerve, and zealous to oppoſe the motions of this Enemy! We bleſs the Lord for what you have already done, in detecting them ſo far; but yet we cannot think our danger over, whilſt they ſwarm in ſuch numbers among us. *Hanibal* was wont to ſay, *Magis ſe a non pugnante Fabio, quam a pugnante Marcello timere*; he more feared *Fabius* not fighting, than fighting *Marcellus.* O be as zealous for the Proteſtant Intereſt, as they are againſt it, if they dare to ſmite with the fiſt of Wickedneſs, we hope you will not be afraid to ſmite them with the Sword of Juſtice. Remember what a matchleſs ſalvation was once given to our Engliſh Parliament, I mean from the Powder-plot, that *Catholick Villany*, as one aptly calls it: Such a deliverance as Ages paſt cannot parallel in any hiſtory, and of which we may ſay, as the Hiſtorian in another caſe, *Si in annalibus non foret fabula videretur.* Had it not been recorded in our own Annals, poſterity would never believe it; they have indeed ſtudiouſly endeavoured in their late *bold Remonſtrance* to hide from your eyes the goodneſs of God in that deliverence, that ſo by forgetting his goodneſs, they might bury in ſilence their own Wickedneſs; we hope none of your actings againſt this Enemy, will be ſtained with luke-warmneſs; if juſtice be ſpirinkled with a favourable hand, like a few drops of Water upon fire, we doubt inſtead of quenching, it will rather encreaſe the flame. *Rome* is a nettle, the more gently it's handled, the more it ſtings. My Lords and Gentlemen, here is an enemy that deſerves your hotteſt zeal and greateſt vigilance, much better than honeſt loyal *Nonconformiſts*, who plead with God night and day on your behalf.

'Tis acknowledged they differ in leſſer matters, from the eſtabliſhed Worſhip of the Nation; but from the Toleration of ſuch Differences, no Publick Danger can ariſe. Some differences in Opinion (ſaith an Honourable Author) are as the ſtriving of one *Iſraelite* with another; and theſe *Moſes* quiets and parts them fairly; and ſome are like the *Egyptian* ſtriving with the *Iſraelite*, whom *Moſes* ſmites down. It was a noble Speech of *Anthony* of *Burbon* King of *Navarre*, to the *Daniſh Ambaſſador*; this King being a Peer of *France*, and firſt prince of the Blood, challenged the Regency of that Kingdom during the *French* Kings minority: He told the *Ambaſſador*, *That he hoped in a ſhort time to procure a free paſſage for the Goſpel throughout* France; *the Ambaſſador was pleaſed with it*; but deſired that *Luthers* Doctrine, not *Calvins, might paſs for current: The King replyed,* Luther *and* Calvin agree in forty points, and differ but in one. *Let thoſe therefore that follow the tenets of theſe two, unite their ſtrength againſt the common Enemy, and at better leiſure, in a more convenient ſeaſon, compound their own differences:* Grant that *Nonconformiſts* be in an error, yet the difference is not fundamental; and the Famous Emperor *Theodoſius*, did not only bear with the *Novatians*, but familiarly conſult with their Learned Paſtors about Church-matters, though differing in ſeveral Points of Diſcipline; and *Conſtantine*, although he made a Law *in terrorem*, yet in point of execution he ſpared them. O that with one ſhoulder you might ſupport the tottering Intereſt of Chriſt in theſe Nations! and be ſtyled the Saviours of *England* in this time of danger; which will be a more Honourable Title, than any other you are, or can be dignified with.

*Ld. Verulam.* Orll. and. *Coment de ſtatu reip. & rel. Cent.* 16.

Soz. Lib. 7. Cap. 12.

*Queries to the Biſhops.*

I would alſo propound it as a matter of ſerious conſideration to the Prelates; Whether this be a time to vex and perſecute the Conſcientious and Faithful in the Land, for Ceremonies and Trifles, when the ſubſtance of Religion lyes expoſed? Will not the late dreadful Alarms by the Popiſh Party ſound a retreat, and put an end to this work? ſuffer me to propound two or three Queries to your Conſciences.

1 *Queſt.*

Are not Papiſts hereby hardened in their errors and confirm'd in their Cruel and Tyrannical impoſitions upon Conſcience, whilſt they ſee you to uſe the ſame Medium? What plea is left you againſt their Tyranny, if ever God permit them to re-kindle the Flames of Martyrdom in *England*? If your way be good, why is not theirs? *Magis & minus non variant ſpeciem*; Is there not as much ſtrength in their Arguments of Fire and Faggot to convince you, as in your Excommunications,

nications, Impriſonments, Mulcts and Penalties, to convince us of the lawfulneſs of your Ceremonies? It's ſaid of *Molineus Bonifacius*, that his ſilly reaſons for the Popes Supremacy did well enough, being propounded with a Sword in his hand; a keen Sword will make a dull Argument cut to the quick; and if you cannot anſwer ſuch Arguments your ſelves, methinks you ſhould be tender of urging them againſt others. Sure I am, Confiſcations, Impriſonments, and Death are the moſt irrefragable Arguments for Popery, and it is a thouſand pities we ſhould tell the world, that the reformed Religion muſt be ſupported by the like Artifices: It would better ſerve their Deſign in *Spain*, than Chriſts Intereſt in *England*. I am ſure 'tis the proper Cognizance of Antichriſt; and O that it might remain with them only. Hear what a man of your own Character ſaith, 'It is obſervable (ſaith Doct. *Taylor*) that 'the reſtraint of Propheſying, and impoſing upon 'other mens underſtandings, being Maſters of 'their Conſciences, and Lording it over their 'Faith, came in with the retinue and train of Anti'chriſt; that is, they came as other abuſes and 'corruptions of the Church did, when the Chur'ches Fortunes grew better, and her Sons worſe, 'and ſome of their Fathers worſt of all; for in 'the firſt three hundred years, there was no ſign 'of perſecuting any man for his Opinion, though 'at that time there were many horrid Opinions. '—— A Wolf may as well give Laws to the 'underſtanding, as he whoſe dictates are only 'propounded in violence, and written in blood: 'And a Dog is as capable of a Law, as a Man, if 'there be no choice in his obedience, no diſcourſe 'in his choice, nor reaſon to ſatisfie his diſ'courſe.

Liberty of Propheſy. p. 109.

2 Quer. Are you not like to have the ſame meaſure, you mete to us, meted back to you again with an overplus, if this Enemy prevail? and then you'l find how good it is to afflict for Conſcience ſake. Certainly, if you reſolve to be faithful to Proteſtant Principles, you will eſcape upon no eaſier terms, than us.

3 Quer. Are not theſe very perſons againſt whom you diſcharge your Cannons, and worry up and down by your Apparritors, like to prove as ſtiff Aſſertors of the Proteſtant Cauſe, (if God call for more blood to witneſs to it) as your ſelves? you find them (I believe) inflexible enough to your Ceremonies; all your menaces and puniſhments cannot cudgel them into Conformity with them, becauſe they find *aliquid commune cum Antichriſto*, a ſpice and tang of Popiſh Superſtition in them; and doubtleſs, they will as freely lay down their lives in defence of the fundamental and weightier points of Religion, as their Places, Liberties, and Earthly Comforts, for the leſſer circumſtantial truths thereof. And is it not pity, that you ſhould (eſpecially at ſuch time as this) ſuppreſs, afflict, and ſilence ſuch men, whoſe Abilities might now be improved to ſuch ſingular advantage?

Application to the Nation in general.

But, *Aquila non capit muſcas*; Lordly Spirits ſcorn to ſtoop to ſuch mean compoſures, or take notice of a creeping Pamphlet; Let me therefore ſpeak to the Body of the People, and eſpecially to thoſe among the People, who profeſs to fear the Lord, and tremble at his Judgments. Will you ſhut your ears to ſeaſonable Counſel alſo? Will you deſpiſe your dangers, till you are ſurprized by them? O *England*! Wilt thou not begin to fear, till thou art paſt hope? Shall thine Enemies find thee ſleeping, and leave thee dead? Wretched *England*! here is thy miſery, that thou *knoweſt not thy time*; *but as the fiſhes are taken in an evil net, and as the birds are caught in the ſnare*; *ſo wilt thou be ſnared in an evil time, when it falleth on thee ſuddenly*, Eccleſ. 8. 12. May I freely expreſs my apprehenſions in the Caſe; I much doubt thine Enemies have ſo contrived and laid their deſign againſt thee, that (in their apprehenſions at leaſt) all thy ſtruglings now, are but as the fluttering of a bird in the net, which inſtead of freeing, doth but the faſter intangle her. However, if God at laſt, will but open thine ears to ſeaſonable Counſel, and perſwade thine heart to thy preſent duties, who can tell, but the Lord may yet be gracious to his Land, and ſpare his People?

It is not ſo much their confidence, as our impenitence that is to be feared. *Haman* was as confident as they can be, and had *caſt Pur* for the *Jews*, as well as they for us, *Eſth.* 3. 7. So was *Pharaoh* too, when he ſaid, I will purſue, I will purſue; God can quickly give their pregnant deſigns, a miſcarrying womb, ſo that they which have conceived miſchief, ſhall bring forth but a lye; and thou that feareſt continually, becauſe of the Enemy, ſhalt yet praiſe him, and ſay, *The heathen are ſunk down in the Pit that they made, in the net which they hid, is their own foot taken: The Lord is known by the Judgments which he executeth; the wicked is ſnared in the work of his own hands*; Higgaion *Selah*, Pſal. 9. 15, 16. and when the Enemy cometh in like a flood; the Spirit of thy God can ſet up a Standard againſt him: If men cannot, winds and waves ſhall fight for thee, as they have done in former exigencies.

*O nimium dilecte Deo cui militat æther*
*Et conjurati veniunt ad claſſica venti.*

Only obey the Counſels of God, and let thine ear be circumciſed; and as ever you expect that a door of hope ſhould be open'd to you in this valley of *Achor*, let theſe following Counſels be ſpeedily and heartily practiſed.

## 1. COUNSEL.

Abhor Popery, and be eminent in your zeal againſt it. *Rome* is that *Amalek*, with whom God will never make peace, neither ſhould we: It was *Queen Elizabeths* Motto, *No peace with Spain*; and it ſhould be ours, No peace with *Rome*. My dear Countrymen, I beſeech you, be not deceived with vain words; ſuffer not your ſelves to be circumvented by a Stratagem of the Enemy; let not prejudices, and diſcontents which they endeavour to beget and foment in you, againſt your real friends, cauſe any of you to fall in with the Deſign and Intereſt of your Enemies: It is a dangerous thing to comply with that Intereſt which God hath engaged himſelf againſt, and as ſure as Chriſt ſits at his Fathers right hand, ſhall be deſtroyed: And what cauſe you have to abhor Popery, you will ſee by that time I have ſhewed you, that it is a FALSE, BLOODY, BLASPHEMOUS, UNCOMFORTABLE, AND DAMNABLE RELIGION.

Firſt, It is a Falſe Religion, and that's reaſon enough to abhor it. You would be loth to be cheated with Counterfeit Coin, ( eſpecially if you were to receive your whole Portion in it ) how much more with a Falſe Faith, when it amounts to as much as all your ſouls are worth in another World! the falſity of the Popiſh Religion ( if it yet remain a queſtion with any among us ) may be thus evinced.

*1 Argum.* That Religion which is not built upon the Prophets and Apoſtles, but ſtands in the wiſdom of man, is a Falſe Religion.

But the Popiſh Religion is not built upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles, but ſtands in the wiſdom of man; therefore the Popiſh Religion is a Falſe Religion.

The major propoſition is undeniable, and ſtands upon the Authority of theſe Scriptures, *Eph.* 2. 20. *And are built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner Stone.* 1 Cor. 2. 5. *That your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God.* Iſa. 8. 20. *To the Law and to the Teſtimony, if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them.*

The minor propoſition is as evident, for ( 1. ) The Papiſts themſelves acknowledge, that their worſhipping of Creatures, Maſs, Purgatory, the Popes Supremacy, and moſt other Doctrines, wherein they differ from us, cannot be confirm'd by Scripture, *Azorius, Inſtit. mor. par.* 2d. *lib.* 4. *C.* 18. ( 2. ) They ſet up the Pope, as a Judge above the Scriptures, ſubjecting them to the Popes Authority: This many of their Learned Doctors are not aſhamed expreſly to affirm and defend; *Pighius Hierarch*, Lib. 1. Chap. 2, 3, 4. *Card. Cuſan*, Epiſt. *7th* and Bohem. *Cocleus Hollius*, &c. ( 3. ) They reproach and deprave the Scripture, calling it an uncertain thing, dead Letter, an inſufficient guide of it ſelf, without their Tradition; or unwritten Word, *Bellar. de ſuf. Scrip.* ( 4. ) They add to, and detract from the Scriptures at pleaſure. *Bellarmin* ſaith, *Pontificem poſſe mutare prout Ecleſiæ expedit poſitiva precepta Apoſtolorum*, ( i. e. ) The Pope can change the poſitive precepts of the Apoſtles, for the behoof of the Church. ( 5. ) They will not ſtand to Scripture Tryal and Judgment for the Deciſion of Controverſies, but cry out to the Fathers, to Councels, to Shool-men, as appears in our own *Acts and Mon.* in multitudes of Examples. ( 6. ) They reſtrain the People by penalties, from reading the Scriptures, perſwading them to reſolve their Faith into the Authority of the Pope, and believe Implicitly, as the Church believes, *Ergo*,

*2 Argum.* That Religion which aſcribes the Glory of mans ſalvation to himſelf, and not to Chriſt alone, is a Falſe Religion. But the Popiſh Religion aſcribes the Glory of mans ſalvation to himſelf, and not to Chriſt alone; therefore 'tis a Falſe Religion.

The Major is undeniable; the end of Religion is the Glory of God; the Chriſtian Religion utterly excludes the glorying of man in himſelf, *Rom.* 3. 27. *Where is boaſting then? It is excluded; by what Law? of works? Nay, bi) by the Law of Faith.* Tit. 3. 5. *Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us*, &c.

The Minor is evident, for themſelves teach, that the proper certainty of Hope is in Merits, that certainty which is not preſumption, is of merits, and to be meaſured by merits, *Alexand. Ales.* Queſt. *3d. 65.* Merits ( ſaith another ) are the foundation of our hope, *Filiucius.* Tract. 22. n. 244. Therefore,

*3 Argum.* That which is the Religion of Antichriſt, is a Falſe Religion; but the Popiſh Religion, is the Religion of Antichriſt; *Ergo.*

The Major is evident, for the Doctrine of Antichriſt is a lye, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 11. *A myſtery of iniquity*, ver. 7.

The Minor appears as evidently, in that the Notes and Characters by which Antichriſt is deſcribed and indigitated in Scripture, agree to Popery, and to it only. The Pope is that ὁ ἄνομος, that *lawleſs one*, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 8. He ſits in the Temple of God, challenging Supremacy over all Churches. He ſits there *as God*, exalting himſelf above all that is called *God*, ver. 4. They attribute to him the Name of the Lord our God.

*Oraclo vocis mundi moderaris habenas,*
*Et merito in terris crederis eſſe Deus.* Sixtus 4th.

His coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and ſigns, and lying wonders, of which there are numberleſs multitudes in Popery, their Legends ſwarm with them. *He hath horns as a Lamb*, ( viz. ) pretences of meekneſs and innocency, but *ſpeaks like a Dragon*, Rev. 13. 11. He *aroſe out of the earth*, *Stirpium more*, after the manner of Plants, growing by inſenſible degrees to this monſtrous greatneſs; to him only agree all the other Characters in *Rev.* 17. *& alibi.* Therefore.

*4 Argum.* That Religion which tolerates and countenances all manner of Pride, Covetouſneſs, Luſt, Murders, *&c.* is a Falſe Religion; but the Popiſh Religion tolerates and countenances theſe, and many other fleſhly luſts; therefore it is a Falſe Religion.

The Major ( if doubted ) may eaſily be proved by all thoſe Scriptures which ſhew the purity of true Religion, as *Jam.* 1. 27. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God*, &c. *Tit.* 2. 12. *Teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts*, &c. *Pſal.* 19. 9. *The fear of the Lord* ( which is there put for his Worſhip ) *is clean*, &c.

The Minor may be as eaſily proved from their own Hiſtories and Writings, and many other credible Authors. As for their Pride, let an Inſtance or two ſuffice: Sir, *Richard Baker* in his Chron. *p.* 30. tells us, That *Aldred* Arch-Biſhop of *Canterbury*, upon the repulſe of his Suit by King *William* the firſt, grew diſcontent, and offered to depart, when the King in awe of his diſpleaſure ſtaid him, fell down at his feet, deſired pardon, and promiſed to grant him his Suit; the King being all this while down at the Arch-Biſhops feet, the Nobles that were preſent put him in mind, that he ſhould cauſe the King to riſe; Nay, ſaith the Arch-Biſhop, let him alone, let him find what it is to anger St. *Peter*: *Richonius* that proud Papiſt, was not aſhamed to tell the World in Print, That a Prieſt is as much above a King, as a King is above a Beaſt; yea, as God is above a Prieſt. Their *Covetouſneſs* is alſo inſatiable, all things are vendible at *Rome*, even the Blood of Chriſt is ſet to ſale for mony; they have vaſt Revenues from the very Stews and Brothels. The blindeſt times took ſo much notice of their Covetouſneſs, that though they durſt not ſpeak out, yet expreſt their apprehenſions, and juſt indignation againſt them in Pictures. There was found in the Abby of *Fulun* ( beſides other Emblems taxing Popiſh Prelates ) the Picture of a Wolf in a Monks Cowl, and ſhaven Crown, preaching to a Flock of Sheep, with theſe words coming in a pendant out of his mouth, *God is my witneſs, how I long for you all in my bowels* ; and underneath was written, This hooded Wolf is the Hypocrite, of whom in the Goſpel, *beware of Falſe Prophets* : This Picture was made two Hundered years before the Reformation by *Luther*. Another like this was found at *Ptortzhem*, only with this difference, that the Wolf was preaching to a Flock of Geeſe, every one holding in his bill, a pair of praying beads. *Prodigious Luſts* are found among them : They forbid Marriage, and ſcatter their Luſts like brute beaſts promiſcuouſly. St. *Gregory* commanded that their Prieſts ſhould not marry ; but underſtanding what filthineſs they committed, and finding in one Fiſh pond, ſix Thouſand Heads of young Infants that had been murder'd ; he repeal'd his decree : Yea, their own Writers tell us ſuch ſtories of their Wickedneſs in this kind, that I am aſham'd my pen ſhould Engliſh ; the Learned Reader may find more than enough in *Bernard*, in Cant. Serm. 66. *Alvarez. Pelag.* de planct. Eccleſ. Lib. 2*d*. Artic. 24. *Peter Aleacu*, *Palingenius*, *Cornelius Mus.* &c. Moſt horrid murders are frequently practiſed by them, yea, and encouraged with promiſed rewards in Heaven.

John Wolfe *lect. memor. Tom.* 1. *advan.* 1300.

*Valeret* lives of the Popes. *p.* 33.

*Hoſpinian* ſhews us how the *Jeſuits* animate him whom they imploy for the murdering of Kings ; they bring him into a Chappel, where the Knife lyes wrapt up in a Cloath with *agnus Dei* engraven on it ; then they open the Knife and ſprinkle it with Holy Water, faſtning to the Haft ſome Conſecrated Beads, with this Indulgence ; that ſo many Stabs as he gives the King, ſo many ſouls he ſaves out of *Purgatory* : Then they commend to him the Knife in theſe words, O thou choſen Son of God, take to thee the ſword of *Jephte*, *Sampſon*, *David*, *Gideon*, *Judith of Maccabeus*, of *Julius* the Second, who defended himſelf from the Princes by his ſword ; go, and be wiſely couragious, and God ſtrengthen thy hand ; then they all fall upon their knees with this prayer, Be preſent, O ye Cherubims and Seraphims, be preſent ye Thrones, Powers, Holy Angels, fill this Holy Veſſel with Glory, give him the Crown of all the Holy Martyrs ; he is no longer ours, but your companion ; and thou, O God, ſtrengthen his arm, that he may do thy will ; give him thy Helmet and Wings, to flye from his Enemies ; ——then they ſhew him a Crown of Glory, and ſay, Lord reſpect this thy Arm, and Executioner of thy Juſtice :——then they tell him they ſee a Divine Luſtre in his Face, which moves them to fall down and kiſs his feet, and now he is no more a mortal man, *&c.*

Hoſpin. Hiſt. Jeſuit. *p.* 225.

Theſe, and all other Luſts are indulged, even by the Doctrines and Priciples of Papiſts ; for, if venial ſins do not render a man unworthy of the love of God, are but trifles, toyes, gnats, as *Bellarmin* calls them, *Lib.* 2*d. de pecatorem* : If the Pope can grant Indulgences for certain days, or years, ſome partial, ſome plenary ; for all ſins, yea, *interdum plena plenior*, far more than all ; ſome for this life, ſome for ever : What ſhould hinder, but that they ſhould take the bit in the mouth, and ruſh into all Wickedneſs, as the Horſe into the battel ? eſpecially adding, what *Navarrus Cordubenſis*, and others by *Bellarimin*'s own confeſſion, teach, that if men ruſh into ſin, upon the hope of ſuch Indulgences, they may be nevertheleſs abſolved. But I have ſtood too long upon this head ; our Proteſtant Writers have clearly and learnedly envinced the falſity of this Religion ; only becauſe many of their Arguments are in *Latine*, I thought it not amiſs to add ſomewhat for the Satisfaction of vulgar Readers.

lar. do
dulge.
h. 4th.
u. 5,
. cit.

2. Abhor Popery, for it is a Bloody Religion ; *Rev.* 17.6. and *I ſaw the woman drunk with the blood of the ſaints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of Jeſus.* The Pope writes his Laws in blood, wherever he erects his Throne ; he is the Son of perdition in an active, as well as in a paſſive ſenſe. Poor *England* hath had experience of Popiſh cruelty, and ſo hath *Ireland* too ; in one of whoſe *Provinces* 140000 Proteſtants were Maſſacred by them in the late rebellion. Popiſh cruelty ſpares none, pities none ; how have Proteſtants been compelled by tortures to diſcover their deareſt relations ! Wives ( being firſt defiled ) have been forced to give the deaths wound to their dear husbands, bloody villains, putting the Sword into their hands, and guiding them in the Execution : Godly Chriſtians compelled to carry Faggots, to burn their own Faithful Paſtors : Children of eight years old, whipt to death for Religion : Yea, ſuch hath been their rage againſt the ſincere profeſſors of the truth, that beyond all examples of malice, (for *paſcitur in vivos livor poſt fata quieſcit*) they have not only hunted after the Living, but violated the Graves, and burnt the bones of dead Saints : Thus they dealt with *Bucer*, *Fagius*, *Wickliffe*, &c. *O England !* What cauſe haſt thou to bleſs the Lord, for ſo long a reſpit from Popiſh cruelty ! Thine own Hiſtories may ſufficiently inform thee, what Rivers of precious Blood have ſtreamed through thee, what flames of Martyrdom have raged within thy Cities and Villages, when theſe ravenous Wolves and Bloody Tygers were let looſe to ravage in all thy Borders ? And what cauſe haſt thou to tremble at the firſt approaches of theſe truculent foes, whoſe rage is boiled up to a greater height than ever ? And ſhould they return upon thee again, ( which Heaven prevent ) they would exceed all former examples of cruelty. Poor *England* ! Thoſe Knives which lately Providence put in thine hands were intended to be ſheath'd in thy Bowels : Art thou able to endure ſuch another bout, as the laſt Age did ? Hear how one of the Faithful Watchmen ( now out of their reach ) expoſtulated upon the ſame account with thee.

Mr. Strong.

‘ Can you ( ſaith he ) endure to ſee a ſtranger to Lord it in your Habitations and your
‘ Dwellings ? To caſt you out ? For your
‘ pleaſant and well-tilled Fields to be made a
‘ prey ? For you to ſow, and another to reap ?
‘ *Impius has ſegetes*, &c. For the delicate Wo-
‘ man, upon whom the wind muſt not blow,
‘ that ſcarce dare venture to ſet the ſole of her
‘ foot upon the ground for tenderneſs, to be ex-
‘ poſed to the luſts and cruelty of an enemy ; to
‘ be glad to flye away naked, to prolong a Miſer-
‘ able life, which would gladly be parted with
‘ for death, were it not for fear of the exchange ?
‘ For the tender Mother to look upon the Child
‘ of her Womb, and conſider, Muſt this Child in
‘ whom I have placed the hopes of mine Age,
‘ ( for *omnis in Aſcanio ſtat chari cura parentis* )
‘ he that hath been ſo tenderly bred up, muſt he
‘ fall into the rough hands of a Bloody Soldier,
‘ skilful to deſtroy ? It had been well for me,
‘ if God had given me a miſcarrying womb, and

‘ dry beaſts, rather than to bring forth children
‘ unto Murtherers. Or if you could be ſafe, how
‘ could you endure to ſee the evil that ſhall come
‘ upon your people, and the deſtruction of your
‘ kindred? I do not rhetorize and fawn to draw
‘ Affection, your brethren are a ſad Comment
‘ upon what I have ſpoken, and *Ireland* the Stage
‘ upon which you may ſee this Tagedy acted be-
‘ fore your eyes.

3. O hate Popery: For it is not only a Bloody, but a Blaſphemous Religion. If we be Chriſtians indeed, the diſhonour of Gods Name ſhould affect us more than the ſhedding of the warmeſt Blood in our veins; this Scarlet Whore is *full of the Names of Blaſphemy*, *Rev.* 17. 3. Popery is a meer Rapſodie of Blaſphemies: *Luther* hath gathered ſeveral of their Blaſphemous Doctrines out of their own Cannons to our hands, of which let a few ſuffice: (1.) *Papa & ſui*, &c. (*i. e.*) The Pope and his, are not bound to be ſubject and Obedient to the Commands of God. (2.) *Sole ſignificari*, &c. (*i. e.*) By the Sun is ſignified the Papal, and by the Moon the Imperial, or Secular Power in the *Chriſtian Commonwealth.* (3.) *Papam habere in Scrinio pectoris ſui*, &c, (*i.e.*) That all Laws are in the Cofler of the Popes Breaſt, and full power over all Laws. (4.) *Si Papa ſuæ*, &c. (*i. e.*) If the Pope be ſo negligent of his own ſalvation, ſo negligent and remiſs in Office, that he ſhould draw innumerable multitudes to hell with him, to be there ever tormented; yet may no mortal man reprove him of any fault in ſo doing. (5.) *Papam habere proteſtatem*, &c. (*i. e.*) The Pope hath power to commute and diſſolve vows made to God, and then if any man deferr to pay his vow according to Gods Command, he is not held guilty. (6.) *Quod non Papa à Scriptura*, &c. (*i. e.*) That the Pope hath not his Authority from the Scriptures, but the Scriptures from the Pope. (7.) *Summa Summarum*, &c. (*i. e.*) The Summe of all their *Cannonical Law* is this, that the Pope is a God in the Earth, Superiour to all Cœleſtial, Terreſtrial, Spiritual and Secular perſons; that all things are his, and none may ſay unto him, What doſt thou? I am loth to offend Chriſtian ears with more of their Blaſphemous Tenets, this is enough to turn the Stomachs of Chriſtians with indignation againſt them.

2d. *Tome. Oper.* Luth. *Lat.* p.125.

4. 'Tis a moſt uncomfortable Religion; 'tis impoſſible to get, or keep true peace of Conſcience in that way. *Rev.* 9. 5, 6. *And their torments was as the torment of a Scorpion when he ſmiteth a man: And in thoſe days, ſhall men ſeek death, and ſhall not find it, but death ſhall flee from them:* That is, (ſaith a Worthy Divine) the Conſciences of poor ſinners being ſtung with guilt and horror of ſin, and finding no ſatisfaction nor remedy in their way, ſhall be endleſly perplext and tortured with inward troubles of Spirit, which are like the ſtinging of a Scorpion; ſo that they ſhall chuſe death rather than life: For do but Conſider, (1.) They are Enemies to Free-Grace and all Goſpel-preaching. *Gardiner* would not have *this gap of Free-grace open'd to the people.* See (ſaith *Contzen* a Jeſuit) *The fruit of Proteſtantiſm and their Goſpel-preaching.* (2.) They deprive the people of the Scriptures, wherein are treaſured up all the Cordial and Soul-reviving Comforts of a poor diſtreſſed ſinner: *If thy Law* (ſaith *David*) *had not been my delight, I ſhould have periſhed in my affliction*; And again, *This is my comfort in my affliction, thy word hath quickned me*, Pſal. 119. (3.) They lay the ſtreſs of their hopes for ſalvation (as you have heard) upon their own Merits, and the Merits of others like themſelves; ſo that all the comforts they build upon that foundation, muſt needs be looſe and deluſory things: *Debile fundamentum fallit opus:* Every thing is as its foundation is. Laſtly, They deny the poſſibility of the aſſurance of Salvation in this life; and ſo conſequently, their Conſciences muſt be always cauterized and dead, or fluctuating and dubious; O what a Religion is this!

*Contz.* in *Math.* 24.

5. Laſtly, It is a *Damnable* Religion; we have no ground from Scripture, to conclude the ſalvation of any among them, that know the depths of Satan, and live and dye in thoſe deſtructive Opinions. Hear what the Scriptures ſay, *Rev.* 17. 8. *The beaſt that thou ſaweſt, was, and is not, and ſhall aſcend out of the bottomleſs pit, and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth, ſhall wonder (whoſe Names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the World)* when they ſee the beaſt that *was*, and is *not*, *and yet is*: And 2 *Theſ.* 2. 21. *And for this cauſe, God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lye, that they all might be damned that belived not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* When their ſoreſt plague ſhall come upon them, they ſhall not have a heart given them to repent; but *ſhall blaſpheme the Name of God, becauſe of them*, Rev. 16. 9. And therefore to ſhut up this firſt Counſel, you that love the Lord, hate that by which he is ſo much diſhonoured; it will make your blood boil in your veins, to ſee how he is crucified, dethroned, and trampled on by theſe his Enemies.

## 2. COUNSEL.

Uſe all proper preventive Means to avert this threatning judgment; of which ſort I ſhall recommend theſe three in ſpecial.

Mourn for the abuſe of former light and liberty, and ſay, *O [remember not againſt us former iniquities; let thy tender mercy ſpeedily prevent us; for we are brought very low*, Pſal. 79. 8. O *England!* what a day of Mercy haſt thou had! how haſt thou been exalted to Heaven with *Capernaum!* thou mighteſt once have worſhip'd God as purely as thou would'ſt, you might have been as holy as you would; the lot of this Generation was caſt upon ſuch an happy nick of time as is ſcarce to be found in the hiſtory of Ages paſt; but the moſt glorious Morning hath his Evening, the brighteſt Sun its clouds, and time of ſetting. We knew not the time of our Viſitatation, but were both wanton and barren under thoſe precious Mercies. God is now coming with his Axe in his Hand, to hew down barren Trees. Nothing but unfeigned repentance and ſpeedy reformation can reprieve us. *Romanæ leges pœnam pregnanti deferunt.* Nothing but thoſe fruits can be a good ſign of Mercy to *England.* And will you not yet mourn for the loſs of ſuch a day? ſuch peace neglected, and not mourn! ſuch liberties abuſed, and for their abuſes removed, and not a tear! So many flouriſhing Churches broken, and the heart not broken! So many ſhining Lights extinct, and none lay it to heart! Such black clouds of Popiſh darkneſs and

1 Means.

blood gathering over us, and none tremble! Lord! what hearts have we? how wonderful is the ſtupifying power of ſin! O ye Profeſſors of *England*, that ye had known at leaſt in that your day the things of your peace!! but now they are hid from your eyes. You once had thoſe Mercies, now you have them not; and the Lord onely knows whether ever you ſhall ſee them again. I am out of hopes of them, till I ſee the People of God more humbled for the ſins that removed them.

Means. Make up your breaches ſpeedily; 'tis time (I think) when the enemy is entring in at them. Hear me, all ye friends of Chriſt, by what names ſo ever diſtinguiſhed among your ſelves; Will you come and be friends one with another? have you yet enough of your Diviſions? how do the fruits of your Animoſities, Contentions and Reproaches, reliſh now with you? do you ſee who God is ſending to part you? Can't you yet pray together, mourn together, ſtrive with God together? Why then, can you go to Priſon together? will you ſtand quietly at the ſtake together? What ſay you friends? you profeſs to be the children of the God of Peace, and I am ſure Chriſt is the Prince of Peace, and the Goſpel the Goſpel of Peace; and will not you be the Sons of Peace? If you will not yet unite, let the ruin of *England* lie upon your ſcore. Do you make no more of the Commands of Chriſt, the Credit of Religion, the ſafety of the Nation? Ah! methinks, as *Tertullian* told *Scapula*, *Si non vis tibi parcere, parce Carthagini.* If you have no pity for your ſelves, have pity for the Nation; don't ſacrifice all to your unruly luſts. If you profeſs love to Chriſt, and yet have no love for thoſe in whom is his Image; if you pretend to be Saints, and yet had rather hazard the honour of Chriſt, than deny your paſſions and luſts, pray pull off your Vizards, fall into your places, and appear as you are.

Brethren, I beſeech you ſeriouſly to conſider theſe three Particulars, and if there be any force in them, or tenderneſs in your Conſciences, let them at laſt perſwade you to love one another. 1. That Scripture makes your love to the Brethren a poſitive Mark of your Regeneration; 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. *We know that we are paſſed from death to life, becauſe we love the Brethren: He that loveth not his Brother, abideth in death.* And 1 *Joh.* 5. 1. *Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of him.* And to ſpeak truth, it is (ordinarily) the cleareſt ſign that many poor Chriſtians can find in their own breaſts: Upon the hazard therefore of your own peace and Aſſurance be it, if ſtill you continue to bite and devour one another. 2. I will farther add, that this endeared and mutual love of the Sains, is the charge, yea, the dying-charge of Chriſt to them; they were ſome of the laſt words of Chriſt in this World, *Joh.* 15. 12. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* Dying-charges are commonly received with greateſt Veneration, and men (what ever they neglect) will be ſure to fulfil the will of the Dead. So *Gen.* 50. 16. when *Joſephs* Brethren were afraid leſt (his Father being now dead) he would remember the old injuries they had done him, urge this pacifying Argument upon him, *Thy Father did command, before he dyed, ſaying, Forgive I pray thee now the treſpaſſes of thy Brethren.* And *ver.* 21. you ſee how it prevail'd with him, *He comforted them, and ſpake kindly to them.* O my Brethren! will you not fulfil the will of the Dead; your dead friend, even Jeſus that left it as his laſt dying-charge upon you? 3. To conclude, Will you not lay down your private differences and animoſities, when God threatens you with a common ruin? when a common danger is upon you all? In the Year 1607. when by the irruption of the *Severn-Sea*, the Country in *Sommerſetſhire* was overflown almoſt 29. miles in length, and four miles in breath, and many perſons drowned: It was then obſervable (ſaith Mr. *Fuller*) that Creatures of contrary Natures, as *Dogs*, and *Hares*, *Foxes*, and *Conies*, yea *Cats* and *Mice*, getting up to the tops of ſome Hills diſpenſed at that time with their Antipathies, remaining peaceably together, without ſign of fear, or any violence one towards another. My Readers thoughts will doubtleſs anticipate me in the application of this ſtrange paſſage. Our want of love hath cut the banks and let in an inundation of Calamities upon us, and a more fearful flood of Judgments is yet expected; and will not ſuch publick dangers yet cauſe us to depoſe our private Differences? Shall we act below *Dogs*, *Cats*, and *Foxes*? ſhall we prefer private revenge before common ſafety? If ſo, I much doubt God will ſtill us, and part the fray in a more terrible manner than moſt think of. I doubt it may be ſaid of us ere long, as he ſaid who ſaw the dead carkaſſes of Enemies that had been ſlain in a duel lie quietly together, as if they had embraced each other, *Quanta amicitia ſe invicem amplectantur, qui mutua implacabili inimicitia perierunt?* How lovingly do they embrace each other being dead, who periſhed through their mutual and implacable enmity? How juſtly may the Lord ſweep away this Generation of Profeſſors, and raiſe up others in their room who will agree, and love one another better?.

Worthies of *England*, in his Farewell to *Somerſetſhire.*

What ſhall I ſay more? *If there be any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy; that ye be like minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, and of one mind,* Phil. 2. 12.

Strive day and night with God by importunate Prayers, for the prevention of thoſe imminent Judgments, but ſtrive no more one with another; no more of that work I pray. O 'tis a thouſand pities to ſee the ſheep of Chriſt to puſh and gore each other. *Non Secus ac,*

> *Cum duo converſis inimica in prælia tauri*
> *Frontibus incurrunt.*————

O rather put on, as the Elect of God, bowels of mercy and compaſſion; let the People of God be but once heartily united, and then *Rome* do thy worſt. *Aſſociate your ſelves, O ye people, and you ſhall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far Countreys; gird your ſelves, and ye ſhall be broken in pieces; take Counſel together, and it ſhall come to nought; ſpeak the word, and it ſhall not ſtand; for God is with us.*

3 Means. Lye day and night at the Throne of Grace, interceding with God for your ſelves, and for the Nation. What Mr. *Perkins* ſaid of his times, it is no leſs ſuitable to theſe, *Non ſunt iſta litigandi, ſed orandi tempora:* Theſe are not times for contention, but Prayer: This will be a good Omen of Mercy and deliverance at hand; we may ſay of the ſpirit of Prayer, as Chriſt ſaid of the budding of the Fig-tree, *Mat.* 24. *When ye ſee the Fig-tree and all the Trees of the Field put forth tender leaves, ye know that Summer is nigh.* So the reviving and budding forth of the Spirit of Prayer, is a ſign that Salvation is nigh: The Pſalmiſt knew

the time to favour *Sion* was come, and that God would ariſe and have mercy upon her, becauſe he found a ſpirit of compaſſion and prayer for *Sion* poured out, *Pſ.* 102.13, 14. When the decree for judgment is gone forth, and God will not be ſtopt, he uſually ſhuts up and ſtraitens the ſpirits of praying ones, *Jer.* 7. 16. He never ſhuts out Prayer till the caſe become deſperate, and remedileſs; *Jer.* 15.1. O friends, great is the efficacy of prayer; Prayer will ruin all your enemies: *David* put up but one petition againſt *Achitophel*, *Lord turn the Counſel of* Achitophel *into fooliſhneſs*, and it ruined both him and his deſign, 2 *Sam.* 15. 3. Prayers and tears will do more than Guns or Swords, 2 *Chron.* 14. 9. 11.

O be not diſcouraged, becauſe you preſently ſee not the effects and returns of your Prayers; your prayers are heard, though their anſwers be ſuſpended, and be confident in due time they ſhall be anſwered alſo. O how many millions of prayers are upon the file in Heaven, as a Memorial before God upon this account! not a good man all the world over but joins with you in this cry, Lord, raſe the foundations of Antichriſt, pull down *Babylon*, and build up *Sion*. Yea, the prayers of thouſands, who are now in Heaven, are yet to be anſwer'd in that matter. For though we may ſay of their perſons as the Church ſpeaks of *Abraham*, they know us not; yet we may ſay of their prayers as the Church ſpeaks of *Abel*, though they be dead, their prayers are not dead, they live, and yet ſpeak. O then ſtir up your ſelves to take hold of God, weep and make ſupplication.

Two things exceedingly diſcourage our ſpirits in prayer, great *guilt* in us, and long *delayes* of anſwers from God; againſt both theſe, the Lord hath laid up encouragements and ſweet ſupports in the word: Are we under great guilt? have we abuſed mercies? So did *Iſrael*, Pſ. 106. 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 28. Yet mercy comes triumphing over all their unworthineſs with a *non obſtante*, *ver.* 44. *Nevertheleſs he regarded their affliction when he heard their cry.* What though *England* like *Iſrael* be a polluted Nation; *yet Iſrael hath not been forſaken, nor Judah of his God; though their Land was filled with ſin againſt the holy one of Iſrael*, Jer. 51. 5. Or doth God exerciſe your faith and patience by delaying the returns of prayer; ſo that you are ready to look at your prayers as loſt? See another *Nevertheleſs*, in that caſe to raiſe up your hearts and hopes, *Pſal.* 31. 22. *I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes; Nevertheleſs, thou heardeſt the voice of my ſupplication when I cryed unto thee.* Up therefore every one in whom is the ſpirit of prayer, pour out your hearts before him in this time of common danger, your God will hear you; but if you are ſpeechleſs now, 'tis a ſad forerunner of death, and National ruin.

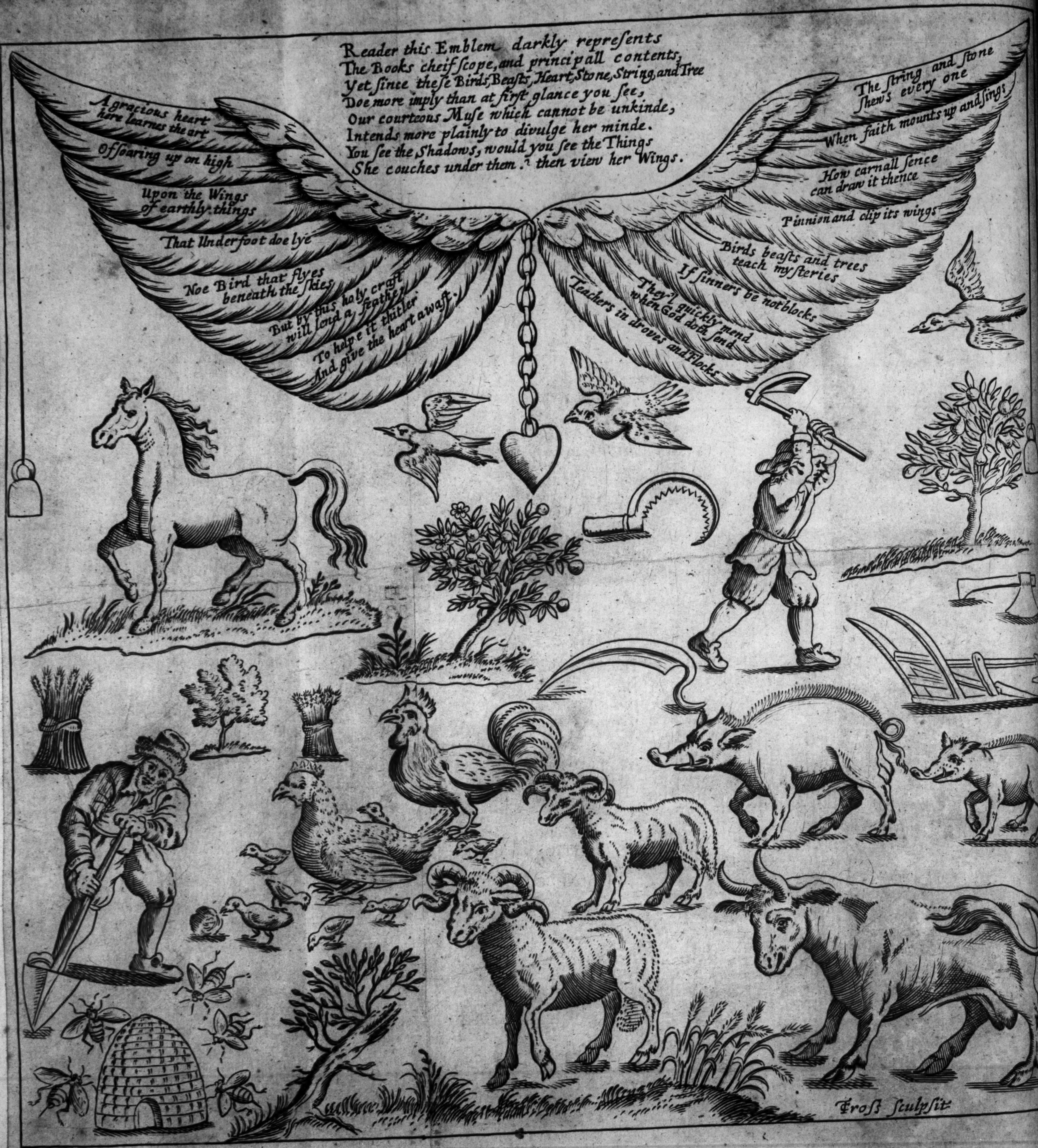
### 3. *COUNSEL.*

Prepare your ſelves for the worſt, that if times ſhould alter (for there are changes in the right hand of the Moſt High) yet your hearts may not be turned back, nor your ſteps decline from thoſe paths of truth and holineſs wherein you have been engaged.

O cleave to the Lord with purpoſe of heart, and when fiery Tryals come (whereof moſt ſerious and conſidering Chriſtians are in a trembling expectation) then do not baſely deſert Chriſt in open field. To do evil (ſaith *Metellus*) where there is neither pain nor danger, is eaſie and common; but to do good in the face of danger, is vertuous and truly noble. It was the ſaying of a *Martyr* to his Perſecutors, *Though you pluck my heart out of my bowels, yet you ſhall never pluck the truth out of my heart.* O how is Chriſt honoured, enemies daunted; and your Souls ſecured by your Conſtancy in a time of danger! hold faſt what you have received, and though you loſe your Heads, yet ſave your Crowns. It was a reſolute and noble ſaying of *Luther*, when hard put to it to defend the Truth of Chriſt againſt ſo many Enemies, *Ego Martinus Lutherus*, &c. 'I *Martin Luther*, an unworthy 'Preacher of the Goſpel of Chriſt, do believe and 'hold, that this Article, *viz.* That we are juſtified before God, by faith alone without works, 'ſhall never be overthrown, neither by the *Roman Cæſar*, nor by the *Turk*, *Tartar*, *Perſian*, '*Pope*, with all his *Cardinals*, *Prieſts*, and *Monks*, 'Kings, Princes, Potentates, and all the Devils in 'Hell, will they, nill they, ſhall leave me this Article unſhaken.

Brethren, I much doubt the wantonneſs, Scepticiſme, and contentions of the Profeſſors of this Age, have ſo weakned the Authority and Reputation of Religion in the World, that God will once more call for Chriſtian blood to ſeal his Truths, and convince the world that there is reality in Godlineſs. And if it ſhould come to that, I even tremble to think what ſhrinking will be among Profeſſors. To prevent which, all that I ſhall add, ſhall be in theſe two words. 1. See the ground you ſtand on be good. I do not ſpeak of the Cauſe, for it is beyond diſpute the moſt glorious Cauſe that was ever ſealed by the blood of any Witneſs; but of your *Condition*. O ſee that be good alſo! look to it that you die in, as well as for the faith; are you upon ſure and ſafe grounds, as to your eternal ſtate? if not, but that you be ſtill dubious, it's time to make both ſure and quick work. 2. Stand your ground, he deſerves to be hanged in everlaſting chains in Hell, that relinquiſhes ſuch a Cauſe, and ſuch a Chriſt on Earth. Chriſtian, I would fain know, how thou canſt imagine to cloſe up thy life more honourably, or more comfortably, than by offering it up in defence of the precious truths of Chriſt, againſt his bold and blaſpheming enemies? The very Heathens heated with love to their Country, have made many brave, and bold adventures for it; and will you ſhrink? *O take unto you the whole Armour of God, that you may be able to withſtand in the evil day; and having done all, to ſtand. Stand therefore*, &c. Epheſ. 6. 13.

Husbandry



Reader this Emblem darkly repreſents
The Books cheif ſcope, and principall contents,
Yet ſince theſe Birds, Beaſts, Heart, Stone, String, and Tree
Doe more imply than at firſt glance you ſee,
Our courteous Muſe which cannot be unkinde,
Intends more plainly to divulge her minde.
You ſee the Shadows, would you ſee the Things
She couches under them. then view her Wings.

A gracious heart
here learnes the art
Of ſoaring up on high
Upon the Wings
of earthly things
That Underfoot doe lye
Noe Bird that flyes
beneath the ſkies
But by this holy craft
will lend a feather
To helpe it thitler
And give the heart awaft.
The ſtring and ſtone
Shew's every one
When faith mounts up and ſings
How carnall ſence
can draw it thence
Pinnion and clip its wings
Birds beaſts and trees
teach myſteries
If ſinners be not blocks
They'l quickly mend
when God doth ſend
Teachers in droves and Flocks
TCroſs ſculpſit

# Husbandry Spiritualiz'd:

OR, THE

## Heavenly Uſe of Earthly Things.

Conſiſting of many Pleaſant *Obſervations*, Pertinent *Applications*, and Serious *Reflections*; and each Chapter concluded with a *Divine* and Suitable *Poem*. Directing *Husbandmen* to the moſt Excellent Improvements of their common Imployments. Whereunto are added, by way of *Appendix*, ſeveral Choice *Occaſional Meditations*, upon *Birds*, *Beaſts*, *Trees*, *Flowers*, *Rivers*, and ſeveral other Objects; fitted for the help of ſuch as deſire to Walk with God in all their Solitudes and Receſſes from the World.

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## THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

*To the Worſhipful* Robert Savery, *and* William Savery, *of* Slade, *Eſquires.*

*Honoured Friends,*

IT hath been long ſince obſerv'd, That the World below, is a Glaſs to diſcover the World above; *Seculum eſt ſpeculum.* And although I am not of their opinion, that ſay, The Heathens may ſpell Chriſt out of the Sun, Moon and Stars; yet this I know, That the irrational and inanimate, as well as rational Creatures have a Language; and though not by Articulate Speech, yet in a Metaphorical ſenſe, they preach unto Man the Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs of God, *Rom.* 1. 20. *There is* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 19. 3.) *no ſpeech, nor language where their voice is not heard.* Or (as *Junius* renders) there is no Speech, nor Words, yet without theſe their voice is underſtood; and their Line *(i.e.* ſaith *Diodate)* their writing in groſs and plain draughts, is gone out through all the Earth.

As Man is compounded of a fleſhly and ſpiritual ſubſtance, ſo God hath endowed the Creatures, with a ſpiritual, as well as fleſhly uſefulneſs; they have not only a natural uſe in Alimental and Phyſical reſpects, but alſo a ſpiritual uſe, as they bear the figures and ſimilitudes of many ſublime and heavenly Myſteries. Believe me (ſaith contemplative *Bernard*) thou ſhalt find more in the Woods, than in a corner; Stones and Trees will teach thee what thou ſhalt not hear from Learned Doctors. By a skilful and induſtrious improvement of the Creatures (ſaith Mr. *Baxter* excellently) we might have a fuller taſte of Chriſt and Heaven, in every bit of Bread that we eat, and in every Draught of Beer that we drink, than moſt Men have in the uſe of the Sacrament.

And as the Creatures teach divine and excellent things, ſo they teach them in a perſpicuous and taking manner: *Duo illa nos maxime movent ſimilitudo, & exemplum,* ſaith the Orator; Theſe two things, ſimilitude and example, do eſpecially move us. Notions are more eaſily conveyed to the underſtanding, by being firſt cloathed in ſome apt ſimilitude, and ſo repreſented to the ſenſe. And therefore Jeſus Chriſt the great Prophet, delighted much in teaching by Parables; and the Prophets were much in this way alſo, *Hoſ.* 12. 10. *I have uſed ſimilitudes by the miniſtry of the Prophets.* Thoſe that can retain little of a Sermon, yet ordinarily retain an apt ſimilitude.

I confeſs it is an humbling Conſideration, That Man, who at firſt was led by the knowledge of God to the knowledge of the Creature, muſt now by the Creatures learn to know God. That the Creatures (as one ſaith) like *Balaam*'s Aſs, ſhould teach their Maſter. But though this be the unhappineſs of poor Man in his collapſed ſtate, yet it is now his wiſdom to improve ſuch helps; and whilſt others, by the abuſe of the Creatures, are furthering their Perdition, to be, by the Spiritual Improvement of them promoting our own Salvation.

It's an excellent Art to diſcourſe with Birds, Beaſts and Fiſhes, about ſublime and ſpiritual Subjects, and make them anſwer to our queſtions; yet this may be done, *Job* 12. 7, 8. *Ask now the Beaſts, and they ſhall teach thee, and the Fowls of the Air, and they ſhall tell thee; or ſpeak to the Earth, and it ſhall teach thee, and the Fiſhes of the Sea ſhall declare unto thee.* That is (ſaith neat and accurate *Caryl*) the Creatures teach us when we think of them: " They teach us, though not formally, yet virtually; they anſwer and reſolve " the queſtion put to them, though not explicitely to the Ear, yet convincingly to " the Conſcience. So then, we ask the Creatures, when we diligently conſider them, " when we ſearch out the Perfections and " Virtues that God hath put into or ſtampt

*Caryl* in loc.

“ upon them. To ſet our mind thus upon the Creature, is to diſcourſe with the Creature; the queſtions which Man asks of a Beaſt, are only his own Meditations. Again, the Creatures teach us; when we in Meditation make our Collections, and draw down a demonſtration of the Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs of God in making them, or of the frailty of Man in needing them: Such Concluſions and Inferences, are the teachings of the Creatures.

*Dr.* Manton.

Common objects (ſaith another) may be improved two ways; *viz.* In an Argumentative, and in a Repreſentive way; by reaſoning from them, and by viewing the reſemblance that is betwixt them and ſpiritual matters.

*Firſt*, In Meditation argue thus, as in the preſent caſe and ſimilitude of the Apoſtle. If an Husbandman upon the ordinary Principles of Reaſon can wait for the Harveſt, ſhall not I wait for the coming of the Lord? The day of Refreſhing; the Corn is precious to him, and ſo is the coming of Chriſt to me. Shall he be ſo patient, and endure ſo much for a little Corn? and not I for the Kingdom of Heaven? He is willing to ſtay till all cauſes have had their operations, till he hath received the former and the latter Rain, and ſhall not I, till the Divine Decrees be accompliſhed?

*Secondly*, In Meditation, make the reſemblance, and diſcourſe thus within your ſelves: This is my Seed-time, Heaven is my Harveſt; here I muſt labour and toyl, and there reſt. I ſee the Husbandmans Life is a great toyl: no excellent thing can be obtained without labour, and an obſtinate patience. I ſee the Seed muſt be hidden in the furrows, rotten and corrupted, e'er it can ſpring forth with any encreaſe. Our hopes are hidden, light is ſown for the righteous; all our comforts are buried under the clods, and after all this there muſt be long waiting, we cannot ſow and reap in a day; effects cannot follow, till all neceſſary cauſes have firſt wrought. 'Tis not in the power of Husbandmen to ripen Fruits at pleaſure, our times are in the hands of God, therefore 'tis good to wait; a long-ſuffering patience will reap the deſired Fruit. Thus you have ſome hints of this heavenly Art of improving the Creatures.

*Navigation Spiritualized.*

The Motives inducing me to this undertakement, was the Lord's owning, with ſome ſucceſs, my labours of a like nature, together with the deſire and inclination (ſtir'd up in me, I hope, by the Spirit of the Lord, to devote my vacant hours to his ſervice in this kind.) I conſidered, that if the *Phariſees* in a blind Zeal to a Faction, could compaſs Sea and Land to Proſelyte Men to their Party, though thereby they made them ſeven-fold more the Children of the Devil than before: How much more was I obliged, by true love to God, and zeal to the Everlaſting Happineſs of Souls, to uſe my utmoſt endeavours, both with *Seamen* and *Husbandmen* to win them to Chriſt, and thereby make them more than ſeventy-ſeven fold happier than before? Not to mention other incouragements to this Work, which I received from the earneſt deſires of ſome Reverend and Worthy Brethren inviting thereunto; all which I hope the event will manifeſt to be a Call from God to this Work.

I confeſs I met with ſome diſcouragement in my firſt attempt, from my unacquaintedneſs with rural Affairs; and becauſe I was to travel in a path (to me) untrodden; but having once engaged in it, thoſe diſcouragements were ſoon overcome; and being now brought to what you here ſee, I offer to your hands theſe firſt Fruits of my ſpare hours.

I preſume you will account it no diſparagement, that I dedicate a Book of Husbandry to Gentlemen of your Quality. This is *Spiritual Husbandry*, which is here taught you; and yet I muſt tell you, that great Perſons have accounted that Civil Employment (which is much inferiour to this) no diſparagement to them. *The King himſelf is ſerved by the field*, Eccleſ. 5. 9. Or as *Montanus* renders the *Hebrew* Text, *Rex agro fit ſervas;* The King himſelf is a Servant to the Field. And of King *Uzziah* it is written, (2 *Chron.* 26. 10.) *That he loved Husbandry.* And *Amos* 7. 1. we read of the *Kings Mowings.* Yea, *Pliny* hath obſerved, That Corn was never ſo plentiful at *Rome*, as when the ſame Men Tilled the Land that Rul'd the *Commonwealth. Quaſi gauderet terra laureato vomere, ſcilicet & aratore triumphali;* As though the Earth it ſelf rejoyced in the Laurel'd Plow-ſhare, and the Triumphant Plowman.

What pleaſure you will find in reading it, I know not; but to me it hath been a pleaſant path, from firſt to laſt; who yet have been at far greater expence of time and pains in compiling it, than you can be in reading it. The Husbandmans work, you know, is no eaſie work, and the Spiritualizing of it hath greater difficulties attending it; but yet the pleaſure hath abundantly recompenced the pains. I have found *Eraſmus* his Obſervation experimentally true; *Qui litteris addicti ſumus, animi laſſitudinem à ſtudiis gravioribus contractum; ab iiſdem ſtudiis, ſed amænioribus recreamus:* Thoſe that are addicted to ſtudy, (ſaith he) when they have wearied their Spirits with ſtudy, can recreate them again with ſtudy, by making a diverſion from that which is ſevere and knotty, to ſome more facile and pleaſant Subject.

But to hear that God hath uſed and honoured theſe Papers to the good of any Soul, will yield me the higheſt content and ſatisfaction imaginable.

May you but learn that Leſſon, which is the general ſcope and deſign of this Book, *viz.* How to walk with God from day to day, and make the ſeveral objects you behold, *Scalæ & alæ*, Wings and Ladders to mount your Souls nearer to him, who is the Center of all bleſſed Spirits. How much will it comfort me, and confirm my hope, that it was the Call of God indeed, which put me upon theſe endeavours!

O Sirs! What an excellent thing would it be for you, to make ſuch holy improvements of all theſe earthly Objects which daily occur to your ſenſes, and cauſe them to proclaim and preach to you Divine and Heavenly Myſteries; whilſt others make them groan, by abuſing them to Sin, and ſubjecting them to their Luſts. A man may be caſt into ſuch a condition, wherein he cannot enjoy the bleſſing and benefit of a pious and powerful Miniſtery; but you cannot (ordinarily) fall into ſuch a condition, wherein any thing (except a bad heart) can deprive you of the benefits and comforts of thoſe excellent Sermons, and Divinity Lectures, which the Creatures here offer to preach and read to you.

Content not your ſelves, I beſeech you, with that natural ſweetneſs the Creatures afford; for thereof the Beaſts are capable, as much, if not more, than you; but uſe them to thoſe Spiritual ends you are here directed, and they will yield you a ſweetneſs far tranſcending that natural ſweetneſs you ever reliſhed in them; and indeed, you never uſe the Creatures as their *Lord's* till you come to ſee *your Lord*, in and by them. I confeſs the diſcoveries of God in the Word are far more excellent, clear and powerful; *He hath magnified his Word above all his Name.* And therein are the unſearchable *Riches of Chriſt*, or rich diſcoveries of that Grace that hath no footſteps in nature, as the Apoſtle's expreſſion ſignifies, *Epheſ.* 3. 8.

And if that which might be known of God by the Creatures, leave Men without excuſe; as it's manifeſt, *Rom.* 1. 20. How inexcuſable than will thoſe be, who have received not only the teachings of the Creature, but alſo the Grace of the Goſpel in vain! *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation?* They that are careleſs in the day of Grace, ſhall be ſpeechleſs in the Day of Judgment.

I am ſenſible of many defects in theſe Papers, (as well as in my ſelf;) they have doubtleſs a taſte of the diſtractions of the Times wherein they were written; nor was I willing to keep them ſo long under-hand, as the accurateneſs and exactneſs with which ſuch a ſubject ought to be handled, did require. Had I deſigned my own Credit, I ſhould have obſerved that Counſel,—*Nonumque prematur in annum*, (*i.e.*) To have kept it much longer under the File, before I had expoſed it to publick view; but I rather inclined to *Solomon*'s Counſel, *Whatever thy hand finds out to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no wiſdom, nor knowledge, nor device in the grave, whether thou art going*, Eccleſ. 9. 10.

I apprehend a neceſſity of ſome ſuch means to be uſed, for the inſtruction and conviction of Country People; who either are not capable of underſtanding Truth in another Dialect, or at leaſt, are leſs affected with it. The *Propoſition* in every Chapter conſiſts of an Obſervation in Huſbandry; wherein, if I have failed in uſing any improper expreſſion, your Candour will cover it, and impute it to my unacquaintedneſs in rural Affairs,----*In magnis voluiſſe ſat eſt.*

The *Reddition*, or Application, you will find (I hope) both pertinent and cloſe. The *Reflections* ſerious, and ſuch (as I hope) your Conſciences will faithfully improve. I have ſhut up every Chapter with a *Poem*, an innocent Bait to catch the Reader's Soul.

That of *Herbert* is Experimentally true:

> *A Verſe may find him that a Sermon flies,*
> *And turn Delight into a Sacrifice.*

I ſhould never have been perſwaded (eſpecially in this ſcribling Age, wherein we may complain with the Poet,

> *Scribimus indocti, doctiq; poemata paſſim.*)

To have ſet my dull Fancy upon the Rack to extort a Poem to entertain my Reader; for I cannot ſay with *Ovid*, *Sponte ſua carmen, &c.* but that I have been informed, that many Seamen induced by the pleaſure of a Verſe, have taken much pains to learn the *Poems* in their *Compaſs* by heart; and I hope both the Children at home, and the Servants in the Fields, will learn to exerciſe themſelves this way alſo. O, how much better will it be ſo to do, than to ſtuff their Memories with obſcene Ballads, and filthy Songs, which corrupt their Minds, and diſpoſe them to much wickedneſs, by irritating their natural corruption! But theſe are purer Flames, you will find nothing here of ſuch a tendency.

> *'Tis guilt, not Poetry, to be like thoſe*
> *Whoſe Wit in Verſe, is downright ſin in Proſe.*
> *Whoſe ſtudies are Prophaneneſs, as if then*
> *They only were good Poets, when bad men.*

D. DIGS.

I ſhall add no more, but to beg that God who inſtructeth the Huſbandman in his Civil Calling, to teach him wiſdom ſpiritually to improve it; and particularly, that you may reap a Crop of much Spiritual Benefit, from that Seed which is here ſown by the hand of the Lord's unprofitable Servant, and in him,

*Your very Affectionate*

*Friend and Servant,*

John Flavel.

# TO THE
# Chriſtian READER.

*THere are three things wherein (as it hath been ſaid, long before my day) the Exerciſe of Godlineſs doth chiefly conſiſt: Prayer, Temptation, Meditation: Meditation is the Subject of this following Manuel. The Object of Meditation is twofold. Firſt, The Word. Secondly, The Works of God. The Works of God are twofold. Firſt, Internal. Secondly, External. The External Works of God are twofold. Firſt, of Creation. Secondly, of Providence. The Works of Providence are likewiſe twofold. Firſt, In things Civil, the Lord ordering and over-ruling all the Affairs and Motions of ſingle Perſons, Families and Nations, in a ſubſerviency to his own moſt holy Ends, Deſigns and Purpoſes. Secondly, In things Natural, the Lord inſtructing the Husband-man to diſcretion, and teaching him how to Dreſs and Till the Earth, that it may give Seed to the Sower, and Bread to the Eater; as alſo how to breed up and manage the Beaſts of the Field, both greater and leſſer Cattel, for the uſe and ſervice of Man.*

*Meditation upon this lower part of the Works of God, and his wonderful Providences about them, may raiſe our Souls very high; and while we wiſely conſider theſe natural things, we may grow more and more wiſe, in and for Spirituals and Eternals.*

*The worthy and ingenious Author of the enſuing Diſcourſe, hath ſupplied us with an excellent help, for the Spiritualizing of the Providential Works of God in natural things, by Godly Meditations; we chiefly want the help of the Holy Spirit (without which all other helps and helpers are altogether inſufficient) to frame and wind up our hearts, for this both profitable and delightful duty; yet the help which the Lord is pleaſed to give us for our direction in it, by the Miniſtry of Man, is not only not to be refuſed, but thankfully received and improved; and all little enough to bring our minds to, or keep them at this work: The beſt of Saints (on this ſide Heaven) have (though they are not earthly-minded) much Earth in their minds; which like a heavy clog at their heels, or a weight at their hearts, preſſeth them down when they would make an eſſay to mount upward in Meditation. We find it no eaſie matter to keep off earthly thoughts, when we are moſt ſeriouſly engaged in heavenly Work; how hard is it then to get in, and be fixed upon heavenly Thoughts, while we are engaged about earthly Work; yea, are (for ſo is the Husband-man) working the very earth, and raking in the Bowels of it. 'Tis a great part of our holineſs to be ſpiritually minded, while we are converſing with God through Jeſus Chriſt in Spiritual Duties; but to be ſpiritually-minded, and to mind Spiritual Things, when we are converſing with the clods of the Earth, and the Furrows of the Field; when we have to do with Corn and Graſs, with Trees and Plants, with Sheep and Oxen; when we behold the Birds and Fowls of the Air, the Worms, and all that creep upon the ground; then (I ſay) to be ſpiritually minded, and thence to have our Thoughts aſcending and ſoaring up to God, in heart-affecting and quickning Contemplations, witneſſeth an high degree of Holineſs, and of gracious Attainments. To make a Ladder out of earthly materials, for the raiſing of our ſelves in Spirit up to Heaven, is the* Art of Arts. *Holy and happy indeed are they! who (being taught of God) have learned this Art, and live in the daily practice of it. Earthly Objects uſually hinder us in our way, ſometimes turn us quite out of our way to Heaven. Many plow and ſow, dig and delve the Earth, till their Hearts become as earthly as the Earth it ſelf: Many deal about the Beaſts of the Field, till themſelves become even brutiſh. Is it not then a bleſſed deſign which this Author aims and drives at, ſo to ſpiritualize all ſorts, or the whole compaſs of earthly Husbandry, that all ſorts of Husband-men may become Spiritual and Heavenly? It ſeems to me a token for good, that God hath an intendment of ſome ſpecial good to the Souls of ſuch as are by Profeſſion proper Husband-men, ſeeing he hath lately put it into the Hearts of two faithful Miniſters (who with all of that Profeſſion, are Husband-men in a figure) to undertake, tho' in a different way, this Subject, and to publiſh their Labours in Print, that they may be of uſe, not only for the preſent Age, but for Poſterity.*

Mr. Rich-ard Steel, and this Author.

*And that the Husband-man may be pleaſed, as well as profited, in peruſing the Labours of this Author; he hath, with ſingular aptneſs and acuteneſs, contrived and contracted the ſum or ſcope of every Chapter into an Elegant Diſtich, or pair of Verſes, placed at the head of it, and concluded it with a choice melodious Poem ſuitable to, and dilating upon the whole matter of it. Theſe the Husband-man, who can but read, may quickly learn and ſing for his ſolace, inſtead of thoſe vain Ballads and corrupting Rhimes, which many of that Rank are apt to buy, and ſolace themſelves withall, without any benefit, yea, much to their hurt, making their hearts more corrupt, carnal and vain thereby.*

*Let me add one word more to the Reader. This Book of* Husbandry Spiritualiz'd, *is not calculated only for the common Husband-man; Perſons of any Calling or Condition, may find the Author working out ſuch ſearching reflections and ſtrong Convictions, from almoſt every part and particular of the Husband-mans work, as may prove, if faithfully improved, very uſeful to them; to ſome for their awakening, to conſider the ſtate of their Souls, whether in Grace or in Nature; to others for their Inſtruction, Conſolation and Encouragement in the ways of Grace, as alſo for their proficiency and growth in thoſe ways. That the bleſſing of the Lord, and the breathings of his good Spirit may go out with it, for all thoſe gracious purpoſes, is the heart's deſire and prayer of him, who is,*

Chriſtian Reader, a ſincere Well-wiſher
to thy Precious and Immortal Soul,
*JOSEPH CARYL.*

## To his Reverend, and Learned Friend, Mr. *John Flavell*, on his Spiritual Navigation and Husbandry.

*LEtters of Mart to his dear Servant given,*
*By him that fiſts the ruffling winds of heaven:*
*To fight, and take all ſuch as would not dain*
*T' acknowledge him the Seas great Soveraign.*
*He launch'd his little* Pinace, *and began*
*T' attaque the vaſſals of* Leviathan.
*Auſpicious gales ſwelling his winged Sails,*
*Searches all Creeks, and every Bark he hails;*
*That ſcarce a Ship our Weſtern Coaſt afford,*
*Which this brave* Pinace *hath not laid aboard.*
*And what among our riddles ſome might count,*
*Was ſeen at once at* Barwick, *and the* Mount.
*Yea, in more* Ports *hath in one* luſtre *been,*
*Than* Hawkins,Drake, *or* Gavendiſh *have ſeen.*
*And Prizes of more worth brought home again,*
*Than all the* Plate-Fleets *of the King of* Spain.
*But that which makes the wonder ſwell the more,*
*Thoſe whom he took were* Beggars *all before.*
*But reſts he here? No, no, our Friend doth know*
'Tis good to have two ſtrings unto his Bow.
*Our rare* Amphibion *loves not to be pent*
*Within the bounds of one poor Ellement.*
*Beſides, the Learned Author underſtood,*
That of an idle hand there comes no good.
*The Law to him no* Pulpit *doth allow,*
*And now he cannot* Preach, *he means to* Plow.
*Though Preaching were a Crime, yet he foreſaw*
*Againſt the Plowman there could be no Law.*
*Nor ſtayes he on reſolves, but out of hand*
*He yoaks his Teem, plows up the ſtubborn Land:*
*Sows it with precious Seed,harrows again*
*The tougher clods, takes pleaſure in his pain.*
*Whilſt,*Orpheus-*like,(which doth his Art advance)*
*Rocks,Fields,and Woods,*after his pipe do dance.

*Induſtrious Spirit, to what a rich account*
*With thy bleſt Lord, will all theſe Labours mount?*
*That every nerve of thy beſt Soul doſt ply,*
*To further Heavens* Spiritual Husbandry.
*This kind of Tillage which thou teacheſt us,*
*Was never dreamt of by* Triptolemus.
*Go, Reader, turn the leaves; and me allow*
*To Pray(whilſt at my work)*God ſpeed the Plow.

NICHOLAS WATTS.

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## In Authoris OPERA.

*LEt* Paracelſus *and* Van-Helmonts *Name,*
*No more ride triumph on the wings of Fame.*
*Lo, here's a* Chymiſt, *whoſe Diviner skill*
*Doth* hallowed, *from unhallowed things diſtil.*
*Spiritualizeth Sea-affairs, agen,*
*Makes the rude ground turn tutor unto Men.*
*Shews* Mariners, *as by a Compaſs, how*
*They may unto the* Port *of Glory row.*
*Teacheth the* Plowman, *from their Work, to know*
*What Duties unto God, and Man they owe.*
*Rare Artiſt! who,when many Tongues are mute,*
*Mak'ſt things, that are Inanimate, confute*
*The Ages ſins: by Preaching unto eyes,*
*Truths, which, in other Modes, their Eaſe deſpiſe.*
*Proſper his Pious Labours, Lord! howe'r*
*Do not forget to Crown the Labourer.*

*Sic raptim canit,*
DAN. CONDY.

## To his Reverend and Invaluable, Friend Mr. *J. F.* upon his *Husbandry Spiritualiz'd.*

*INgenious Sir, What do I ſee? What now!*
*Are you come from the Pulpit to the Plow?*
*If ſo, then pardon me, if I profeſs;*
*The Plow deſerves to be ſent to the Preſs.*
*'Tis not long ſince you went to Sea, they ſay,*
*Compos'd a Compaſs, which directs the way,*
*And ſteers the courſe to Heaven,* O *bleſt Art!*
*And bravely done, that you did that impart*
*To us, who take it kindly at your hand,*
*And bleſs the Lord that you are come to Land,*
*To be an Husbandman, wherein your skill,*
*With admiration, doth your Readers fill.*
*One grain will yield increaſe, it's ten times ten,*
*When the Earths Manur'd by ſuch Husbandmen!*
*We may expect rich Harveſts, and full Crops,*
*When Heavenly Dew deſcendeth in ſuch Drops*
*Of Spiritual rain, to water every Field,*
*That it full heaps of Grace to God may yield.*
*I muſt adore the Wiſdom of that God*
*That makes Men wiſe, who, even from a clod*
*Of Earth, can raiſe ſuch Heavenly Meditation*
*Unto a pitch of higheſt elevation.*
*Beſides, I mark the goodneſs of the Lord,*
*Performing unto us his faithful Word,*
*That all ſhall work for good unto the Saints,*
*Which, in ſome meaſure, leſſens our complaints.*
*For though our Pulpit-mercies be grown leſs,*
*We have ſome gracious helps yet from the Preſs.*
*And herein all the World may plainly ſee,*
*That faithful Servants will not idle be.*
*We have ſome Bricks,although the Straw be gone,*
*The Church, at laſt, ſhall be of poliſht ſtone.*
*What-ever Men or Devils act, or ſay;*
Sion, *at laſt, will have a Glorious Day.*

*The wretched Muck-worm that from morn to night,*
*Labours, as if 'twere for an heavenly weight;*
*And, when he hath got all he can, the moſt*
*Amounts to little more than a poor cruſt*
*To feed his tired Carcaſe, if himſelf*
*Have, by his carking, got a little Pelf,*
*Leave it he muſt, to one he knows not whom,*
*And then muſt come to an eternal doom;*
*And hear his poor neglected wretched Soul*
*Tell him, at laſt, that he hath play'd the Fool.*
*But here he's taught, how he, before he dye,*
*May lay up Treaſure for Eternity,*
*Wherein he may be rich, yea, much much more*
*Than they that do poſſeſs whole mines of Oar.*
*When Earths more worth than Heaven, and Gold*
*than Grace*
*Then let the Worldling run his brutiſh race,*
*But not before, unleſs he do intend*
*To meet with Soul-deſtruction in the end.*

*But I muſt leave him, and return again*
*To gratulate the Author for his pain.*
*And here I can't forbear to let my Pen*
*To tell the World of all the Husbandmen,*
*That e're I met, he, he hath hit the vein*
*To recompence the Labourers hard pain,*
*And taught him how to get the greateſt gain.*
*Wherein he treads a path not trod before;*
*By which indeed, his skill, appears the more.*
*I might* Encomiums *give him, great and true,*
*And yet come very ſhort of what's his due,*

*But I muſt not walk in forbidden ways,*
*For, thereby, I am ſure I ſhould diſpleaſe*
*His pious Mind, who doth, and freely can*
*Give all the Praiſe to the great Husbandman,*
*Who will his graces in his Servants own,*
*But doth expect himſelf to wear the Crown.*
*Farewel, dear Sir, I take my leave, and now,*
*Will ſay no more than this,* God ſpeed the Plow.

EDWARD JEFFERY.

# THE EPISTLE TO THE Intelligent Country *READER.*

THou haſt here the Fruit of ſome of my ſpare Hours, which were thus imployed, when by a ſad Providence I was thruſt from the Society of many dear Friends, into a ſolitary Countrey dwelling. I hope none will envy me theſe innocent delights, which I made out of my lonely walks, whereby the Lord ſweetned my Solitudes there. 'Tis like thou wilt find ſome paſſages here, that are harmleſly pleaſant; yet, I aſſure thee, I know of none that the moſt *Cynical Reader* can cenſure, as ſinfully light and vain. I muſt acknowledge, to the Praiſe of God, that I have found ſome of thoſe (which poſſibly ſome of my Readers will call the ſlighteſt and moſt Trifling ſubjects of Meditation) to be the Ordinances for *Inſtruction*, *Caution* and *Conſolation* to my own Soul: yea, ſuch a degree of comfort, I do profeſs to have found by theſe things, as hath much endeared the Countrey Life to me, and made me much better to underſtand that ſaying of *Horace*, than when I learn'd it at School,

*Noviſtine locum potiorem rure beato?*
*Eſt ubi plus tepeant hymes? ubi gratior aura?*
*Orus, quando te adſpiciam? quandoque licebit*
*Nunc veterum libris, nunc ſomno, & inertibus hor-*
*Ducere ſolicitæ jucunda oblivio vitæ.* (*i.e.*) (tis

What life can with the Country life compare?
Where breath's the pureſt and moſt healthful (Air.
Where undiſturb'd, my ſtudy, I purſue;
And when I ſleep, bid all my cares adieu.

*Hor. Sat. 6.*

And what I have found ſo beneficial to my ſelf, I cannot but think may be ſo to others. I aſſure thee, Reader, I am not fond of any of theſe conceptions; and yet I think I may modeſtly enough ſay, That the emptieſt leaf in this Book, may ſerve for more and better uſes than a meer diverſion, when thou canſt find leiſure to peruſe it. I know, your Troubles and Cares are many, and though your condition of Life hath many innocent Comforts, and outward Mercies to ſweeten it, yet believe moſt of you have found, that ancient ſaying of *Anacreon* experimentally true. Ἔχει τὶ πικρὸν τῆς γεωργίας γλυκύ.

*Some bitter troubles Countreymen do meet,*
*Wherewith the Lord doth intermix their ſweet.*

The *Cares* of your *Minds*, are commonly no leſs than the *Pains* of your *Bodies*; it concerns you therefore, to *ſweeten* what you cannot *avoid*; and I know no better way for that than what is here directed to. O Friends! What advantages have you for a Spiritual Life? Why may you not have two Harveſts every year? One for your Souls, another for your Bodies; if you could thus learn to husband your Husbandry. Methinks Spiritual Meditations do even put themſelves upon you: Husbandmen of old were generally preſumed to be honeſt and good Men; what elſe means that ſaying of *Menander*, Ἀγροῖκος εἶναι προσποιῇ πονηρὸς ὤν.

*Profeſs thy ſelf an Husbandman,*
*And wicked too! believ't that can.*

What you are, godly or wicked, is not for me (that am a ſtranger to moſt of you) to determine; but if you are not godly, it's my deſire and deſign to make you ſo; and I could not think on a more probable means to accompliſh this honeſt deſign, than what I have here uſed. Methinks it ſhould be a pleaſure to you, when you come weary out of the Fields from Plow, or any other Labour, to ſit down in the Evening, and Read that Chapter which concerns that particular buſineſs, and *refreſh* your *Souls* even from that which hath *wearied* your *Bodies*. Were your Hearts but Heavenly, and more time allowed for Spiritual Husbandry, your inward Comforts would be much more, and your outward Gains not a jot leſs; for if the ſucceſs of all your Civil Labours and Imployments depend upon the pleaſure and will of God (as all that are not Atheiſts do acknowledge) then certainly, your buſineſs can ſucceed never the worſe, for your endeavours to pleaſe him, upon whoſe pleaſure it ſo entirely depends. I have many times lifted up my Heart to Heaven, whilſt theſe Papers were under my hand, for a ſpecial Bleſſing to accompany them, when they ſhould be in yours. If the Lord accompliſh my deſires by them upon your Souls, you ſhall enjoy two Heavens,

avens, one here, and another hereaſter. Would that be ſweet? The *Hiſtorian* tells us, that *Altitius* ſowing Corn in the Field, when *Q. Cincinnatus* ne to him bare-headed, with Letters from the *Se*-, ſignifying, that he was choſen to the Dictatorſhip. I hope the Lord will ſo bleſs and ſucceed theſe Labours, that many of you will be called from holding the *Plow* on Earth, to wear the *Crown* of Glory in Heaven; which is the ſincere deſire of

*Your hearty Well-wiſher,*

JOHN FLAVELL.

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## THE *Author* to the READER.

*Come you, whoſe liſt'ning Ears do even itch,*
*To hear the way preſcrib'd of growing rich;*
*I'll ſhew you how to make your Tenements*
*Ten thouſand times more worth, and yet your Rents*
*Not rais'd a Farthing; here my Reader ſees,*
*A way to make his dead and barren Trees*
*Yield precious Fruit, his Sheep, though ne're ſo bad,*
*Bear Golden Fleeces, ſuch ne'r* Jaſon *had,*
*In every thing your gain ſhall more than double,*
*And all this had with far leſs toyl and trouble.*
*Methinks, I hear thee ſay, this cannot be,*
*I'll ne're believe it; well Read on, and ſee,*
*Reader, hadſt thou but ſenſes exercis'd*
*To judge aright; were Spiritual things but priz'd*
*At their juſt value, thou wouldſt quickly ſay,*
*'Tis ſo indeed; thou wouldſt not go thy way*
*Like one that's diſappointed, and ſo fling*
*The Book aſide,* I thought 'twas ſome ſuch thing;
*Time was when Countrey Chriſtians did afford,*
*More hours and pains about God's Holy Word;*
*Witneſs the Man who did moſt gladly pay*
*For ſome few Leaves his whole Cart-load of Hay.*
*And time ſhall be when Heavenly Truth that warms*
*The heart, ſhall be preferr'd before your Farms.*
*When Holineſs, as Sacred Scripture tells,*
*Shall be engraven on the Horſes Bells.*
*Lord, haſten on thoſe much deſired times,*
*And, to that purpoſe, bleſs theſe Rural Rhimes.*

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# THE PROEM.

## 1 COR. III. 9.

## *Ye are God's Husbandry.*

THE ſcope and deſign of the following Chapters, being the Spiritual Improvement of Husbandry, it will be neceſſary by way of *Proem*, to acquaint the Reader with the Foundation and general Rules of this Art in the Scriptures, thereby to procure greater reſpect unto, and prevent prejudice againſt Compoſures of this kind.

To this end I ſhall entertain the Reader a little while upon what this Scripture affords us, which will give a fair Introduction to the following Diſcourſe.

The Apoſtle's ſcope in the context being to check and repreſs the vain glory and emulation of the *thians*, who inſtead of thankfulneſs for, and humble and diligent improvement of the excellent ings of the Miniſtry; turn'd all into vain oſten- n and emulation, one preferring *Paul*, and an- *Apollos*, in the mean time depriving themſelves e Choice Bleſſings they might have received them both.

Cure this growing miſchief in the Churches, ecks their vanity, and diſcovers the evil of ſuch ices; by ſeveral Arguments, amongſt which s one,

*Ye are God's Husbandry. q. d.* at are ye, but a Field, or plod of ground, to be red and cultivated for God? And what are *Apollo*, and *Cephas* but ſo many Workmen and Labourers, imployed by God, the great Husbandman, to plant, and water you all?

If then, you ſhall glory in ſome, and diſpiſe others, you take the ready way to deprive your ſelves of the Benefits and Mercies you might receive from the joint Miniſtry of them all. God hath uſed me to plant you, and *Apollo* to water you; you are obliged to bleſs him for the Miniſtry of both, and it will be your ſin if you diſpiſe either. If the Workmen be diſcouraged in their Labours, 'tis the Field that loſes and ſuffers by it; ſo that the words are a ſimilitude, ſerving to illuſtrate the Relation.

1. Which the Churches have to God.
2. Which God's Miniſters have to the Churches.

1. The relation betwixt God and them, is like that of an Husbandmand to his Ground or Tillage. The Greek word ſignifies God's * *Arabe*, or that plot of ground which God manures by the Miniſtry of Paſtors and Teachers.

2. It ſerves to illuſtrate the relation that the Miniſters of Chriſt ſuſtain to the Churches which is like that of the Husbands Servants to him, and his Fields, which excellent notition carries in it the perpetual neceſſity of a Goſpel-Miniſtry. (For what Fruit can be expected, where there are none to Till the ground?) As alſo the diligence, accountableneſs, and rewards, which theſe Labourers are to give to, and

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* *Fideles vocantur Dei* γεώργιον, *quia à Deo per paſtores, tanquam arvum excoluntur.* Rav.

receive from God, the great Husband-man. All runs into this,

That the Life and Imployment of an Husbandman, excellently ſhadows forth the relation betwixt God and his Church, and the relative Duties betwixt its Miniſters and Members.

Or more briefly thus.

The Church is God's Husbandry, about which his Miniſters are imployed.

I ſhall not here obſerve my uſual method, (intending no more but a Preface to the following Diſcourſe) but only open the particulars wherein the reſemblance conſiſts; and then draw ſome Corrolaries from the whole. The firſt I ſhall diſpatch in theſe Twenty Particulars following.

1. *Prop.* The Husbandman purchaſes his Fields, and gives a valuable Conſideration for them, *Jer.* 32.9.10.

*Red.* So hath God purchaſed his Church with a full valuable price, even the precious Blood of his own Son, *Act.* 20. 28. *Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed, or acquired with his own Blood.* O dear-bought Inheritance, how much doth this beſpeak it worth? Or rather, the high eſteem God hath of it, to pay down Blood, and ſuch Blood for it; never was any Inheritance bought at ſuch a rate: Every particular Elect perſon, and none but ſuch are comprehended in this purchaſe, the reſt ſtill remain in the Devils right. Sin made a forfeiture of all to Juſtice, upon which Satan entered and took poſſeſſion, and as a ſtrong man armed, ſtill keeps it in them, *Luk.* 11.21. but upon payment of this ſum to Juſtice, the Elect (who only are intended in this purchaſe) paſs over into God's right and propriety, and now are neither Satans, *Act.* 26. 18. nor their own, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. but the *Lord's peculiar*, 1 *Pet.*2.6. And to ſhew how much they are his own, you have two *poſſeſſives* in one Verſe, *Cant.* 8. 12. *My Vineyard, which is mine is before me. Mine, which is mine.*

*Prop.* Husband-men divide and ſeparate their own Lands from other Mens, they have their Land-marks and Boundaries, by which propriety is preſerved, *Deut.* 27. 17. *Prov.* 22. 28.

*Red.* So are the People of God wonderfully ſeparated, and diſtinguiſht from all the People of the Earth, *Pſal.* 4.3. *The Lord hath ſet apart him that is godly for himſelf, and the Lord knoweth who are his*, 2 Tim. 2. 19. It is a ſpecial Act of Grace, to be incloſed by God out of the waſt howling Wilderneſs of the World, *Deut.* 33. 16. This God did *intentionally*, in the decree before the World was; which decree is executed in their Sanctification and Adoption.

3. *Prop.* Corn-fields are carefully fenced by the Husband-man with Hedges and Ditches, to preſerve their Fruits from Beaſts that would otherwiſe over-run and deſtroy them—*Non minus eſt virtus quam querere parta tueri.* It is as good Husbandry to keep what we have, as to acquire more than we had.

*Red. My well-beloved hath a Vineyard in a very fruitful Hill, and he fenced it*, Iſa. 5. 1, 2. No Inheritance is better defended and ſecured, than the Lord's Inheritance, *Pſal.* 125. 2. *As the mountains are round about* Jeruſalem, *ſo the Lord is round about his people.* So careful is he for their ſafety, *that he createth upon every dwelling place of mount* Sion, *and upon her Aſſemblies, a cloud and ſmoke by day, and the ſhining of flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory ſhall be a defence*, Iſa. 4. 5. Not a particular Saint, but is hedged about and incloſed in arms of power and love, *Job* 1. 10. *Thou haſt made a hedge about him.* The Devil fain would, but by his own Confeſſion could not, break over that hedge to touch *Job*, till God's permiſſion made a gap for him: Yea, he not only makes an hedge, but a wall about them, and that of Fire, *Zech.* 2.5. Sets a guard of Angels *to encamp round about them that fear him*, Pſal. 34. 7. And will not truſt them with a ſingle guard of Angels neither, though their power be great, and love to the Saints as great; but watches over them himſelf alſo, *Iſa.* 27. 2, 3. *Sing ye unto her a Vineyard of red wine, I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.*

4. *Prop.* Husband-men carry out their Compoſt, to fertilize their Arable ground, they dung it, dreſs it, and keep it in heart; and in theſe Weſtern parts are at great Charges to bring Lime, and Salt-water Sand to quicken their thin and cold Soil.

*Red. Lord, let it alone this year alſo, till I ſhall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well, if not, cut it down*, Luk. 13. 8. O the rich dreſſing which God beſtows upon his Churches! they are coſtly Fields indeed, dreſt and fertilized, not only by precious Ordinances and Providences, but alſo by the Sweat, yea, Blood of the Diſpenſers of them. "You *Londoners* (ſaith Mr. *Lockier in Coloſ. p.* 552.) "are Trees watered choicely indeed; 'tis ſtoried of the Palm-tree, that at its firſt tranſplanting into *Italy*, 'twas watered with Wine, I cannot ſay (ſaith he) that you have been ſo watered by me, I dare not; but this I can humbly and truly ſay, that if our choiceſt Strength and Spirits may be named inſtead of Water, Wine; or if the bleſſing which hath gone along with theſe Waters, at any time, hath turned them into Wine, in vigour upon your Souls; then hath God by me, watered your Roots with Wine.

5. *Prop.* The Husband-man builds his Houſe, where he makes his Purchaſe, dwells upon his Land, and frequently viſits it; he knows, that ſuch as dwell far from their *Lands*, are not far from *loſs*.

*Red.* So doth God; where ever he plants a Church, there doth he fix his Habitation, intending there to dwell, *Pſal.* 46. 5. *God is in the midſt of her*, ſhe ſhall not be moved. Thus God came to dwell upon his own Fee and Inheritance, in *Judea*, Levit. 26. 11, 12. *And I will ſet my Tabernacle amongſt you, and will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people.* Which Promiſe is again renew'd to his Churches of the New Teſtament, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. And when the Churches ſhall be in their greateſt flouriſh, and purity, then ſhall there be the fulleſt and moſt glorious manifeſtation of the Divine preſence among them, *Rev.* 21.3. *And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, ſaying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and be their God.* Hence the Aſſemblies are called, the places of his Feet——And there they *behold the beauty of the Lord*, Pſal. 27.

6. *Prop.* Husband-men grudge not at the Coſt they are at for their Tillage; but as they lay out vaſt Sums upon it, ſo, they do it cheerfully.

*Red. And now, O inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *and men of* Judah, *judge I pray you, betwixt me and my Vineyard what could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?* And as he beſtows upon his Heritage the choiceſt Mercies, ſo he doth it with the greateſt cheerfulneſs; for he ſaith, *Jer.* 32. 41. *I will rejo over them, to do them good; and I will plant them in th Land aſſuredly, with my whole heart, and with my wh ſoul.* It is not the giving out of Mercy (ſaith on that grieveth God, but the recoiling of his Merci back again upon him by the Creatures ingratitude.

7. *Prop.* When Husband-men have been at C and Pains about their Husbandry, they expect fr from it, anſwerable to their pains and expences ab it: *Behold* (ſaith *James*) *the Husband-man waiteth the precious fruits of the Earth*, Jam. 5. 7.

*Red. And he looked that it ſhould bring forth fruit, Iſa.* 5. 2. This Heavenly Husbandman waits for the Fruits of his Fields alſo; never did any Husbandman long for the deſired Harveſt, more than God doth for the fruits of Holineſs from his Saints: great are the expectations of God from his people: *And when the time of the fruit drew near, he ſent his ſervants to the Husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.*

8. *Prop.* Husbandmen are much delighted, to ſee the ſucceſs of their Labours, it Comforts them over all their hard pains, and many weary days, to ſee a good increaſe.

*Red.* Much more is God delighted in beholding the flouriſhing Graces of his people; it pleaſes him to ſee his Plants laden with Fruit, and his Valleys ſing with Corn, *Cant.* 6. 2. *My Beloved is gone down to the garden, into his beds of Spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather Lillies.* Theſe Beds of Spices (ſay Expoſitors) are the particular Churches, the Companies of Believers; he goes to feed in theſe Gardens, like as Men go to their Gardens to make merry, or to gather Fruit, *Cant.* 4. 16. *He eats his pleaſant fruit, viz.* His peoples holy performances, ſweeter to him than any *Ambroſia*; thus he feeds in the Gardens, and he gathers Lillies when he tranſlates good Souls into his Kingdom above; *For the Lord taketh pleaſure in his Saints, and will beautifie the meek with Salvation.*

*Paſcitus Chriſtus quando ſuorum virtutes videt, lillia decerpit, quando optimum quemque ex hac vita traducit.* Trap. *in loc.*

9. *Prop.* The Husbandman is exceedingly grieved, when he ſees the hopes of a good Crop diſappointed, and his Fields prove barren, or blaſted.

*Red.* So the Lord expreſſes his grief for, and anger againſt his people, when they bring forth no Fruits, or wild Fruits, worſe than none, *Hoſ.* 9. 16. Ephraim *is ſmitten, their root is dried up.* Chriſt was exceedingly diſpleaſed with the Figtree, and Curſed it for its barrenneſs, it grieves him to the Heart when his Servants return to him with ſuch Complaints as theſe, *We have laboured in vain, we have ſpent our ſtrength for nought.*

10. *Prop.* Husbandmen imploy many Labourers to work in their Fields, there is need of many hands for ſuch a multiplicity of buſineſs.

*Red.* God hath diverſity of Workmen alſo in the Churches, whom he ſends forth to labour in his Spiritual Fields, *Eph.* 4. 12. *He gave ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts; and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, Amos* 3. 7. I have ſent [*my ſervants*] *the Prophets.* 'Tis uſual with the Apoſtles to place this Title of Servant among their honourary Titles, though a profane Mouth once called it, *Probroſum artificium*, a ſordid Artifice. Chriſt hath ſtampt a great deal of dignity upon his Miniſters, in retaining them for the neareſt ſervice to himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. *Let a man ſo account of us, as the Miniſters of Chriſt*; they are workers together with God: The Husbandman works in the Field among his Labourers, and the great God diſdaineth not to work in and with his poor Servants, in the work of the Miniſtry.

11. *Prop.* The work about which Husbandmen imploy their Servants in the Field, is toylſome and ſpending. You ſee they come home at night as weary as they can draw their Legs after them.

*Red.* But Gods workmen have a much harder task than they. Hence are they ſet forth in Scripture by the laborious Ox, 1 *Cor.* 9. 9. *Rev.* 4. 7. Some derive the word Διάκονος, ἀ κόνις, *Deacon* from a word that ſignifies duſt, to ſhew the laboriouſneſs of their imployment, labouring till even choaked with duſt and ſweat. 'Tis ſaid of *Epaphroditus, Phil.* 2. 13. *That for the work of Chriſt he was ſick, and nigh unto death; not regarding his life, to ſupply their lack of ſervice.* The Apoſtles expreſſion, *Col.* 1. *ult.* is very emphatical, *Whereunto I alſo labour, ſtriving according to his working; which worketh in me mightily.* The word Ἀγωνιζόμενος ſignifies, ſuch ſpending labour as puts a Man into an agony; and bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing.

12. *Prop.* The immediate end of the Husbandmans labour, and his Servants labour, is for the improvement of his Land, to make it more flouriſhing and fruitful.

*Red.* The ſcope and end of the Miniſtry is for the Churches benefit and advantage. They muſt not lord it over God's heritage, as if the Church were for them, and not they for the Church; nor ſerve themſelves of it, but be the Churches Servants for Jeſus ſake, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. the power they have received being for Edification, and not for Deſtruction, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. Chriſt hath given them to the Churches, their Gifts, their Time, their Strength, and all their Miniſterial Talents are not their own, but the Churches Stock and Treaſure.

13. *Prop.* The Workmen that labour in the Fields, are accountable for their work to him that imploy'd them.

*Red.* Church-Officers are alſo accountable to God for all the Souls committed to them. They are Stewards of the Myſteries of God, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. and Stewards are accountable. *We watch for your Souls* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *as they that muſt give an account, Heb.* 13. 7. If theſe Servants be unfaithful in their work and truſt, the Blood of Souls ſhall be required at their hands, *Ezek.* 3. 17, 18. which are *fulmina, non verba*, (ſaith *Eraſmus*) thunder-bolts, rather than words. The guilt of Blood is the greateſt guilt; and of all Blood, the Blood of Souls.

14. *Prop.* Thoſe that ſpend their time and ſtrength all their days, in manuring and plowing the Fields, do maintain themſelves and their Families by their Labours; their hands are ſufficient for themſelves and theirs.

*Red. Even ſo hath God ordained, that they which preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel,* 1 Cor. 9. 14. *The workman is worthy of his meat, Mat.* 10. 10. 'Tis a ſad thing, if thoſe who break the Bread of Life to Souls, ſhould be ſuffered to want Bread themſelves. God would not have the Mouth of the Ox muzled that treads out the Corn, but have liberty to eat as well as work: Yet if any pretender to the Miniſtry be like the Heifer that loves to tread out the Corn, (*i. e.*) cares to do no work, but ſuch as brings in preſent pay; he therein ſufficiently diſcovers his Beaſt-like diſpoſition. Miniſters muſt be faithful in their Maſters work, and if Men do not, God will reward them. For, *He is not unrighteous to forget their work, and labour of love*, Heb. 6. 10.

15. *Prop.* It is a great trouble to Husbandmen in a buſie time, to be put off from their labours by ſtormy Weather, which drives them out of the Fields, and makes them let all lye, till it clear up again; yet, mean while, they are not idle, but imploy themſelves in home-work.

*Red.* Even ſo in God's Husbandry, 'tis an unſpeakable Affliction to God's Workmen, to be rendred uſeleſs and unſerviceable to the Churches, by thoſe ſtorms of trouble, which drive them from their publick Miniſterial Work. With what a heavy heart did *Paul* go off from his Work at *Epheſus, Acts* 20. It ſpends a Miniſter to preach, but more to be ſilent. 'Tis a loud ſpeaking Judgment, when God ſhall ſay to them as to *Ezekiel, Son of Man, 'twill make thy tongue* *cleave to the roof of thy mouth, and thou ſhalt be dumb, Ezek.* 3. 26. Such ſilencing Providences, ſpeaking thundring Language to gracious Hearts; yet even then, the keepers of the vineyard have a private Vineyard of their own to look after, they have much home-work when no out-work.

16. *Prop.* There is a vaſt difference betwixt thoſe Fields which have been well husbanded, and dreſt by a Skilful and diligent Husbandman; and thoſe that have been long out of Husbandry. How fragrant is the one? How dry and barren the other? When you paſs by a Field well dreſſed and fenced, every thing proſperous, and in exquiſite order, you may know without farther enquiry, that a good Husband lives there.

*Red.* Thus ſtands the caſe betwixt thoſe places which God hath bleſt with a faithful painful Miniſtry, and ſuch as have none, or worſe than none: For as the Husbandmans coſt and pains appears in the verdant, and fragrant hew of his Fields; ſo a Miniſters pains and diligence is (ordinarily) ſeen in the heavenly Lives, and flouriſhing Graces of the People. The Churches of *Corinth* and *Theſſalonica*, where *Paul* and other holy Inſtruments ſpent much of their time and pains, became famous and flouriſhing Churches, 2 *Cor.* 9. 2. A ſpecial bleſſing comes along with a godly Miniſter, to the place where ſpecial Providence aſſigns him. Such places like *Gideon*'s Fleece, have the Dew of Heaven lying on them, whilſt others round about are dry and barren.

17. *Prop.* The Husbandman is not diſcouraged, though the Seed lye long under the clods, he knows it will ſpring up at laſt, and reward him, or thoſe that comes after him, for their pains and patience in waiting for it.

*Red.* Miniſters ſhould not be preſently diſcouraged in their work, becauſe they ſee but little or no appearance of all the Seed they have ſown among the people. The *ſervant of the Lord muſt be patient towards all, waiting if at any time God will give them repentance,* 2 *Tim.* 24, 25. And if it never ſpring up in his time, it may after his death; and if ſo, he ſhall not fail of his reward, *John* 4. 36, 37. *And he that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that ſoweth, and he that reapeth may rejoice together; and herein is that ſaying true, one ſoweth, and another reapeth.* Though Miniſters dye, yet their words live; yea, their words take hold of Men when they are in the duſt, *Zech.* 1. 6.

18. *Prop.* Husbandmen find low Grounds and Valleys, moſt fertile. Hills, how loftily ſoever, they over-top the lower grounds, yet anſwer not the Husbandmans pains, as the Valleys do. Theſe are beſt watered and ſecured from the ſcorching heat of the Sun.

*Red.* Experience ſhews us, that the humbleſt Saints are moſt fruitful under the Goſpel. *Theſe are they that receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word, Jam.* 1. 21. whoſe influences abide in them, as the Rain doth in the low Valleys. Happy is that Miniſter, whoſe Lot falls in ſuch a pleaſant Valley. *Bleſſed are they that ſow beſide all ſuch waters, that ſend forth thither the foot of the ox and the aſs, Iſa.* 32. 20. Among theſe Valleys run the pleaſant Springs, and Purling-Brooks, which fertilize the Neighbouring ground. Heavenly Ordinances there, leave fruitful influences.

19. *Prop.* The firſt Crop is uſually the beſt: and the longer the Husbandman Tills his ground, the leſs it produces. After a few years its vigour and ſtrength is ſpent.

*Red.* The firſt Entertainment of the Goſpel is commonly the beſt; and what good is done by the Miniſtry, is often done at its firſt entrance. New things are pretty, and very taking. John *at firſt was to the Jews a burning and a ſhining light, and they were willing* [*for a ſeaſon*] *to rejoice in his light, John* 5. 35. *Paul* was highly valued among the *Galatians* at firſt: Such was their Zeal, that they could have pluckt out their Eyes, and have given them to him; but how quickly did this full Tide ebb again? For he complains, *Gal.* 4. 15. *Where then is the bleſſedneſs ye ſpake of?*

20. *Prop.* Laſtly, When Fields prove barren, and will not quit the Husbandmans coſt, nor anſwer the Seed he ſows in them, he plucks up the Hedges, and lays it waſte.

*Red.* So when Churches grow formal and fruitleſs, the Lord removes his Goſpel-preſence from them; plucks up the Hedge of his protection from about them, and lays them open, as waſte ground, to be over-run by their Enemies, *Jer.* 7. 12. *Go to* Shiloh, *and ſee what I did unto it.* What is become of thoſe once famous and flouriſhing Churches of *Aſia*? Are they not laid waſte, and trodden down by Infidels? And now go to (ſaith the great Husbandman) *I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will pull up the hedge thereof, and it ſhall be laid waſte,* Iſa. 5. 5.

Thus you ſee the Alegory opened in its particulars: From the whole, I ſhall preſent you with theſe five enſuing *Corolaries.*

### *The Firſt* Corrolary.

*How great then are the dignities and priviledges of the Churches of Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath appropriated to himſelf, above all the people of the earth, to be his peculiar inheritance?* The reſt of the World is a waſte Wilderneſs; all other places, how pleaſant ſoever, in reſpect of their natural amænity and delights, are truly enough called the dark places of the Earth; diſmal, ſolitary Cells, where Ziim and *Iim*, *Bitterns*, *Cormorants*, and every doleful Creature dwells. But the Church is the Paradiſe of the Earth, *a Garden encloſed, Cant.* 4. 12. in whoſe Hedges the Goſpel-birds chirp and ſing melodiouſly, *Cant.* 2. 12. Its Beds, are Beds of Spices, *Cant.* 6. 2. and betwixt its pleaſant Banks, a Chryſtal River of living Water runs, *Rev.* 22. 1. the Streams whereof make glad the City of God, in the midſt thereof the Lord himſelf delights to walk. O *Sion*, with what pleaſures doſt thou abound! If *Bernard* were ſo raviſhed with the delights of his *Monaſtery*, becauſe of its green Banks, and ſhady Bowers, and Herbs, and Trees, and various Objects to feed his Eyes, and fragrant Smells, and ſweet and various tunes of Birds, together with the opportunities of devout Contemplation, that he cryed out admiringly, *Lord! what delight doſt thou provide, even for the poor!* How much more ſhould we be raviſhed with *Sion*'s glory? For *beautiful for ſcituation, is mount* Sion. Of whom it may much more truly be ſaid, what a Chronicler of our own once ſaid of *England*, That it is the Fortunate Iſland, the Paradiſe of Pleaſure, the Garden of God, whoſe Valleys are like *Edon*, whoſe Hills are as *Lebanon*, whoſe Springs are as *Piſgah*, whoſe Rivers are as *Jordan*, whoſe Wall is the *Ocean*, and whoſe Defence is the Lord *Jehovah*. Happy art thou, O Iſ*rael*, who is like unto thee? Who can count the Priviledges wherewith Chriſt hath inveſted his Churches! O let it never ſeem a light thing in our Eyes, that we grow within his bleſſed incloſure. How ſweet a Promiſe is that, *Exod.* 19. 5. *Ye ſhall be to me a peculiar treaſure, above all people; for all the earth is mine.*

*Speed's Chron.*

### *The Second* Corrolary.

Hence it follows, That Spiritual Barrenneſs is a great reproach and ſhame to Chriſtians.

Husbandry, which is ſo planted, watered, fenced, filled with favours and mercies, be like the barren Heath in the Deſart? Surely it ſhould be ſaid of every Soul that grows here, as the *Hiſtorian* ſaith of *Spain*, that there is *nihil infructuoſum, nihil ſterile*; nothing barren or unfruitful in it. God's Vineyard is planted in a very fruitful Hill, *Iſa.* 5. 1. *And ſurely they that are planted in the houſe of the Lord, ſhould flouriſh in the Court of our God; they ſhould bring forth fruit, even in old age, to ſhew that God is upright*, Pſal. 92. 13, 14. *They are created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath ordained they ſhould walk in*, Eph. 2. 10. *They are married unto Chriſt, that they might bring forth fruit to God*, *Rom.* 7. 4. An empty Branch is a diſhonour to the Root that bears it, a barren Field to the Husbandman that own it; God cannot endure that in his Fields, which he ſuffers in the Wilderneſs.

### *The Third* Corrolary.

If the Church be God's Husbandry, then there is ſuch a ſpecial gracious preſence of the Lord in his Churches, as is not to be found in all the World beſide. Where may you expect to find the Husbandman, but in his own Fields? There lyes his buſineſs, and there he delights to be. And where may we expect to find God, but in the Aſſemblies of his Saints? *He walks among the golden Candleſticks*, *Rev.* 2. 1. I will walk among you (ſaith he) and be your God, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. Upon this account the Church is called *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there, *Ezek.* 48. *ult.* You may ſee the *footſteps* of God in the *Creatures*; but the *face* of God is only to be ſeen in his *Ordinances*. Hence *Pſal.* 27. 4. David *long'd for the Temple, that he might ſee the beauty of the Lord*. Now, what is beauty, but a ſymetry and proportion of parts? In the work of *Creation*, you ſee one Attribute manifeſted in one thing, and another, in another thing; but in the *Sanctuary* you may ſee beauty, even all the Attributes of God, diſplayed there: And indeed, we find in Scripture ſuch aſtoniſhing expreſſions about the Viſions of God in his Church, that in reading them, a Man can ſee little difference betwixt it and Heaven; for as the Church is called Heaven, *Mat.* 25. 1. ſo its deſcription is like that of Heaven, *Heb.* 12. 22, 23. *You are come to the heavenly* Jeruſalem, *and to an innumerable company of Angels, &c.* And *Rev.* 4. 22. *They ſhall ſee his face, and his name ſhall be written in their foreheads*. And *v.* 24. *The ſaints are repreſented, ſtanding nearer to the throne of God, than the Angels themſelves.* Hence alſo Ordinances are called *Galleries*, in which both Saints and Angels walk, beholding the glory of him that ſits upon the Throne, *Zech.* 3. 7. *If you will keep my ways, I will give you galleries to walk in, among them that ſtand by.*

### *The Fourth* Corrolary.

If the Church be God's Husbandry, then thoſe that be imployed in Miniſterial Work ought to be Men of great Judgment and Experience in Soul Affairs; for theſe are the Labourers whom God, the Myſtical Husbandman imploys and entruſts about his Spiritual Husbandry. Should Husbandmen imploy ignorant Perſons, that neither underſtand the Rules, nor proper Seaſons of Husbandry; how much would ſuch Workmen damnifie and prejudice him? He will not imploy ſuch to weed his Fields, as know not Wheat from Tares; or to prune his Trees, that think *Midſummer* as fit for that work as *December*; much leſs will God. He qualifies all that he ſends, with wiſdom for their Work. *His workmen approve themſelves workmen indeed, ſuch as need not be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 15. As *Bezaleel* was furniſhed with wiſdom, before he was imployed in Tabernacle-work; ſo Chriſt inſtructs his Servants, with skill and inſight, before they are imployed in Miniſterial work. He gives them a Mouth and wiſdom, *Luke* 21. 15. indues them with power from on high: As Chriſt was filled abundantly with the Spirit for his Work, ſo according to proportion, are thoſe that are ſent by him, *John* 20. 21, 22. *As my Father hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you.* And as for thoſe that run before they are ſent, and underſtand not the Myſteries of the Goſpel, I ſhall ſay no more of them but this; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

### *The Fifth* Corrolary.

To conclude, If the Church be God's Husbandry, that is, if Husbandry have ſo many reſemblances of God's Works about the Church in it; then how inexcuſable is the ignorance of Husbandmen in the things of God, who beſides the Word of the Goſpel, have the teaching of the Creatures; and can hardly turn their hands to any part of their Work, but the Spirit hints one Spiritual uſe or other from it to their Souls? How do the Scriptures abound with Parables, and lively Similitudes taken from Husbandry? From the Field, the Seed, the Plow, the Barn, from threſhing and winnowing; ſimilitudes alſo from planting, grafting, and pruning of *Trees*; and not a few from the ordering of Cattel. So that to what buſineſs ſoever you turn your hands, in any part of your Calling, ſtill God meets you with one heavenly Inſtruction or other. But alas! How few are able to improve their Civil Imployments to ſuch excellent ends? Theſe things are but briefly hinted in the Scriptures, and thoſe hints ſcattered up and down, that they know not where to find them; and if they could, yet would it be difficult ſo to methodize them, as it is neceſſary they ſhould be, in order to their due Improvement by Meditation.

And therefore I judg'd it neceſſary to collect and prepare them for their uſe; and in this manner to preſent them to you, as you find them in the following Chapters. Read, conſider, and apply; and the Lord make you good Husbands for your own Souls.

# THE FIRST PART OF Husbandry Spiritualized.

## CHAP. I.

## Upon the Induſtry of the Husband-man.

*In the laborious Husband-man you ſee,*
*What all true Chriſtians are, or ought to be.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE Imployment of the Husbandman is by all acknowledged to be very laborious; there is a multiplicity of Buſineſs incumbent on him. The end of one work, is but the beginning of another. Every Seaſon of the Year brings its proper work with it: Sometimes you find him in his *Fields*, dreſſing, plowing, ſowing, harrowing, weeding, or reaping; and ſometimes in his *Barn*, threſhing, or winnowing, ſometimes in his *Orchard*, planting, grafting or pruning his Trees; and ſometimes among his *Cattel*: So that he hath no time to be idle. And as he hath a multiplicity of buſineſs, ſo every part of it is full of toyl, and ſpending labour: He eats not the Bread of Idleneſs, but earns it before he eats it; and as it were, dips it in his own ſweat, whereby it becomes the ſweeter to him. Though ſin brought in the Husband-mans ſweat, *Gen.* 3. 19. yet now not to ſweat would increaſe his ſin, *Ezek.* 16. 49.

### APPLICATION.

Behold here the Life of a ſerious Chriſtian, ſhadowed forth to the Life. As the Life of a Husbandman, ſo the Life of a Chriſtian is no idle, or eaſie Life. They that take up Religion for *oſtentation*, and not for an *occupation*; and thoſe that place the buſineſs of it in notions, and idle ſpeculations, in forms, geſtures, and external obſervances, may think, and call it ſo: But ſuch as devote themſelves unto it, and make Religion their buſineſs, will find it no eaſie work, to exerciſe themſelves to godlineſs. Many there are, that affect the reputation and *ſweet* of it, who cannot endure the labour, and *ſweat* of it. If Men might be indulged to divide their hearts betwixt God and the World, or to cull out the cheap and eaſie duties of it, and neglect the more difficult and coſtly ones, it were an eaſie thing to be a Chriſtian: But ſurely to have reſpect to all God's Commandments, to live the Life, as well as ſpeak the Language of a Chriſtian; to be holy in all manner of Converſation, is not ſo eaſie. This will be evident, by comparing the Life of a Chriſtian, with the Life of a Husbandman, in theſe five particulars; wherein it will appear, that the work of a Chriſtian, is by much the hardeſt work of the two.

1. The Husband-man hath much to do, many things to look after; but the Chriſtian more: If we reſpect the extenſiveneſs of his work, he hath a large Field indeed to labour in, *Pſal.* 119. 96. *Thy commandment is exceeding broad*; of a vaſt extent and latitude, comprizing not only a multitude of external Acts and Duties, and guiding the Offices of the outward Man about them, but alſo taking in every thought and motion of the inner Man within its compaſs.

You find in the Word, a world of work cut out for Chriſtians; there's hearing-work, praying-work, reading, meditating, and ſelf-examining-work; it puts him alſo upon a conſtant watch over all the corruptions of his heart. Oh, what a world of work hath a Chriſtian about him? For of them he may ſay, as the *Hiſtorian* doth of *Hannibal*, They are never quiet, whether conquering, or conquered. How many weak languiſhing Graces hath he to recover, improve, and ſtrengthen? There is a weak Faith, a languiſhing Love, dull and faint Deſires to be quickened and invigorated. And when all this is done, what a multitude of work do his ſeveral Relations exact from him? He hath a world of buſineſs incumbent on him, as a Parent, Child, Husband, Wife, Maſter, Servant, or Friend, yea, not only to Friends, but Enemies. And beſides all this, how many difficult things are there to be born and ſuffered for Chriſt? And yet ll not God allow his people in the neglect of any e of them: Neither can he be a Chriſtian that th not reſpect to every command, and is not holy all manner of Converſation, *Pſal.* 119. 6. 2 *Pet.* 11. every one of theſe Duties, like the ſeveral okes in a Wheel come to bear in the whole round a Chriſtians Converſation: So that he hath more ork upon his hands than the Husbandman.

2. The Husbandman's work is confeſſed to be ending work, but not like the Chriſtians. What *uguſtus* ſaid of the young *Roman*, is verified in the e Chriſtian, *Quicquid, vult, valde vult.* Whatſoever doth in Religion, he doth to purpoſe. Under the w, God rejected the *Snail* and the *Aſs, Levit.* 11. 30. *od.* 13. 13. And under the Goſpel, he allows no ggiſh lazy Profeſſor, 1 *Tim.* 5. 11, 13. Sleepy Dus are utterly unſuitable to the Living God; he ll have the very Spirits diſtilled and offered up to m in every Duty, *John* 4. 24. he beſtows upon his ople, the very ſubſtance and kernel of Mercies, d will not accept from them the ſhells and ſhadows Duties; not the skin, but the inwards, and the that covereth the inwards, was required under e Law, *Exod.* 29. 30. And every Sacrifice under e Goſpel, muſt be *ſacrificium medullatum* a Sacrifice ll of Marrow; obſerve the manner in which their ork is to be performed.

*Rom.* 12. 11. In ſerving God, fervent in Spirit, or ſing hot.

2 *Pet.* 1. 10. In ſecuring Salvation, diligent; or ing it throughly, and enough.

1 *Tim.* 4. 7. In godlineſs, exerciſing or ſtripping emſelves; as for a Race.

*Luke* 13. 24. In the purſuit of happineſs, ſtriving en to an Agony.

*Acts* 26. 7. In Prayer, ſerving God inſtantly; or a ſtretched out manner; yea, pouring out their arts before him, *Pſalm* 62. 8. as if the Body were t like a dead Corps upon the knees, whilſt the irit is departed from it, and aſcended to God. This the manner of his work: Judge then how much rder this work is, than to ſpend the ſweat of the ow in manual labour.

3. The Husbandman finds his work as he left it, he n begin one day where he left the other; but it is t ſo with the Chriſtian, a bad heart, and a buſie evil, diſorder and ſpoil his work every day. The riſtian finds not his heart in the morning, as he t it at night; and even when he is about his work, w many ſet-backs doth he meet with? Satan ſtand his right hand (the working-hand) to reſiſt him, *ch.* 3. 1. when he would do good, evil (the evil of s own heart and nature) is preſent with him.

4. The Husbandman hath ſome reſting days, when throws aſide all his work, and takes his recreation; t the Chriſtian hath no reſting day, till his dying y; and then he ſhall reſt from his labours. Religion ows no idle day, *but requires him to be always abound- in the work of the Lord*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 58. When one Duty done, another calls for him; the Lord's day is a day reſt to the Husbandman, but no day in the Week laborious to the Chriſtian. O 'tis a ſpending day him. When he hath gathered in the Crop of one ty, he is not to ſit down ſatisfied therewith, or ſay that rich worldling did, *Luke*, 12. 19. *Soul take e eaſe, thou haſt goods laid up for many years*; but muſt plow again, and count it well if the Vintage reach the Seed-time, *Levit.* 26. 5. I mean, if the ſtrength, luence, and comfort of one Duty, hold out to other Duty; and that it may be ſo, and there be room left for idleneſs, God hath appointed Ejaculatory Prayer, to fill up the intervals, betwixt ſtated and the more ſolemn Duties. Theſe are to keep in the Fire, which kindled the morning Sacrifice, to kindle the evening Sacrifice. When can the Chriſtian ſit down and ſay, *Now all my work is ended, I have nothing to do without doors, or within?*

Laſtly, There is a time when the labour of the Husbandman is ended; old Age and weakneſs takes him off from all Imployment; they can only look upon their Labourers, but cannot do a ſtroke of work themſelves; they can tell you what they did in their younger years, but now (ſay they) we muſt leave it to younger people: We cannot be young always; but the Chriſtian is never ſuperannuated as to the work of Religion; yea, the longer he lives, the more his Maſter expects from him. When he is full of days, God expects he ſhould be full of fruits, *Pſal.* 92. 14. *They ſhall bring forth fruit in old age, they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing.*

## REFLECTIONS.

The Wordlings Reflection.

1. How hard have I laboured for the Meat that periſheth? prevented the dawning of the day, and laboured as in the very Fire, and yet is the Chriſtians work harder than mine? I Surely then never yet underſtood the work of Chriſtianity. Alas, my ſleepy Prayers, and formal Duties, even all that ever I performed in my Life, never coſt me that pains, that one hour at plow hath done. I have either wholly neglected, or at beſt, ſo lazily performed Religious Duties, that I may truly ſay, I offer to God what coſt me nothing. Wo is me poor wretch! How is the Judgment of *Corah* ſpiritually executed upon me? The Earth opened her mouth, and ſwallowed up his Body; but it hath opened its mouth and ſwallowed up my heart, my time, and all my affections. How far am I from the Kingdom of God!

The Formaliſts Reflection.

2. And how little better is my caſe, who have indeed profeſſed Religion, but never made it my buſineſs? Will an empty (though ſplendid) profeſſion ſave me? How many brave Ships have periſhed in the Storms, notwithſtanding their fine Names, the *Proſperous*, the *Succeſs*, the *Happy Return*? A fine Name could not protect them from the Rocks, nor will it ſave me from Hell. I have done by Religion, as I ſhould have done by the World; prayed, as if I prayed not; and heard, as if I heard not. I have given to God but the ſhadow of Duty, and can never expect from him a real Reward.

The Reflection of a ſlothful Chriſtian.

3. How unlike a Chriſtian doſt thou alſo (O my Soul) go about thy work; though upright in the main, yet how little Zeal and Activity doſt thou expreſs in thy Duties? Awake Love and Zeal, ſeeſt thou not the toyl and pains Men take for the world? How do they prevent the dawing of the day? And labour as in the very Fire till night; and all this for a trifle! Should not every drop of Sweat which I ſee trickle from their Brows, fetch (as it were) a drop of Blood from my heart? who am thus convinced and reproved of ſhameful lazineſs, by their indefatigable diligence. Do they pant after the duſt of the Earth? *Amos* 2. 7. And ſhall not I pant after God? *Pſal.* 42. 1. Ah, my Soul! it was not wont to be ſo with thee, in the days of my firſt Profeſſion. Should I have had no more Communion with God in Duties then, it would have broken my heart: I ſhould have been weary of my Life. Is this a time for one to ſtand idle, who ſtands at the door of Eternity? What, now

ſlack-handed, when ſo near to my Everlaſting Reſt *Rom.* 13. 11. or haſt thou found the work of God ſo unpleaſant to thee? *Prov.* 3. 17. Or the Trade of godlineſs ſo unprofitable? *Pſal.* 19. 11. Or knoweſt thou not, that Millions now in Hell periſhed for want of ſerious diligence in Religion, *Luke* 13. 34. nor doth my diligence for God, anſwer to that which *Chriſt* hath done and ſuffered, to purchaſe my Happineſs: Or to the preparations he hath made in Heaven for me? Or doſt thou forget that thy Maſters Eye is always upon thee, whilſt thou art lazing and loytering? Or would the Damned live at this rate as I do if their day of Grace might be recalled? For ſhame (my Soul) for ſhame! rouze up thy ſelf, and fall to thy work, with a diligence anſwerable to the weight thereof; for it is no vain work concerning thee, it is thy Life.

### The POEM.

*Religion* When *advanc'd in power,*
*Will make you* Husband *every hour.*
*'Twill make* Men *ſtrive with all their might,*
*And therein* Find *a ſweet delight.*
*If there were* Nought *beſides that pay*
*Chriſt gives* To *chear us in our way;*
*Should we not* Do *the beſt we can?*
*For there's* No *ſuch reward from man.*
*Shall others* Work, *and not regard*
*Their ſtrength;* To *get a ſmall reward?*
*Whilſt we* Turn *ſlugs, and loyter thus?*
*Oh that* Their *Zeal might quicken us!*
*Why are our* Hands, *and Feet ſo ſlow,*
*When we* Unto *our buſineſs go?*
*How can we* Then *Chriſt's pay expect,*
*And yet the* Chriſtians *work reject?*
*If this, then* Alſo *that embrace*
*Them both:* If *not, we both diſgrace.*
*Some if* They *could theſe two divide,*
*'Twould* Pleaſe *them well, with Chriſt to ſide!*
*But if they* May *not, then it were*
*As good* Ceaſe *pleading, they'll not hear.*
*Rouze up* From *ſloth, (my Soul) betake*
*Thee to thy* Work, *no cavils make.*
*O ſtrive,* And *try! Saints ſay that even,*
*The pain they* Take, *hath much of heaven.*
*But yet* Their *beſt Wine's kept till laſt,*
*Their reſt, and* Eaſe *comes all ſo faſt.*

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## CHAP II.

### Upon the Thriſtineſs of the Husbandman.

*The hardeſt Labourers, are the thriving Men,*
*If you'll have thriving Souls, be active then.*

### OBSERVATION.

INduſtry and diligence is the way to thrive and grow Rich in the World. The Earth muſt be manured, or its increaſe is in vain expected; *Qui fugit molam, fuget farinam;* he that refuſes the Mill, refuſes the Meal, (ſaith the Proverb) *The diligent Soul ſhall be made fat.* *Solomon* hath two Proverbs concerning thriſtneſs and increaſe in the world. In *Prov.* 10. 4. he ſaith, *The hand of the diligent maketh rich.* And *ver.* 22. he ſaith, *The bleſſing of the Lord maketh rich.* Theſe are not *contradictory*, but *confirmatory* each of other; one ſpeaks of the *principal*, the other of the *inſtrumental* cauſe. Diligence without God's bleſſing will not do it; and that bleſſing cannot be expected without diligence; therefore Husbandmen ply their buſineſs with unwearied pains, they do even lodge in the midſt of their labours as that good Husband *Boaz* did, *Ruth.* 2. 3. They are *parſimonious* of their time, but *prodigal* of their ~~ſweat and~~ ſtrength, becauſe they find this to be the thriving way.

### APPLICATION.

AS Nature opens her Treaſures to none but the diligent, ſo neither doth Grace. He that will be *rich*, muſt be a *painful* Chriſtian; and whoſoever will cloſely ply the Trade of Godlineſs, ſhall comfortably and quickly find, *That in keeping Gods commands, there is great reward*, Pſal. 19. 11. God is a *bountiful rewarder of ſuch as diligently ſeek him*, *Heb.* 11. 6. They muſt not indeed work for wages, nor yet will God ſuffer their work to go unrewarded; yea, it ſufficiently rewards it ſelf, 1 *Tim.* 6. 6. And its reward is twofold; (1) Preſent, and in part; (2) Future, and in full, *Mark* 10. 29, 30. Now in this time an hundred fold, even from ſuffering, which ſeems the moſt unprofitable part of the work, and in the world to come Life everlaſting. If you ask what preſent advantage Chriſtians have by their diligence? I anſwer, as much and more than the Husbandman hath from all his toyls and labours. Let us compare the particulars, and ſee what the Husbandman gets, that the Chriſtian gets not alſo. Compare your gains, and you'll quickly ſee the odds.

*Non mercenarii ſed operarii.*

1. You get Credit and Reputation by your diligence; 'tis a commendation and honour to you, to be active and ſtirring men: But how much more honour doth God put upon his laborious Servants? 'Tis the higheſt honour of a Creature, to be active and uſeful for its God. Saints are called *veſſels of honour*, as they are fitted for the Maſters uſe, 2 *Tim.* 2. 21. Wherein conſiſts the honour of Angels but in this; that they are miniſtring Spirits, ſerviceable Creatures? And all the *Apoſtles* gloried in the Title of Servants. The loweſt office in which a Man can ſerve God, even that of a *Nethinim*, or Door-keeper, which was the loweſt Order or Rank of Officers in the Houſe of God, *Ezek.* 44. 10, 11. is yet preferred by *David* before the ſervice of the greateſt Prince on Earth, *Pſal.* 84. 10. 'Tis no ſmall honour to be active for God.

2. You have this benefit for your labour, that thereby you avoid looſe and evil Company, which would draw you into miſchief. By diligence for God, the Chriſtian alſo is ſecured from Temptations; *God is with them, while they are with him*, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. Communion with God in the way of Duty, is a great Preſervative againſt Temptations. The *Schoolmen* put the queſtion, how the *Angels* and glorified Saints become impeccant? And reſolve it thus: That they are ſecured from ſin, by the Beatifical Viſion; and ſure I am that the Viſions of God, not only in Glory, but now alſo in Duty, are marvellous defences againſt ſin; and they that are moſt active for God, have the fulleſt and cleareſt Viſions of God, *John* 14. 21.

3. You have this benefit by your labour, that it tends much to the health of your Bodies. The Chriſtian hath this benefit by his labour, that it tends to a healthful ſtate of Soul; *The way of the Lord is ſtreng* *to the upright*, *Prov.* 10. 29. As thoſe that follow the daily labours in the Field, have much more heal than Citizens that live idely, or Scholars that live sedentary Life. So the Active Chriſtian enjoys m Spiritual Health, and is troubled with fewer Complaints than others.

4. By diligence in your Civil Imployments, you preſerve your Eſtates, and are kept from running be-hind-hand in the world. *Bayliffs* trouble not ſuch Mens doors; they uſually have the fore-foot of their neighbours. And by activity and diiigence for God, Souls are kept from backſliding, and running back in their Graces and Comforts. Remiſſions and intermiſſions in our Duties, are the firſt ſteps and degrees by which a Soul declines and waſtes as to his Spiritual Eſtate.

5. Your pains and diligence in the Fields, makes your Beds ſweet to you at night, *Eccleſ.* 5. 12. *Reſt is ſweet to a labouring man, whether he eat little or much.* But the diligent Life of a Chriſtian makes the clods of the Valley, his Grave ſweet to him, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. 2 *Kings* 20. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee,* &c. Think Chriſtian, how ſweet it will be for thee, when thou comeſt to die; to ſay then as thy Redeemer did, when near his death, *John* 17. 4, 5. *I have finiſhed the work that thou gaveſt me to do; and now, O Father, glorifie me with thine own ſelf.*

6. The expence of your Sweat fills your Purſes, you get Eſtates by your diligence and labour; but what are your gains to the gains of Chriſtians? They can get in an hour, that which they will not part with for all the Gold and Silver on Earth, *Prov.* 3. 14.

So that compare theſe Labourers, as to all their advantages, and you ſhall ſee, that there is no Trade like that which the diligent Chriſtian drives.

## REFLECTIONS.

Reflections of the ſlothful Soul.

2. Bluſh then, O my Soul, at the conſideration of thy lazineſs and ſloth which is attended with ſo many Spiritual wants! And can I wonder at it, when I refuſe the painful way of Duty, in which the precious fruits of godlineſs, are only to be found? If theſe fruits lay upon the ſurface of Duty, or could be had with wiſhes, I ſhould not want them; but to dig eep and take pains I cannot. My deſires, like thoſe f the ſlothful Man, kill me, becauſe my hands reuſe to labour, *Prov.* 21. 25. If every duty were to e rewarded preſently with Gold, would I not have een more aſſiduous in them, than I have been? And et I know that a heart full of the Grace and Comort of the Holy Ghoſt, is better than a Houſe full f Gold and Silver. O what a compoſition of ſtupiity and ſloth am I! I have been all for the ſhort cut o comfort, when conſtant experience teacheth, that e further way about, by painful Duty, is the nearſt way to it. What pains do Husbandmen take? hat perils do Seamen run for a little gain? O uggiſh heart! wilt thou do nothing for Eternal reaſures?

Secondly, If there be ſuch great reward attending ligence in Duty, then why art thou ſo apt (O my ul) to caſt off Duty, becauſe thou findeſt not prent Comfort in it? How quickly am I diſcouraged, I preſently find not what I expect in Duty? Wherethe Well is deep, and much pains muſt be taken draw up thoſe Waters of Joy, *Iſa.* 12. 3. There a Golden Vein in the Mount of Duty, but it lyes ep; and becauſe I meet not with it as ſoon as I pect, my lazy Heart throws by the Shovel, and es, dig I cannot.

e World- s Reflecti-

Thirdly, If this be indeed the rich and thriving Trade, why do I peddle about the poor low things of the World ſo much, neglecting the rich Trade of dlineſs for it? O, how much of my time and ſtrength have theſe things devoured? Had I employed that time in Communion with God, would it not have turn'd to a better account? Think'ſt thou in earneſt, O my Soul, that God hath endowed thee with ſuch excellent Faculties, capable of the moſt Divine and Heavenly Imployments, or that Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhed his invaluable precious Blood, or that he hath ſent forth the glorious Spirit of Holineſs, and all this to fit Men for no higher or nobler Employments than theſe?

Is this the end of thy wonderful Creation? Doth God whirl about the Heavens in endleſs revolutions, to beget time for this? Or doth he not rather expect that the weightieſt work ſhould engroſs thy greateſt ſtrength, and choiceſt hours? O, that I could once conſider, what a good Maſter Chriſtians ſerve, who will not only abundantly reward them at night? but brings them their Food into the Field to incourage them in their labour! What pity is it, that ſo good a Maſter ſhould be ſo badly ſerved as he hath been by me! Hark how he pleads to gain my Heart.

## The *POEM*, by way of Dialogue betwixt Chriſt and the World.

### CHRIST.

*O Why ſo free of ſweat and time?*
*For what ere long will not be thine.*
*Or if it might, thou ſell'ſt to loſs,*
*A precious Soul, for laſting droſs.*
*Thoſe weary hands, and toyling brains,*
*Might be imploy'd for better gains.*
*Wouldſt thou but work as hard for me,*
*As for the World, which* cozens *thee;*
*Thy gains ſhould be a thouſand fold:*
*For my Revenu's more than gold.*

### WORLD.

*Soul, I have always found thee willing,*
*Rather by me to earn a ſhilling;*
*Than truſt uncertain things which lye,*
*Beyond thee in Eternity.*
*Shall things unſeen now tempt thee? tuſh,*
*A Bird in hand's worth two i' th' buſh.*
*I pay thy wages down in hand,*
*This thou canſt feel, taſte, underſtand.*
*O let not ſuch a vain pretence,*
*Prevail againſt thy very ſence.*

### CHRIST.

*Thus beaſts are led, thus birds are ſnar'd,*
*Thus ſouls for ruin are prepar'd.*
*What? truſt no farther than you ſee,*
*You'll truſt a thief as far as me.*
*Deluded wretch, will nought but ſight*
*And ſence convince thee? O how right,*
*How juſt is God? whoſe direful ſcourge*
*Such Arguments in Hell ſhall urge.*

### WORLD.

*Chriſt threatens wrath to come, but I*
*Do threaten thee with poverty.*
*And why wilt thou thy ſelf, and thoſe*
*That are ſo dear, to wants expoſe?*
*Come, ſee the Saints; for all their brags,*
*How well they thrive, they'r cloth'd with rags.*

### CHRIST.

*If my dear Saints in rags do go,*
*'Tis not Religion cloaths them ſo;*

*But by ſuch wants the Lord prepares*
*Their Souls, againſt thy killing ſnares.*
*They all are heirs, though under age,*
*Expectants of their heritage.*
*Kept ſhort for preſent, yet contemn*
*A change with thoſe, that ſcoff at them.*

### WORLD.

*It is in vain to plead, for I*
*With preſent things charm powerfully.*
*What e're thou offer'ſt they'll deſpiſe;*
*I hold them priſoners by their Eyes.*

### CHRIST.

*If they will ſerve no other Lord,*
*Then let it ſtand upon record*
*Againſt their Souls, that they refus'd*
*My wages, and my grace abus'd.*

### ANOTHER.

*NOne will deny but thoſe are bleſſed pains,*
*which are attended with the richeſt gains.*
*Grant this, and then moſt clearly 'tis inferr'd,*
*Soul-work to all deſerves to be preferr'd.*
*This is an unknown trade, Oh, who can count,*
*To what the gains of godlineſs amount?*
*For one poor ſhilling, O, what risks ſome run?*
*Some toyling as i' th' fire, from Sun to Sun.*
*Whereas one hour ſpent with God brings in*
*Such heavenly treaſures, that poor ſouls have been*
*Inrich'd for ever. Even as you ſee*
*A Princes Favourite upon the knee,*
*Can in an hours time more wealth obtain,*
*Than all your lives by labour you can gain.*
*Prayer-gains are great, and quick returns are made,*
*Sure then the Chriſtian drive the richeſt Trade.*
*'Tis true the Hypocrite that never drove*
*A ſerious trade for Heaven, may Bankrupt prove:*
*But holy Souls, which mind, and cloſely ply*
*Their buſineſs, greatly are inrich'd thereby.*
*The difference 'twixt the one, and t'other's beſt*
*By ſuch a Simile as this expreſt.*
*As in a Summers day you often ſee,*
*The wanton Butterfly, and painful Bee;*
*On Fragrant Flowers ſix, whence one doth ſtrive*
*To bear his precious burden to the Hive:*
*The others pains no profit with it brings,*
*His time is ſpent in painting of his wings.*
*When Winter comes the Bee hath full ſupplies,*
*The other creeps into an hole and dies.*
*Like different events ſhall be betwixt*
*The painful Saint, and lazy Notioniſt.*

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## CHAP. III.

## Upon the Chearfulneſs of the Husbandman.

*The Plowman ſings and whiſtles though he ſweat,*
*Shall Chriſtians droop becauſe their work is great?*

### OBSERVATION.

THough the Labours of Husbandmen are very great and toylſome, yet with what chearfulneſs do they go through them? It is very delightful to hear the melody they make by whiſtling, as they follow the Plow; yea, the very Horſes have their Bells, which make a pleaſant noiſe. *Horſes* (ſaith Mr. *Fuller*) *will do more for a whiſtle, than a whip;* and their Bells do, as it were, gingle away their wearineſs. I have been often delighted with this Country Muſick, whereby they ſweeten their hard labours with an innocent Pleaſure, and verifie the ſaying of the *Poet*;

*Tempus in argo rum cultu conſumere dulce eſt.* Ovid.

Al'tho they Plow from morning until night,
Time ſteals away with pleaſure and delight.

### APPLICATION.

BUT how much greater cauſe have the people of God to addreſs themſelves unto his work with all chearfulneſs of Spirit? And indeed, ſo far as the heart is ſpiritual, it delights in its Duties. 'Tis true, the work of a Chriſtian is painful, and much more ſpending, than the Husbandmans (as was opened *Chap.* 1.) but then it as much exceeds in the delights and pleaſures that attend it. What is the Chriſtians work, but *with joy to draw water out of the wells of ſalvation? Iſa.* 12. 3. You may ſee what a pleaſant path the path of Duty is, by the chearfulneſs of thoſe that have walked in them, *Pſal.* 119. 14. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy judgments, as much as in all riches.* And by the Promiſes that are made to ſuch, *Pſal.* 138. 5. *Yea, they ſhall ſing in the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.* And again, *You ſhall have a ſong as in the night, when an holy ſolemnity is kept, and gladneſs of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe, to come to the mountai of the Lord, to the mighty one of* Iſrael, *Iſa.* 30. 29.

And laſtly, By the many commands, whereby joy in the way of the Lord is made the Duty of the Saints. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, for praiſe i comely for the upright*, Pſal. 97. 12. *Rejoice, and agai I ſay rejoice,* Philip. 4. 4. Where the command i doubled; yea, not only ſimple rejoycing, but the higheſt degree of that Duty comes within the command, *Pſal.* 132. 2, 16. *Shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart.* And *Luke* 6. 22, 23. they are bid *to lea for joy*, when about the difficult'ſt part of their wor And that you may ſee there is ſufficient ground fo it, and that it is not like the mad mirth of ſinners, b pleaſed to conſider.

1. The nature of the work about which they a imployed; it is the moſt excellent and heavenl Imployment that ever Souls were acquainted wit O what a raviſhing and delightſome thing it is to wal with God! And yet by this, the whole work of Chriſtian is expreſſed, *Gen.* 17. 1. Can any Life com pare with this for pleaſure? Can they be chill th walk in the Sun-ſhine? Or ſad, that abide in th Fountain of all delights? And walk with him who Name is the God of all Comfort, 2 *Cor.* 1. 3. *whoſe preſence is the fulneſs of joy, Pſal.* 16. 11. O wh an Angelical Life doth a Chriſtian then live?

Or, 2*ly*. If we conſider the variety of Spiritual E ployments *varietas delectat*. Change of Employme takes off the tediousneſs of labour. Variety of Voic pleaſe the Ear; variety of Colours delight the Ey the ſame Meat prepared ſeveral ways pleaſes the P late more, and clogs it leſs. But O the variety choice Diſhes wherewith God entertains his Peo in a Sabbath! As the Word, Prayer, Sacraments, & *Iſa.* 58. 13. If thou call the Sabbath thy deligh or, as, *Tremelius* renders it, thy delicate things. *ſoul* (ſaith *David*) *ſhall be ſatisfied, as with marrow fatneſs,* Pſal. 63. 5.

3. Or laſtly, If we conſider the ſuitableneſs of t work to a regenerate Soul. Is it any pain for a B to fly? Or a Fiſh to ſwim? Is the Eye tyred w beautiful Objects? Or the Ear with melodious ſoun As little can a Spiritual Soul be weaned with Sp tual and Heavenly exerciſes, *Rom.* 7. 22. *I delight i Law of God after the inner man. Gravia non gravit*

*corum loco* (ſaith the *Philoſopher*) weighty things are not heavy in their own Element or Center. And ſurely, God is the Center of all gracious Spirits. A Saint can ſit from morning to night to hear diſcourſes of the love and lovelineſs of Jeſus Chriſt. The ſight of your thriving Flocks, and flouriſhing Fields, cannot yield you that pleaſure which an upright Soul can find in one quarter of an hours Communion with God. *They hat are after the fleſh* ( ſaith the Apoſtle , *Rom.* 8. 5.) *o mind the things of the fleſh , and they that are after the pirit the things of the ſpirit.* But then, look how much Heavenly Objects tranſcend earthly ones , and how much the Soul is more capable of delight in thoſe Objects , than the groſs and duller ſenſes are in heirs ; ſo much doth the pleaſure ariſing from the Duty, excel all ſenſitive delights on Earth.

## REFLECTIONS.

The Carnal Hearts Reflection.

How am I caſt and condemned by this, may I ſay ; who never favoured this ſpiritual delight in holy Duties. When I am about my Earthly Employments, can go on unweariedly from day to day ; all the ay is down-hill to my Nature ; and the wheels of y Affections being oiled with carnal delight, runs o faſt, that they have need moſt times of trigging. Here I rather need the Curb than the Spur. O, how eet and nimble are my Spirits in theſe their urſuits ! But O, what a ſlug am in Religious Duties! ure if my Heart were renewed by Grace, I ſhould elight in the Law of God, *Rom.* 7. 22. All the World is alive in their ways , every Creature enjoys is proper pleaſure ; and is there no delight to be ound in the paths of holineſs ? is godlineſs only a ry Root that bears no pleaſant Fruits ? No , no here are doubtleſs incomparable pleaſures to be found herein ; but ſuch a carnal Heart as mine ſavours hem not.

*he Hypocrites eflection.*

I cannot ſay but I have found delight in Religious Duties, but they have been only ſuch as rather ſprang from the ſtentation of Gifts and Applauſes of men, than any weet and real Communion I have had with God hrough them ; they have rather proved Food and uel to my Pride, than Food to my Soul. Like the ightingale I can ſing ſweetly, when I obſerve others liſten to me, and be affected with my muſick. O, lſe deceitful Heart, ſuch delight as this will end in owling ! Were my Spirit right, it would as much elight in Retirements for the injoyment of God, as doth in thoſe Duties that are moſt expoſed to the bſervation of man. Will ſuch a ſpring as this mainin a ſtream of Affections, when carnal motives fail? hat wilt thou anſwer (O my Soul) to that queſtion, *ob* 27. 9, 10. *Will God hear his cry when trouble comes on him ? Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty ? Will always call upon God ?* What wilt thou reply to this eſtion ? Deceive not thou thy ſelf, O my Soul ! ou wilt doubtleſs be eaſily perſwaded to let go that ou never delighteſt in ; and from an Hypocrite Religion, quickly become an Apoſtate from Reion.

*he upright Hearts flection.*

From all this, the upright Heart takes advantage to rouze up its delight in God ; and thus it expoſtueth with it ſelf : Doth the plowman ſing amidſt drudging labours , and whiſtle away his weariſs in the Fields , and ſhall I droop amidſt ſuch Heavenly Employment ? O my Soul , what want'ſt thou here, to provoke thy delight ? If there be ſuch an Affection as delight in thee , methinks, ſuch an object as the bleſſed Face of God in Ordinances ſhould excite it. Ah, how would this ennoble all my Services, and make them Angel-like ! How glad are thoſe bleſſed Creatures to be imployed for God ? No ſooner were they created but they ſang together, and ſhouted for Joy, *Job* 38. 7. How did they fill the Air with heavenly Melody, when ſent to bring the joyful Tydings of a Saviour to the World ? Aſcribing glory to God in the higheſt, of their powers : Yea, this delight would make all my Duties Chriſtlike ; and the nearer that pattern , the more excellent. He delighted to do his Fathers will , it was to him meat and drink, *Pſal.* 40. 7. *John* 4. 32, 34.

Yea, it would not only ennoble, but facilitate all my Duties, and be to me as wings to a Bird in flying, or Sails to a Ship in motion. *Non tardat uncta rota* ; oyled Wheels run freely ; *Or ever I was aware, my Soul made me like the Chariots of* Aminadab. O ! what is the reaſon ( my God) my delight in thee ſhould be ſo little ? Is it not , becauſe my unbelief is ſo great ? Rouze up my delights, O thou Fountain of Pleaſure ! And let me ſwim down the ſtream of holy Joys in Duty, into the boundleſs Ocean of thoſe immenſe Delights that are in thy preſence, and at thy Right Hand for evermore.

## The POEM

*O What a dull, deſpondent heart is mine ?*
*That takes no more delight in things Divine.*
*When all the Creatures both in Heaven and Earth,*
*Enjoy their pleaſures, and are big with mirth.*
*Angels and Saints that are before the Throne ;*
*In extaſies and raptures every one*
*Perpetually is held ; each bleſſed Spirit*
*The pureſt higheſt joys doth there inherit ;*
*The Saints on Earth in their imperfect ſtate ;*
*Thoſe Peerleſs Joys by Faith do antedate.*
*To natural men, who ſavour not this pleaſure,*
*Yea bounteous nature doth unlock her treaſure*
*Of ſenſitive delights. Yea, ſtrange to tell,*
*Bold ſinners rant it all the way to Hell.*
*Like Fiſh that play in* Jordan's *Silver ſtream,*
*So theſe in ſenſual Luſts ; and never dream*
*Of that dead Sea, to which the ſtream doth tend ;*
*And to their pleaſures puts a fatal end.*
*Yea Birds, and Beaſts as well as Men, enjoy*
*Their innocent delights. Theſe chirp and play ;*
*The cheerful Birds among the Branches ſing,*
*And make the neighbouring Groves with Muſick ring ;*
*With various warbling notes they all invite,*
*Our raviſht Ears , with pleaſure and delight.*
*The new faln Lambs will in a Sun-ſhine day,*
*About their feeding Dams jump up and play.*
*Are Ciſterns ſweet : And is the Fountain bitter ?*
*Or can the Sun be dark when Glow-worms glitter ?*
*Have Inſtruments their ſweet melodious Airs ?*
*All Creatures their delights , and Saints not theirs ?*
*Yea , theirs tranſcend theſe ſenſual ones as far,*
*As noon-day* Phebus *doth a twinkling Star.*
*Why droop I then, may any Creature have*
*A life like mine for pleaſure ? Who ere gave*
*The like incouragement that Chriſt hath given,*
*To do his will on earth as 'tis in heaven*

## CHAP. IV.

### Upon the due quality of Arable Land.

*Corn-Land muſt neither be too fat, nor poor;*
*The middle ſtate ſuits beſt with Chriſtians ſure.*

### OBSERVATION.

HUsbandmen find by experience, that their Arable Lands may be dreſt too much as well as too little. If the Soil be over-rank, the Seed ſhoots up ſo much into the ſtalk, that it ſeldom ears well; and if too thin and poor, it wants its due nutriment, and comes not to perfection. Therefore their care is to keep it in Heart but not to over-dreſs or under-dreſs it. The end of all their coſt and pains about it is Fruit; and therefore reaſon tells them, that ſuch a ſtate and temperament of it, as beſt fits it for Fruit, is beſt both for it and them.

### APPLICATION.

AND doth not Spiritual Experience teach Chriſtians, that a mediocrity and competency of the things of this Life, beſt fits them for the Fruits of obedience, which is the end and excellency of their beings? A man may be overmercied, as well as overafflicted, *Rare famant fœlicibus aræ*, the Altars of the Rich ſeldome ſmoke. When our outward Enjoyments are by Providence ſhaped and fitted to our condition, as a Suit is to the Body, that ſits cloſe and neat, neither too curt nor long; we cannot deſire a better condition in this World. This was it that wiſe *Agur* requeſted of God, Prov. 30. 8, 9. *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, but feed me with food convenient for me, leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay who is the Lord? Or leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of my God in vain.* Againſt both he prays *equally*, not *abſolutely*; that had been his ſin, but comparitively and ſubmiſſively to the will of God. He had rather, if God ſee it fit, to avoid both of theſe extreams; But what would he have then? why, Food convenient. Or, according to the *Hebrew*, give me my prey or ſtatute-bread; which is a Metaphor from Birds which fly up and down to prey for their young, and what they get they deſtribute among them; they bring them enough to preſerve their lives, but not more than enough to lye mouldering in the Neſt. Such a proportion *Agur* deſired; and the reaſon why he deſired it, is drawn from the danger of both the extreams. He meaſured (like a wiſe Chriſtian) the conveniency or inconveniency of his Eſtate in the World, by its ſuitableneſs or unſuitableneſs to the end of his being; which is the ſervice of God. He accounted the true excellency of his Life to conſiſt in its reference and tendency to the glory of his God; and he could not ſee how a *redundancy*, or too great a *penury* of earthly comforts, could fit him for that; but a middle ſtate equally removed from both extreams, beſt fitted that end. And this was all that good *Jacob*, who was led by the ſame Spirit, lookt at, *Gen.* 28. 20. *And Jacob vowed a vow ſaying, if God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, ſo that I come again to my Fathers Houſe in peace, then ſhall the Lord be my God.* Poor *Jacob*, he deſires no great matters in the World, Food and Raiment will ſatisfie him; in Spiritual things his deſires are boundleſs, he is the moſt greedy and unſatisfied Man in the World, *Hoſ.* 12. 4. but in the matters of this life, if he can get from God but *Offam & aquam*, a morſel of Meat, and a mouthfull of Water, he will not envy the richeſt *Cræſſus* or *Craſſus* upon Earth. *Cibus & potus ſunt divitiæ Chriſtianorum.* *Meat* and *Drink* are the riches of Chriſtians. *Divitiæ ſunt ad legem naturæ compoſita paupertas* (ſaith *Pomponius Atticus*) Riches are ſuch a Poverty or Mediocrity, as hath enough for natures uſes; and ſuch a ſtate is beſt accommodated, both to the condition and to the deſires of a Saint.

1. To his condition, For what is a Saint but a Stranger and Pilgrim upon Earth, a Man in a ſtrange Countrey travelling homeward? So *David* profeſſes himſelf, Pſal. 119. 19. *I am a ſtranger in this earth.* And ſo thoſe Worthies, who are now at home in Heaven, *Heb.* 11. 13. they profeſſed themſelves to be Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth, and to ſeek a Countrey; a *viaticum* contents a Traveller, he will not cumber himſelf with ſuperfluous things which would rather clog and tire than expedite and help him in his Journey.

2. It ſuits beſt with his deſires, I mean his regular and adviſed deſires. For,

1. A gracious Soul earneſtly deſires a free condition in the World, he is ſenſible he hath much work to do, a race to run, and is loth to be clog'd, or have his Foot in the Snare of the Cares or Pleaſures of this Life. He knows that fulneſs expoſes to wantonneſs and irreligion, *Deut.* 6. 12. *Hoſ.* 13. 6. 'Tis hard, in the midſt of ſo many tempting objects, to keep the golden Bridle of moderation upon the Affections. The Heart of a Chriſtian, like the Moon, commonly ſuffers an Eclipſe when it is at the full, and that by the interpoſition of the Earth.

It was *Solomon*'s fulneſs that drew out and diſſolved his Spirits, and brought him to ſuch a low ebb in Spirituals, that it remains a queſtion with ſome, Whether he ever recovered it to his dying day. As it is the miſery of the poor to be neglected of Men, ſo it is the miſery of the rich to neglect God. Who can be poorer, than to have the World, and love it? Or richer, than to enjoy but little of it, and live above it?

And on the other ſide, extream poverty is no leſs expoſed to ſin and danger, *Levit.* 6. 2, 3, 4. As high and lofty Trees are ſubject to Storms and Tempeſts, ſo the loweſt Shrubs to be brows'd on by every Beaſt; and therefore, a Saint deſires a juſt competency a the *fitteſt*, becauſe the *freeſt* ſtate.

2. A gracious Perſon deſires no more but a competency, becauſe there is moſt of God's love and ca diſcovered in giving in our daily Bread, by a dail Providence. It is betwixt ſuch a condition, and fulneſs of Creature-proviſions in our land, as it wa betwixt *Egypt* and *Canaan*; *Egypt* was watered wi the foot from the River *Nilus*, and little of God w ſeen in that mercy; but *Canaan* depended upon th dews and ſhowers of Heaven; and ſo every ſhower rain was a refreſhing ſhower to their Souls as well Bodies. Moſt men that have a ſtock of Creatur comforts in their hands look upon all as coming in a ordinary natural courſe, and ſee very little of G in their mercies. Pope *Adrian* built a Colledge *Louvain*, and cauſed this inſcription to be written Letters of Gold on the Gates thereof; *Traject plantavit, Louvanium rigavit, Cæſer dedit incrementu* (i.e.) *Utrecht* planted me, *Louvain* water'd me, a *Cæſar* gave the increaſe. One to reprove his fo wrote underneath, *Hic Deus nihil fecit*; Here G did nothing. Carnal men, they ſow, and reap, a eat, and look no further.

But now, when a man ſees his mercies come in the ſpecial and aſſiduous care of God for him, th is a double ſweetneſs in thoſe mercies; the natural ſweetneſs which comes from the Creature it ſelf, every one, even the Beaſts can taſte that as well as thee; but beſides that, there is a Spiritual ſweetneſs, far exceeding the former, which none but a believer taſtes; and much of that comes from the manner in which he receives it, becauſe it comes (be it never ſo courſe or little) as a Covenant-mercy to him. *He hath given bread to them that fear him, he is ever mindful of his Covenant, Pſal.* 111. 5. *Luther*, who made many a Meal upon a broiled Herring, was wont to ſay, *Mendicato pane hic vivamus, an non hoc pulchre ſarcitur in eo, quod paſcimur pane cum angelis & vita æterna, Chriſto & Sacramentis*; Let us be content with courſe fare here, have we not the Bread that came down from Heaven? Do we not feed with Angels? A pregnant inſtance of the ſweetneſs of ſuch mercies, is given us by a worthy Divine of our own Mr. *Iſaac Ambroſe*.

Epiſtle to the Earl of *Bedford*; *ante ultima.*

'For mine own part (ſaith he) however the Lord hath ſeen cauſe to give me but a poor pittance of outward things (for which I bleſs his Name) yet in the income thereof, I have many times obſerv'd ſo much of his peculiar Providence, that thereby they have been very much ſweetened, and my Heart hath been raiſed to admire his Grace. When of late under an hard diſpenſation (which I judge not meet to mention, wherein I ſuffered with inward peace conſcientiouſly) all ſtreams of wonted ſupplies being ſtopt, the Waters of relief for my ſelf and Family did run low. I went to Bed with ſome ſtaggerings and doubtings of the Fountains letting out it ſelf for our refreſhing; but ere I did awake in the morning, a Letter was brought to my Bed-ſide, which was ſigned by a choice Friend Mr. *Anthony Aſh*, which reported ſome unexpected breakings out of God's goodneſs for my comfort. Theſe are ſome of his Lines—Your God, who hath given you an Heart thankfully to record your experiences of his goodneſs, doth renew experiences for your encouragement. Now I ſhall report one which will raiſe your Spirit towards the *God* of your Mercy, *&c.* Whereupon he ſweetly concludes, 'One morſel of God's Proviſion, (eſpecially if it come unexpected, and upon Prayer, when wants are moſt) will be more ſweet to a Spiritual reliſh, than all former full Enjoyments were.

Many Mercies come unask'd for, and they require thankfulneſs, but when Mercies come in upon Prayer, and as a return of Prayer, their ſweetneſs more than doubles; for now it's both God's bleſſing upon his own inſtitution, and Seal ſet to his Promiſe at once, *Pſal.* 66. 16, 17. Doubtleſs *Hannah* found more comfort in her *Samuel*, and *Rachel* in her *Naphtali*, (the one being ask'd of God, and the other wreſtled for with God, (as their Names import) than Mothers ordinarily do in their Children.

## REFLECTIONS.

The Reflection of the deſigning Hypocrite.

Do the people of God deſire only ſo much of the Creature as may fit them for the ſervice of God? What a wretch am I that have deſired only ſo much of Religion as may fit me to gain the Creature! As God's people have ſubjected all their Creature-enjoyments to Religion, ſo oppoſitely, O my Soul, thou haſt ſubjected Religion to thy worldly intereſt and deſigns. Inſtead of eating and drinking to ſerve God, I have ſerved God that I might eat and drink; yea, I have not only acted below Religion, but below reaſon alſo; for reaſon dictates plainly, that the means muſt never be more excellent than the end. Wretch that I am, to make Religion a Slave to my Luſt, a Stirrupt to Advancement, an Artifice to carry on my carnal Deſigns: Verily I have my reward; and this is all the good I am ever like to get by it.

The Worldlings Reflection.

And no leſs ſhould the Worldling tremble, to conſider how he hath caſt off the Duties of Religion, made them ſtand aſide, and give place to the world. Inſtead of deſiring ſo much only as might make him ſerviceable to God, he thruſts aſide the ſervice of God to get as much of the world as he can, who is ſo far from making godlineſs the end of his Creature-comforts, that he rather looks upon it as an obſtacle and hindrance to them. May not the very Heathens make me bluſh? Could *Ariſtotle* deliver this as a true rule to Proſperity, to make Religion our firſt and chief care? Could *Ariſtippus* ſay, He would rather neglect his Means than his Mind? His Farm than his Soul? Will the very *Mahometans*, how urgent ſoever their buſineſs be, lay it all aſide, five times in the day to pray? Yea is it common to a Proverb among the very *Papiſts*, that Maſs and Meat hinders no Man, and yet I that profeſs my ſelf a Chriſtian, thruſt out Duty for every trifle? O wretched Soul! how hath the God of this world blinded mine Eyes? Can the world indeed do that for me, that Chriſt can do? Hath it ever proved true to them that truſted it and doated on it? Hath it not at laſt turn'd them off as Men turn off a Sumpter Horſe at night, that hath been a drudge to carry their Gold and Silver for them all day, and at laſt is turn'd out with an empty Belly, and a galled Back? O how righteous will that ſentence of God be? Go cry to the Gods whom thou haſt ſerved!

The Gracious Soul's Reflection.

And may not many gracious hearts turn in upon themſelves with ſhame and ſorrow, to conſider how unſatisfied they have heen in that condition, that others have preferr'd and eſteem'd as the greateſt of all outward Mercies? I have indeed been fed with Food convenient, but not contented: Now hath my Heart been tortured from day to day with anxious thoughts, what I ſhall eat and drink, and wherewith I and mine ſhould be cloathed? I pretend indeed that I care but for a competency of the world, but ſure I am, my cares about it have been incompetent. Come my diſtruſtful earthly heart, let me propound a few queſtions to thee about this matter, and anſwer truly to what I ſhall demand of thee.

*Queſt.* 1. Haſt thou here a continuing City? Art thou at home, or upon thy Journey, that thou art ſo ſollicitous about the world? Thy Profeſſion indeed ſpeaks thee a ſtranger upon Earth, but thy Converſation a home-dweller. *Eraſmus* ſaid, he deſired Honours and Riches, no more than a weary Horſe doth a heavy Cloak-bag. Wouldſt thou not account him a Fool that would Victual his Ship as much to croſs the Channel to *France*, as if ſhe were bound for the *Eaſt-Indies*? Alas! it will be but a little while, and then there will be no more need of any of thoſe things. 'Tis ſad, that a Soul which ſtands at the door of Eternity, ſhould be perplexing it ſelf about Food and Raiment.

*Queſt.* 2. Which of all the Saints haſt thou known to be the better for much of the world? It hath been ſome Mens utter ruin. Seldom doth God ſuffer Men to be their own Carvers, but they cut their own Fingers. *To give Riches and Pleaſure to an evil man (ſaith Ariſtotle) is but to give Wine to one that hath a Fever.* Where there is no *want*, there is uſually much *wantonneſs*. What a ſad ſtory was that of *Pius Quintus* ; When I was in a low condition ( ſaid he) I had ſome comfortable hopes of my Salvation, but when I came to be a Cardinal, I greatly doubted of it ; but ſince I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all. Though this poor undone wretch ſpake it out, and others keep it in, yet doubtleſs he hath many thouſand Fellows in the world that might ſay as much, would they but ſpeak the truth.

And even God's own people, though the world hath not excluded them out of Heaven, yet it hath ſorely clogg'd them in the way thither. Many that have been very humble, holy and heavenly in a low condition, have ſuffered a ſad ebb in a full condition. What a cold blaſt have they felt coming from the Cares and Delights of this Life, to chill both their Graces and Comforts! It had been well for ſome of God's people, if they had never known what proſperity meant.

*Queſt.* 3. Is not this a ſad Symptom of a declining ſtate of Soul, to be ſo hot, eager, and anxious about the ſuperfluous triſtes of this Life? Think'ſt thou, O my Soul! that one who walks in the views of that Glory above, and maintains a Converſation in Heaven, can be much taken with theſe Vanities? Do not the Viſions of God veil the tempting ſplendor of the Creature! It was the Opinion of ſome of the *School-men*, that the reaſon why *Adam in Paradiſe* was not ſenſible of his nakedneſs, was becauſe he was wholly taken up in converſing with God. But this is certain, lively and ſweet Communion with God, blunts and dulls the edge of the Affections to earthly things; and canſt thou be ſatisfied my Soul with ſuch gains as are attended with ſuch Spiritual Loſſes?

*Queſt.* 4. To conclude, is it not diſhonourable to God, and a juſtification of the way of the world, for me that profeſs my ſelf a Chriſtian to be as eager after Riches as other Men? *After all theſe things do the nations ſeek*, *Mat.* 6. 32. If I had no Father in Heaven, nor Promiſe in the Word, it were another matter ; but ſince my heavenly Father knows what I have need of, and hath charged me to be careful in nothing, but only tell him my wants, *Phil.* 4. 6. How unbecoming a thing is it in me to live and act as I have done! Let me henceforth learn to meaſure and eſtimate my condition, rather by its uſefulneſs to God, than its content and eaſe to my Fleſh.

### The POEM.

*IF fruit and ſervice be indeed the end*
*To which my being and redemption tend,*
*Reaſon concludes, that ſtate of all the reſt*
*Which is moſt ſerviceable, to be beſt.*
*And ſuch a ſtate experience ſhews to lye*
*'Twixt fulneſs, and a pinching poverty.*
*This golden* Mean, *is worth a golden* Mine ;
*He that hath this, ſhould be aſham'd to whine.*
*The full-fed Chriſtian like the* Ox *i'th' ſtall*
*Is no way fit to work or plow withal.*
*And penury like* Pharaoh*'s leaner kine,*
*Devours the fatteſt portions of our time*
*That man with whom this earthly pleaſure's found*
*Or in whoſe heart thoſe anxious cares abound ;*
*And yet can walk by ſcripture-rule and line,*
*Will need a better head and heart than mine,*
*A ſingle ſtaff the Traveller may find*
*Of uſe, and ſervice ; but if you ſhould bind*
*A bundle of them to his back, they'l make*
*Him ſlack his pace, and cry my ſhoulders ake.*
*I am a Traveller, this world's my way*
*A ſingle ſtaff may be of uſe to ſtay*
*My feeble Body if it do not crack,*
*By too hard leaning on it ; but my Back*
*Will bear no more : Alas, I ſoon ſhould tire,*
*And more than one I cannot well deſire.*
*Lord, to preſcribe to thee becomes me not*
*I rather do ſubmit unto my Lot ;*
*But yet let condeſcending Grace admit*
*The Servants ſuit this once, and this is it.*
*The ſtaff of Bread convenient let me have,*
*And manage it diſcreetly ; ſo 'twill ſave*
*Thy feeble Servant from the mire and dirt,*
*But more or leſs than this may do me hurt.*
*Or if thou ſay, thy Servant ſhall have none,*
*Then ſtrengthen Faith, that I may go alone.*

## CHAP. V.

### Upon the Improvement of Bad Ground.

*Spent barren Land, you can reſtore and nouriſh,*
*Decayed Chriſtians, God can cauſe to flouriſh.*

### OBSERVATION.

WHere Land is ſpent out by Tillage, or for want of Manuring, the careful Husbandman hath many ways to recover and bring it in heart again. He lets it lye fallow to give it reſt, and time to recover it ſelf, carries out his Sand, Lime, and Compoſt, to refreſh and quicken it again, and in Paſture and Meadow-ground, will waſh it ( if poſſible) with a current of Water, or the float of the ways after a fall of Rain, which is to the Earth as a Spring of new Blood to a Conſumptive Body. He cuts down and kills the Weeds that ſuck it out and cauſes them to make reſtitution of what they have purloined from it, by rooting upon the place where they grew. As careful are they to recover it when it is ſpent, as an honeſt Phyſician is of his Patient in a languiſhing condition, for he knows his Field will be as grateful to him, and fully requite his Care and Coſt.

### APPLICATION.

AS Man's, ſo God's Husbandry is ſometimes out of caſe, not by yielding too many Crops but too few. The Myſtical Husbandman hath ſome Fields, ( I mean particular Societies and Perſons who were once fragrant and fruitful like a Field which God had bleſſed, but are now decayed and grown barren ; whoſe gleanings formerly, were more than their Vintage now ; the things that are in them are ready to dye, *Rev.* 3. 3. 'Tis poſſible, yea, too common for gracious Souls to be reduced to a very low ebb, both of Graces and Comforts ; how low will not ſay : Our *Britiſh Divines* tell us, That Grace indeed cannot be totally intermitted, nor finally loſt ; but there may be an omiſſion of the Act, though not an omiſſion of the Habit: The Act may be perverted, though the Faith cannot be ſubverted ; it may be ſhaken in, though not ſhaken out ; its Fruits may fall, but its Sap lyes hid in the Root ; they demerit the loſs of the Kingdom, but loſe it not effectively ; the effect of Juſtification may be ſuſpended, but the ſtate of the Juſtified cannot de diſſolved.

How far t
Grace in a
liever may f

*Gratia nec t*
*liter intermi*
*tur, nec final*
*amittitur, A*
*omittitur, h*
*tus non am*
*tur. Actio*
*vertitur, f*
*non ſubverti*
*Concutitur,*
*excutitur De*
*fructus,*
*ſuccus. Jus ad regnum amittunt demeritorie, non effective, effectus j*
*ficationis ſuſpenatur, at ſtatus juſtificati non diſſolvitur.* Soff Britt.

Certain it is, one that like *Paul* hath been rapt with joy, even to the third Heavens and cryed, *I*
*more than a Conqueror who ſhall ſeparate me from the*
*of God?* May at another time lye mourning as a

Gates of Death, crying, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death*? One that ath walked in ſweet Communion with God,ſunning himſelf in the light of his Countenance, may afterwards *walk in darkneſs, and ſee no light*, *Iſa.* 50. 10. He hat hath caſt Anchor within the Veil and rode ſeurely in the peaceful harbour of aſſurance, may eem to feel his Anchor of Hope come home to him, nd go adrift into the ſtormy Ocean again, crying ith the Church, *Lam.* 3. 18. *My hope is periſhed from be Lord.* His calm and clear Air may be over-caſt nd clouded, yea, filled with Storms and Tempeſts, Lightnings and Thunders; his Graces, like underround Flowers in the Winter, may all diſappear,and ide their beautiful heads.

To *God* he may ſay, I am caſt out of thy ſight; I now thou canſt do much, but wilt thou ſhew wonders to the dead?

To the *Promiſes* he may ſay, you are ſweet things ndeed, but what have I to do with you? I could nce indeed rejoyce in you as my portion; but now doubt I graſped a ſhadow, a fancy inſtead of you. To *Saints* he may ſay, turn away from me, labour ot to comfort me, O do not ſpill your precious Ointments of Conſolation upon my Head; for what ave I to do with Comfort. To former *Experiences*, he ay ſay in his haſte, you are all Liars. To the *ght of God's Countenance*, he may ſay, farewell ſweet ght, I ſhall behold thee no more. To *Satan*, he may y, O mine Enemy, thou haſt at laſt prevailed ainſt me, thou art ſtronger than I, and haſt overme. To *Duties* and *Ordinances*, he may ſay, where is e ſweetneſs I once found in you? You were once eeter to me than the Honey-comb; but now as ſteleſs as the white of an Egg. O ſad relapſe! deored change! *quantum mutatus ab illo*?

But will God leave his poor Creatures helpleſs ſuch a caſe as this? Shall their Leaf fall, their anches wither, their Joy, their Life, their Heart part? Will he ſee their Graces fainting, their opes gaſping, the new Creature panting, the things at are in them ready to die, and will he not regard ? Yes, yes, *There is hope of a Tree if it be cut down, and root thereof wax old in the earth, yet by the ſcent of ter it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant*, *Job* 8, 9. This poor declined Soul, as ſad as it ſits at Gates of Hell, may rouze up it ſelf at laſt, and to *Satan* that ſtands triumphing over him, *Rejoyce over me, O mine Enemy for though I fall, yet I ſhall ariſe; gh I ſit in darkneſs, the Lord ſhall be a light unto me*, c. 7. 8. He may raiſe up himſelf upon his Bed of guiſhing for all this, and ſay to *God*, *Though thou chaſtened me ſore, yet haſt thou not given me over unto th.* He may turn about to the Saints that have urned for him, and with a lightſome Countence, ſay, *I ſhall not die but live, and declare the words be Lord.* He may ſay to the *Promiſes*, you are the true faithfull ſayings of God, my unbelief did belye : I ſaid in my haſte you were Liars, but I eat words, I am aſhamed of my folly. Surely, O Soul, e is yet hope in thine end, thou maiſt be reſtored, 23. 3. thou maiſt yet recover thy verdure, and Dew be as the Dew of Herbs. For,

. Is he not thy Father, and a Father full of Comions and Bowels? And can a Father ſtand by his g Child, ſee his fainting Fits, hear his melting ns, and pity-begging looks; and not help him cially having Reſtoratives by him, that can do Surely, *As a Father pities his own Children, ſo will God pity thee*, Pſal. 103. 12, 13. *He will ſpare thee Father ſpareth his own Son that ſerves him*, *Mark* 3. 17. Hark, how his Bowels yearn! *I have ſurely heard* Ephraim *bemoaning himſelf, is not* Ephraim *my dear Son? is he not a pleaſant Child? for ſince I ſpake againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill, I will ſurely have mercy on him*, Jer. 31. 20.

2. Doth he not know thy Life would be altogether uſeleſs to him, if he ſhould not reſtore thee? What ſervice art thou fit to perform to him, in ſuch a condition? *Thy days will conſume like ſmoke, whilſt thy heart is ſmitten and withered like graſs*, *Pſal.* 102. 3, 4. Thy Months will be Months of Vanity,they will fly away, and ſee no good, *Job* 7. 3. If he will but quicken thee again, then thou muſt call upon his Name *Pſal.* 80. 18. but in a dead and languiſhing condition, thou art no more fit for any work of God,than a ſick Man is for manual Labours; and ſurely he hath not put thoſe precious and excellent Graces of his Spirit within thee for nothing; they were planted there for Fruit and Service, and therefore doubtleſs he will revive thee again.

3. Yea, doſt thou not think he ſees thine inability to bear ſuch a condition long? He knows *thy Spirit would fail before him, and the Soul which he hath made*, *Iſa.* 57. 16. *David* told him as much, in the like condition, *Pſal.* 143. 7, 8. *Hear me ſpeedily, O Lord, for my Spirit faileth; hide not thy Face from me, leſt I be like unto thoſe that go down into the Pit*; *q. d.* Lord, make haſte and recover my languiſhing Soul; otherwiſe, whereas thou haſt now a *ſick Child*, thou wilt ſhortly have a *dead Child*.

And in like manner *Job* expoſtulated with him, *Job* 6, 1. 2. 3, 11, 12. *My grief is heavier than the ſand of the Sea, my words are ſwallowed up, for the Arrows of the Almighty are within me; and the poyſon thereof drinks up my ſpirits: The Terrors of God do ſet themſelves in array againſt me, what is my ſtrength that I ſhould hope? is my ſtrength the ſtrength of ſtones? or are my bones of braſs?* So *Chap.* 7. 12. *Am I a Sea, or a Whale? &c.* Other Troubles a Man may, but this he cannot bear, *Prov.* 18. 14. And therefore doubtleſs ſeaſonable and gracious revivings will come, *He will not ſtir up all his wrath, for he remembers thou art but fleſh, a wind that paſſeth away, and cometh not again*, *Pſa.* 78. 38, 39, He hath ways enough to do it, if he do but unvail his bleſſed Face, and make it ſhine again upon thee, Thou art ſaved, *Pſa.* 80. 3. The manifeſtations of his love, will be to thy Soul, as ſhowers to the parched Graſs; thy Soul that now droops and hangs the Wing, ſhall then revive and and leap for joy, *Iſa.* 61. 1. A new Face ſhall come upon thy Graces, they ſhall bud again, and bloſſom as a Roſe if he do but ſend a ſpring of Auxiliary Grace into thy Soul to actuate the dull habits of inherent Grace, the work is done; then ſhalt thou return to thy firſt works again, *Rev.* 2, 4. 5. and ſing, as in the days of thy youth.

*Gratia gratiam poſtulat.*

## REFLECTIONS.

O this is my very caſe, ſaith many a poor Chriſtian; this my Soul languiſhes and droops from day to day. 'Tis good news indeed, that God both can and will reſtore my Soul, but ſad that I ſhould fall into ſuch a ſtate. How unlike am I to what once I was? Surely, as the old Men wept, when they ſaw how ſhort the ſecond *Temple* came of the glory of the firſt, ſo may I ſit down and weep bitterly, to conſider how much my firſt Love, and firſt Duties excelled the preſent. For,

1. I

*A Convictive Reflection.*

1. Is my Heart ſo much in Heaven now, as it was wont to be? Say, O my Soul! doſt thou not remember, when like the beloved Diſciple thou layeſt in *Jeſus* Boſom? How didſt thou ſweeten Communion with him? How reſtleſs and impatient waſt thou in his abſence! Divine withdrawments were to thee as the Hell of Hell: What a burden was the world to me in thoſe days! Had it not been for Conſcience of my Duty, I could have been willing to let all lye, that Communion with Chriſt might ſuffer no interruption. When I awaked in the night, how was the darkneſs inlightned by the heavenly glimpſes of the Countenance of my God upon me? How did his Company ſhorten thoſe hours, and beguile the tediouſneſs of the night? O my Soul, ſpeak thy experience, is it now as it was then! No, no, thoſe days are paſt and gone, and thou become much a ſtranger to that Heavenly Life. Art thou able with truth to deny this charge; When occaſionally I paſs by thoſe places, which were once to me as *Jacob's Bethel* to him; I ſigh at the remembrance of former paſſages betwixt me and Heaven there; and ſay with *Job*, Chap. 29. *O that it were with me as in months paſt, as in the days when God preſerved me, when his Candle ſhined upon my head, when by his light I walked through darkneſs, when the Almighty was yet with me, when I put on righteouſneſs and it cloathed me, when my glory was freſh in me! When I remember theſe things, my Soul is poured out within me.*

2. Is thy obedience to the commands of Chriſt, and motions to Duty, as free and chearful as they were wont to be? Call to mind, my Soul, the Times when thou waſt born down the ſtream of love to every Duty, if the Spirit did but whiſper to thee, ſaying, *Seek my face*, How did my Spirit eccho to his calls? ſaying, *Thy face Lord will I ſeek*, Pſal. 27. 8. If God had any work to be done, How readily did I offer my ſervice? Here am I, Lord, ſend me. My Soul made me like the Chariots of *Aminadab*; Love oyled the Wheels of my Affections, and *his commandments were not grievous*, 1 John 5. 3. *Non tardat uncta rota.* There were no ſuch quarrellings with the command, no ſuch excuſes and delays as there are now. No, ſuch was my Love to Chriſt, and delight to do his will, that I could no more keep back my ſelf from Duty, than a man that's carried away in a Crowd.

Or laſtly, tell me, O my Soul, doſt thou bemoan thy ſelf, or grieve ſo tenderly for Sin, and for grieving the Holy Spirit of God, as thou waſt wont to do? When formerly I had fallen by the hand of a Temptation. How was I wont to lye in Tears at the Lord's Feet, bemoaning my ſelf? How did I haſten to my Cloſet, and there cry, like *Ezra*, Chap. 9. 6. *O my God, I am aſhamed, and bluſh to look up unto thee.* How did I ſigh and weep before him, and, like *Ephraim*, ſmite upon my Thigh, ſaying, *What have I done?* Ah my Soul! How didſt thou work, ſtrive, and caſt about how to recover thy ſelf again? Haſt thou forgotten how thou wouldſt ſometimes look up and ſigh bitterly? Ah! What a God have I provoked? What Love and Goodneſs have I abuſed? Sometimes look in and weep, Ah! What motions did I withſtand? What a good Spirit have I grieved? Ah, my Soul, thou wouldſt have abhor'd thy ſelf, thou could'ſt never have born it, had thine Heart been as ſtupid and as reſtleſs then as now, if ever a poor Soul had reaſon to diſſolve it ſelf into Tears for its ſad Relapſes, I have.

*A Supporting Reflection.*

2. But yet Mourn not, O my Soul, as one without hope. Remember, *There is hope in Iſrael concerning this thing.* As low as thy condition is, it is not deſperate, it is not a Diſeaſe that ſcorns a Remedy; many a Man that hath been ſtretcht out for dead, hath revived again, and lived many a comfortable day in the World; many a Tree that hath caſt both Leaf and Fruit, by the skill of a prudent Husbandman, hath been recovered again, and made both flouriſh and fruitful. Is it not eaſier think'ſt thou, to recover a languiſhing Man to health, than a dead Man to Life? And yet this God did for me, *Eph.* 2. 1. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? *Tho' my Soul draw nigh to the Pit, and my Life to the deſtroyers, yet he can ſend me a meſſenger, one among a thouſand, that ſhall declare to me my uprightneſs; then ſhall he deliver me from going down into the Pit, my fleſh ſhall be freſher than a Child's, and I ſhall return to the days of my youth, Job* 33. 22. Though my flouriſh, and much of my Fruit too be gone, and I am a withering Tree; yet as long as the Root of the matter is in me, there is more hope of ſuch a poor, decayed, withered Tree, than of the Hypocrite that wants ſuch a Root, in all his glory and bravery. His Sun ſhall ſet, and never riſe again; but I live in expectation of a ſweet Morning, after this dark Night.

Rouze up therefore, O my Soul, ſet thy Faith a work on Chriſt for quickning Grace, for he hath Life in himſelf, and quickens whomſoever he will, *John* 7. 38. Stir up that little which remains, *Rev.* 3. 2. Haſt thou not ſeen lively flames proceed from glimmering and dying ſparks, when carefully collected and blown up? Get amongſt the moſt lively and quickning Chriſtians; *as iron ſharpens iron, ſo will theſe ſet an edge upon thy dull affections*, Prov. 27. 17. *Acts* 18. 15. But above all, cry mightily to the Lord for quickning, he will not deſpiſe thy cry. The moans of a diſtreſſed Child, work upon the Bowels of a tender Father. And be ſure to keep within thy view, the great things of Eternity, which are ready to be revealed; live in the believing and ſerious Contemplations of them, and be dead if thou canſt. 'Tis true, thou haſt reaſon enough from thy condition, to be for ever humbled; but no reaſon at all from thy God, to be in the leaſt diſcouraged.

## The POEM.

*Thou art the Husbandman, and I*
*A worthleſs plot of Husbandry.*
*Whom ſpecial love did ne'retheleſs*
*Divide from Nature's Wilderneſs.*
*Then did the Sun-ſhine of thy Face,*
*And ſweet Illapſes of thy Grace*
*Like* April *Showers, and warming gleams*
*Diſtil its Dews, reflect its Beams.*
*My dead Affections then were green,*
*And hopeful Buds on them were ſeen:*
*Theſe into Duties ſoon were turn'd,*
*In which my heart within me burn'd.*
*O halcyon days! thrice happy ſtate!*
*Each place was* Bethel, *Heavens Gate.*
*What ſweet diſcourſe! What heavenly talk!*
*Whilſt with thee I did daily walk!*
*Mine Eyes o'reflow, my heart doth ſink;*
*As oft as on thoſe days I think.*
*For ſtrangeneſs now is got between*
*My God and me, as may be ſeen*
*By what is now, and what was then;*
*'Tis juſt as if I were two Men.*

*My fragrant Branches blaſted be,*
*No fruits like thoſe that I can ſee.*
*Some Canker-worm lies at my Root,*
*Which fades my Leaves, deſtroys my Fruit.*
*My Soul is baniſh'd from thy ſight,*
*For this it mourneth day and night.*
*Yet why doſt thou deſponding lye?*
*With* Jonah *caſt a backward Eye.*
*Sure in thy God help may be had,*
*There's precious Balm in* Gilead.
*That God that made me ſpring at firſt,*
*When I was barren, and accurſt,*
*Can much more eaſily reſtore*
*My Soul to what it was before.*
*Twas* Heman's, Job's, *and* David's *caſe,*
*Yet all recover'd were by Grace.*
*A word, a ſmile, on my poor Soul;*
*Will make it perfect, ſound, and whole.*
*A glance of thine hath ſoon diſſolv'd*
*A Soul in ſin, and grief involv'd.*
*Lord, if thou canſt not work the Cure,*
*I am contented to endure.*

## CHAP. VI.

### Upon the Uncurableneſs of ſome Bad Ground.

*No skill can mend the Miry Ground, and ſure*
*Some Souls the Goſpel leaves as paſt a Cure.*

### OBSERVATION.

ALthough the Induſtry and Skill of the Husbandman can make ſome Ground that was uſeleſs nd bad, good for Tillage or Paſture, and improve at which was barren; and by his coſt and pains ake an Acre worth ten; yet ſuch is the nature of me rocky or miry ground, where the Water ſtands, d there is no way to cleanſe it, that it can never made fruitful. The Husbandman is fain to let it one, as an incurable piece of waſte and worthleſs ound; and though the Sun and Clouds ſhed their fluences on it, as well as upon better Land, yet at doth not at all mend it. Nay, the more Shows it receives, the worſe it proves. For theſe do no ay fecundate or improve it; nothing thrives there, t worthleſs Flags and Ruſhes.

### APPLICATION.

MAny alſo there are under the Goſpel, who are given over by God to judicial blindneſs, hard-ſs of heart, a reprobate ſenſe, and perpetual bar-nneſs; ſo that how excellent ſoever the means are ich they enjoy, and how efficacious ſoever to the onverſion, Edification and Salvation of others; t they ſhall never do their Souls good, Ezek. 47. 11. *Every thing whereſoever the River comes ſhall live, the miry places thereof, and the Marſhes thereof ſhall ver be healed, but be given to ſalt; (i. e.)* given to an obſtinate and everlaſting barrenneſs. Compare *Deut.* 9. 23. By theſe Waters, ſaith Judicious Mr. *Strong*, underſtand the Doctrine of the Goſpel, as *Rev.* 21. a River of Water of Life, clear as Cryſtal. *Hic ius eſt uberrima doctrina Chriſti,* ſaith Mr. *Brightman.* is River is the moſt fruitful Doctrine of Chriſt, theſe Waters do not heal the miry Marſh places, e.) men that live unfruitfully under Ordinances, o are compared to miry Marſh places in three pects.

ritual Barneſs. *p.* 8.

(1.) In miry places the Water hath not free paſſage, but ſtands and ſettles there. So it is with theſe barren Souls; therefore the *Apoſtle* prays, that the Goſpel may run and be glorified, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 1. The Word is ſaid to run, when it meets with no ſtop, *Cum libere propagator*, when it is freely propagated, and runs through the whole Man; when it meets with no ſtop either in the mouth of the Speaker, or Hearts of the Hearers, as it doth in theſe.

(2.) In a miry place, the Earth and Water is mixt together; this mixture makes mire. So when the Truths of God do mix with the Corruptions of Men, that they either hold ſome Truths, and yet live in their Luſts; or elſe when Men do make uſe of the Truths of God to juſtifie and plead for their Sins. Or.

(3.) When as in a Miry place, the longer the Water ſtands in it, the worſe it grows; ſo the longer men abide under Ordinances, the more filthy and polluted they grow: Theſe are the miry places that cannot be healed, their Diſeaſes incurable, deſperate.

O this is a ſad caſe, and yet very common! Many Perſons are thus given over as incorrigible and hopeleſs, Rev. 22. 11. *Let him that is filthy, be filthy ſtill.* Jer. 6. 29. *Reprobate ſilver ſhall men call them, for the Lord hath rejected them.* Iſa. 6. *Go make the heart of this people fat, their ears dull,* &c.

Chriſt executes, by the Goſpel, that Curſe upon many Souls, which he denounced againſt the Figtree, Mat. 21. 19. *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever, and immediately the fig-tree withered away.* To be given up to ſuch a condition, is a fearful Judgment indeed, a Curſe with a witneſs; the ſum of all Plagues, miſeries and Judgments, a fatal ſtroke at the Root it ſelf. It's a woe to have a bad Heart, (ſaith one) but its the depth of woe, to have a Heart that ſhall never be made better. To be barren under the Goſpel is a ſore Judgment, but to have that *pertinax ſterilitas*, a pertinacious barrenneſs; this is to be twice dead, and pluckt up by the Root, as *Jude* ſpeaks.

And to ſhew you the woful and miſerable ſtate and plight of ſuch Men, let the following particulars be weighed.

(1.) It's a ſtroke at the Soul it ſelf; and inward Spiritual Judgment; and by how much the more inward and ſpiritual any Judgment is, by ſo much the more dreadful and lamentable. As Soul-mercies are the beſt of Mercies; ſo Soul-judgments are the ſaddeſt of all Judgments. If it were but a Temporal ſtroke upon the Body, the loſs of an Eye, an Ear, a Hand, a Foot, tho' in it ſelf it would be a conſiderable loſs; yet it were nothing to this. *Omnia Deus dedit auplicta* (ſaith *Chryſoſtum*) ſpeaking of bodily Members; God hath given Men double Members, two Eyes, if one be loſt, the other ſupplies its wants; two Hands, two Ears, two Feet, that the failing of one, may be ſupplied by the help of the other; *Animam vero unam*; but one Soul, if that periſh, there is not another to ſupply its loſs. The Soul, ſaith a *Heathen*, is the Man, that which is ſeen is not the Man. The Apoſtle calls the Body, a vile Body, *Phil.* 3. 21. and ſo it is compared with the Soul; and *Daniel* calls it the *Sheath*; which is but a contemptible thing to the *Sword*, which is in it. O it were far better that many Bodies periſh, than one Soul; that every Member were made the ſeat and ſubject of the moſt exquiſite Torture, than ſuch a Judgment ſhould fall upon the Soul.

'Ουκ ἐϛιν ἄνθρωπος τὸ ὁρώμενον. *Plato.*

(2.) It's the ſevereſt ſtroke God can inflict upon the Soul in this Life, to give it up to barrenneſs; becauſe

becauſe it cuts off all hopes, fruſtrates all means, nothing can be a bleſſing to him. If one come from the dead, if Angels ſhould deſcend from Heaven to preach to him; there is no hope of him. If God ſhut up a Man, who can open? *Job* 12. 14. As there was none found in Heaven or Earth that could open the Seals of that Book, *Rev.* 5. 5. ſo is there no opening by the hand of the moſt able and skilful Miniſtry, thoſe Seals of hardneſs, blindneſs, and unbelief, thus impreſſed upon the Spirit. Whom Juſtice ſo locks up, Mercy will never let out. This is that which makes up the *Anathema Maranatha*, 1 *Cor.* 16. 22. which is the dreadfulleſt Curſe in all the Book of God, accurſed till the Lord come.

( 3. ) 'Tis the moſt indiſcernable ſtroke to themſelves that can be, and by that ſo much the more deſperate. Hence there is ſaid to be poured out upon them the Spirit of ſlumber, *Iſa.* 29. 10. *The Lord hath poured out upon you the Spirit of deep ſleep, and hath cloſed your Eyes. Montanus* renders it, The Lord hath mingled upon you the Spirit of deep ſleep. And ſo it is an Alluſion to a Soporiferous Medicine mingled, and made up of *Opium*, and ſuch like ſtupifactive Ingredients, which caſts a Man into ſuch a deep ſleep, that do what you will to him, he feels, he knows it not. *Make their Eyes heavy, and their ears dull; leſt they ſhould ſee, and hear, and be converted, Iſa.* 6. 9, 10. This is the Heart that cannot repent, which is ſpoken of, *Rom.* 2. 5. For men are not ſenſible at all of this Judgment, they do not in the leaſt ſuſpect it, and that is their miſery. Though they be curſed Trees which ſhall never bear any Fruit to Life, yet many times they bear abundance of other fair and pleaſant Fruits to the Eye, excellent Gifts, and rare Endowments; and theſe deceive and undo them. *Mat.* 7. 22. *We have propheſied in thy name*; this makes the Wound deſperate, that there is no finding of it, no probe to ſearch it.

( 4. ) 'Tis a ſtroke that cuts off from the Soul all the comfort and ſweetneſs of Religion. A man may pray, hear, and confer, but all thoſe Duties are dry ſtalks unto him, which yield no meat, no ſolid ſubſtantial nutriment; ſome common touches upon the Affections he may ſometimes find in Duty, the melting Voice or Rhetorick of the Preacher may perhaps ſtrike his natural Affections, as another Tragical Story Pathetically delivered may do; but to have any real Communion with God in Ordinances, any Diſcoveries or Views of the Beauty of the Lord in them, that he cannot have; for theſe are the ſpecial Effects and Operations of the Spirit, which are always reſtrained.

God hath ſaid to ſuch, as he did to them, *Gen.* 6. 3. *My Spirit ſhall no longer ſtrive with them*; and then what ſweetneſs is there in Ordinances? What is the Word ſeparated from the Spirit but a dead Letter? It's the Spirit that quickens, 2. *Cor.* 3. 2. Friend, thou muſt know that the Goſpel works not like *a natural Cauſe* upon thoſe that hear it; if ſo, the effect would always follow, unleſs miraculouſly ſtopt and hindred; but it works like *a moral inſtituted Cauſe*, whoſe efficacy and ſucceſs depends upon the arbitrary concurrence of the Spirit with it. *The wind blows where it liſteth, ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit*, John 3. 8. *Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth.* Ordinances are as the Pool of *Betheſda*, which had its healing virtue only when the *Angel* moved the Waters; but the Spirit never moves ſavingly upon the Waters of Ordinances, for the healing of their Souls, how many years ſoever they lye by them. Though others feel a Divine power in them, yet they ſhall not. As the Men that travelled with *Paul*, when Chriſt appeared to him from Heaven, they ſaw the light, but heard not the voice, which he heard to Salvation: So it is with theſe, they ſee the Miniſters, hear the words, which are words of Salvation to others, but not ſo to them. Concerning theſe Miſerable Souls, we may ſigh and ſay to Chriſt, as *Martha* did concerning her Brother *Lazarus*: Lord, if thou hadſt been here, in this Sermon, or in this Prayer, his Soul had not remained dead. But here is the woe that lyes upon him, God is departed from the means, and none can help him.

( 5. ) 'Tis ſuch a ſtroke upon the Spirit of man, as is a fearful ſign of his Eternal Reprobation. 'Tis true, we cannot poſſitively ſay of a man in this Life, he is a Reprobate, one that God will never ſhew mercy to; but yet there are ſome probable marks of it upon ſome men in this World, and they are of a trembling Conſideration where ever they appear; of which this is one of the ſaddeſt, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3. *If ou Goſpel be hid, 'tis hid to thoſe that are loſt, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not; leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.* So *Ac* 13. 48. *As many as were ordained unto eternal life believed. Ye believe not, becauſe ye are not of my Sheep,* John 10. 26. And again, *Mat.* 13. 11. *To you it is given know the myſteries of the Kingdom, but to them it is n given.* There cannot be a more dreadful Characte of a Perſon marked out for wrath, than to continu under the Ordinances, as the Rocks and Miry plac do under the natural influences of Heaven. Wha bleſſed opportunities had *Judas*? He was unde Chriſt's own Miniſtry, he often heard the graciou words that proceeded out of his Mouth; he was da and night in his Company, yet never the better And why? Becauſe he was the *Son of Perdition* that is, a Man appointed to Deſtruction and Wrath

(6) And laſtly, To add no more. 'Tis ſuch ſtroke of God upon the Souls of Men, as immediately fore-runs Hell and Damnation, *Heb.* 6. *But that which beareth thorns, and briers is rejected and is nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burnt.* that look as ſome Saints in this World, have ha a prelibation or foretaſte of Heaven, which th Scripture calls *the earneſt of the Spirit*; ſo this is a pr curſor of Hell, a ſign of wrath at the door. W may ſay of it, as 'tis ſaid of the pale Horſe in th *Revelation*, that Hell follows it. *If a man abide in me,* (ſaith Chriſt,) *John* 15. 6. *he is caſt forth branch and withered*; which is the very ſtate theſe barren, curſed Souls. And what follow Why, ſaith he, men gather them, and caſt th into the Fire, and they are burned. Lo, this the Vengeance which the Goſpel executes upon t barren ground.

## REFLECTIONS.

The fi
Soul's Re
ction.

1. Well then, bleſſed be God that made me feel the ſaving power of the Goſpel. O, let God be exalted for ever for this mercy! that how defective ſoever I am in common Gifts, thoug have a dull Underſtanding, a leaking memory ſtammering Tongue; yet I have felt, and do the power of the Goſpel upon my Heart. I b thee (my God) that although I labour under m Spiritual Infirmities, yet I am not ſick of this curable Diſeaſe. I have given thee indeed juſt c to inflict and execute this dreadful Curſe upon m ſo, but thou haſt not dealt with me after my de but according to the riches of thy Mercy. Some tle Fruit I bring forth, and what it is, is by virtu

my Union with Jeſus Chriſt, *Rom.* 7. 4. And this hath more in it as to my comfort, than all the glittering Gifts and ſplended Performances of the moſt glorious Hypocrite can yield to him : If I might have my choice (ſaith one) I would chuſe and prefer the moſt deſpicable and ſordid work of a ruſtick Chriſtian, before all the Victories of *Alexander*, and Triumphs of *Cæſar*. *Bleſſed therefore be the Lord, who hath abounded unto me, in all ſpiritual bleſſings, in heavenly things in Chriſt Jeſus.*

I cannot remember a Sermon as another can, but bleſſed be God that I am able to ſavour it, and feel it; that I have an Heart to love, and a will to obey all that God diſcovers to be my Duty.

The Formal
Profeſſors Re-
ection.

2. O, then how little cauſe have I to make my boaſt of Ordinances, and glory in my External Priviledges, who never bear Spiritual Fruit under them? If I will conſider my condition, there is matter of *trembling*, and not of *glorying* in theſe things. It may be, while I have been glorying in them, and lifting up my ſecure Heart upon them, the Lord hath been ſecretly blaſting my Soul under them, and inſenſibly executing this horrid Curſe by them. Shall I boaſt, that with *Capernaum* I *am lifted up to Heaven*, ſince I may with them at aſt be caſt down to Hell? And if ſo, Lord, what Hell will my Hell be! It will be more tolerable or *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* than for me. It drew Tears om the Eyes of *Chriſt*, when he was looking from *eruſalem*, under the ſame conſideration that I doubt I have cauſe to look upon my own Soul, *Luke* 19. 1. *He wept over it, ſaying, if thou hadſt known, en thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which beng to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine es.* So long I have been a Hearer, a Profeſſor f the Goſpel, ſo many years I have enjoyed its iſtinguiſhing Ordinances, but have they not been l dry and empty things to me; hath not the pirit of Formality acted me in them? Have not lf-ends and worldly reſpects lain at the bottom f my beſt Duties? Have not my Diſcourſes in ommunion with the Saints, been Trade words, eaking what I have learnt, but not felt? Sad my condition now, but it would be deſperate d irrecoverable, ſhould'ſt thou execute this urſe upon me.

e leſs fruit-
Chriſtians
flection.

3. And what may I think of my condition? Lord, I acknowledge my unprofitableneſs under the Means hath been ſhameful; and this hath ade my condition doubtful. I have often tremed for fear, leſt my Root had been blaſted by ch a Curſe; but if ſo, whence is this trembling? hence theſe fears and ſorrows about it? Doth ch Fruit grow in that Soyl which thou haſt Cur? I am told but now, that on whom this Judgent falls, to them thou giveſt an Heart that cant repent. Lord, I bleſs thee for theſe Evidences freedom from the Curſe? for the fruits of fear, ſorrow, and holy jealouſie. The Laws of men ſpare for the Fruits ſake, and wilt not thou ſpare me alſo my God, if there be found in me a bleſſing in the bud, *Iſa.* 65. 8.

*manæ leges*
*am preg-*
*i deferunt.*
yſoſt.

he Goſpel
chers Re-
ion.

4. To conclude, what a ſerious Reflection ſhould this occaſion in every diſpenſer of the Goſpel? How ſhould he ſay when he goes to preach Goſpel, I am now going to preach that word ich is to be *a ſavour of Life or Death to theſe s*; upon how many of my poor Hearers may the Curſe of perpetual barrenneſs be executed this day! O how ſhould ſuch a thought melt his Heart into Compaſſion over them, and make him beg hard, and plead earneſtly with God for a better iſſue of the Goſpel than this upon them?

## The POEM.

*YOU that beſides your pleaſant fruitful Fields,*
*Have uſeleſs Bogs, and rocky ground, that yields*
*You no advantage, nor doth quit your coſt,*
*But all your pains and charges on them's loſt.*
*Hearken to me, I'll teach you how to get*
*More profit by them, than if they were ſet*
*At higher Rents than what your Tenants pay*
*For your moſt fertile Lands; and here's the way.*
*Think when you view them, why the Lord hath choſe*
*Theſe, as the Emblems to deſcipher thoſe*
*That under Goſpel-grace grow worſe and worſe;*
*For means are fruitleſs, where the Lord doth curſe:*
*Sweet Showers deſcend, the Sun his beams reflects*
*On both alike; but not with like effects.*
*Obſerve, and ſee how after theſe ſweet Showers*
*The Graſs and Corn revive; the fragrant Flowers*
*Shoot forth their beauteous heads, the Valleys ſing,*
*All freſh, and green as in the verdant Spring.*
*But Rocks are barren ſtill, and Bogs are ſo;*
*Where nought but Flags, and worthleſs Ruſhes grow.*
*Upon theſe Mariſh Grounds there lyes this Curſe,*
*The more Rain falls; by ſo much more the worſe.*
*Even ſo the Dews of Grace, that ſweetly fall,*
*From Goſpel clouds, are not alike to all.*
*The gracious Soul doth germinate and bud,*
*But to the Reprobate it doth no good.*
*He's like the withered Fig-tree, void of Fruit;*
*A fearful Curſe hath ſmote his very Root.*
*The heart's made fat, the Eyes with blindneſs ſeal'd;*
*The piercing'ſt truths the Goſpel are reveal'd,*
*Shall be to him but as the Sun and Rain*
*Are to obdurate Rocks fruitleſs and vain.*
*Be this your meditation when you walk*
*By Rocks and Fenny-grounds, thus learn to talk*
*With your own Souls; and let it make you fear*
*Leſt that's your caſe that is deſcribed here.*
*This is the beſt improvement you can make*
*Of ſuch bad ground, good Soul, I pray thee take*
*Some pain about them; though they barren be,*
*Thou ſeeſt how they may yield ſweet Fruits to thee.*

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## CHAP. VII.

## Upon the Plowing of Corn-land.

*The Plowman guides his Plow with care and skill,*
*So doth the Spirit in ſound Conviction ſtill.*

### OBSERVATION.

IT requires not only ſtrength, but much skill and judgment, to manage and guide the Plow. The Hebrew word חרשׁ which we Tranſlate to Plow, ſignifies to be intent, as an Artificer is about ſome curious piece of work. The Plow muſt neither go too ſhallow nor too deep in the Earth; it muſt not indent the ground by making crooked Furrows, nor leap and make baulks in good ground; but be guided as to a juſt depth of Earth, ſo to caſt the Furrow in a ſtraight line, that the floor or ſurface of the Field may be made plain. As it is *Iſa.* 28. 25. And hence that expreſſion, *Luke* 9. 62. *He that puts his hand to the plow, and looks back, is not fit for* *the Kingdom of heaven.* The meaning is, that as he that plows, muſt have his Eyes always forward, to guide and direct his hand in caſting the furrows ſtraight and even; (for his hand will be quickly out when his eye is off.) So he that heartily reſolves for Heaven, muſt addict himſelf wholly and intently to the buſineſs of Religion, and not have his Mind intangled with the things of this World, which he hath left behind him; whereby it appears, that the right management of the Plow, requires as much skill as ſtrength.

## APPLICATION.

THis Obſervation in *Nature*, ſerves excellently to ſhadow forth this Propoſition in *Divinity*. That the work of the Spirit in convincing and humbling the Heart of a Sinner, is a work wherein much of the wiſdom, as well as power of God is diſcovered. The work of Repentance and ſaving Contrition, is ſet forth in Scripture by this Metaphor of plowing, *Jer.* 4. 3. *Hoſ.* 10. 12. *Plow up your fallow ground*; that is, be convinced, humbled, and broken-hearted for ſin. And the reſemblance betwixt both theſe Works, appears in the following Particulars.

*Glaſſius Rhet. ſacra.* p. 300.

*Caryll* in *Job* Chap. 4. v. 8.

( 1. ) 'Tis a hard and difficult work to plow, it's reekoned one of the painfulleſt manual labours. It is alſo a very hard thing to convince and humble the Heart of a ſecure, ſtout, and proud ſinner, indurate in wickedneſs. What *Luther* ſaith of a dejected Soul, *That it is as eaſie to raiſe the dead, as to comfort ſuch a one.* The ſame I may ſay of the ſecure, confident ſinner. 'Tis as eaſie to rend the Rocks, as to work ſaving Contrition upon ſuch a Heart. *Citius ex pumice aquam*; all the melting Language and earneſt Intreaties of the Goſpel, cannot urge ſuch a Heart to ſhed a Tear: Therefore it's called a Heart of Stone, *Ezek.* 36. 26. a firm Rock, *Amos* 6. 12. *Shall horſes run upon the rock? will one plow there with Oxen?* Yet when the Lord comes in the power of his Spirit, theſe Rocks do rend and yield to the power of the Word.

( 2. ) The Plow pierces deep into the boſom of the Earth, makes (as it were) a deep gaſh or wound in the Heart of it. So doth the Spirit upon the Hearts of Sinners; he pierces their very Souls by Conviction, *Acts* 2. 37. *When they heard this, they were pricked* ( or pierced point blank) *to the heart. Then the Word divides the Soul and Spirit, Heb.* 4. 12. It comes upon the Conſcience with ſuch piercing *dilemma*'s, and tilts the Sword of Conviction ſo deep into their Souls, that there is no ſtenching the Blood, no healing this Wound, till Chriſt himſelf come and undertake the Cure. *Hæret lateri lethalis arundo*; this barbed Arrow cannnot be pulled out of their Hearts by any, but the hand that ſhot it in. Diſcourſe with ſuch a Soul about his Troubles, and he will tell you, that all the Sorrows that ever he had in this World, loſs of Eſtate, Health, Children, or whatever elſe, are but Flea-bitings to this; this ſwallows up all our Troubles. See how that Chriſtian *Niobe, Luke* 7. 38. is diſſolved into Tears. *Now deep calleth unto deep at the noiſe of his water-ſpouts, when the waves and billows of God go over the Soul.* Spiritual ſorrows are deep Waters, in which the ſtouteſt and moſt Magnanimous Soul would ſink and drown, did not *Jeſus Chriſt* by a ſecret and ſupporting Hand, hold it up by the Chin.

*Κατενύγησαν punctim cedo pungendi penetro.*

( 3. ) The Plow rends the Earth in parts and pieces, which before was united, and makes thoſe parts hang looſe, which formerly lay cloſe. Thus doth the Spirits of Conviction rend in ſunder the Heart, and its moſt beloved Luſts, *Joel* 2. 13. *Rent your hearts, and not your garments*; that is, rather than your Garments; for the ſenſe is comparative, though the expreſſion be negative. And this rending implies not only acute pain; fleſh cannot be rent aſunder withour anguiſh, nor yet only force and violence; the Heart is a ſtubborn and knotty piece, and will not eaſily yield, but it alſo implies a diſunion of parts united: As when a Garment, or the Earth, or any continuous Body is rent; thoſe parts are ſeparated which formerly cleaved together. Sin and the Soul were glewed faſt together before, there was no parting of them, they would as ſoon part with their *Lives*, as with their *Luſts*; but now when the Heart is rent for them truly, it is alſo rent from them everlaſtingly, *Ez.* 7. 15. to 19.

( 4. ) The Plow turns up, and diſcovers ſuch things as lay hid in the Boſom of the Earth before, and were covered under a fair green ſurface, from the Eyes of Men. Thus when the Lord plows up the Heart of a Sinner by Conviction, then the ſecrets of his Heart are made manifeſt, 2 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. the moſt ſecret and ſhameful Sins will then out; for *the word of God is quick and powerful, ſharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing of the ſoul and ſpirit, the joints and marrow, and is a quick diſcerner of the thoughts and ſecret intents of the heart, Heb.* 4. 12. It makes the Fire burn inwardly, ſo that the Soul hath no reſt till Confeſſion give a vent to trouble. Fain would the ſhuffling Sinner conceal and hide his ſhame, but the word follows him through all his ſinful ſhifts, and brings him at laſt to be his own, both accuſer, witneſs, and judge.

( 5. ) The work of the Plow is but *opus ordinabile*, a preparative work in order to Fruit. Should the Husbandman plow his ground never ſo often, yet if the Seed be not caſt in and quickned, in vain is the Harveſt expected. Thus Conviction alſo is but a preparative to a farther work upon the Soul of a Sinner. If it ſtick there, and go no farther, it proves but an Abortive or untimely Birth. Many have gone thus far, and there they have ſtuck; they have been like a Field plowed, but not ſowed, which is a matter of trembling conſideration: for hereby their Sin is greatly aggravated, and their Eternal Miſery ſo much the more increaſed. O when a poor Damned Crea ture ſhall with horror reflect upon himſelf in Hell how near was I once under ſuch a Sermon to Con verſion? My Sins were ſet in order before me my Conſcience awakened and terrified with th guilt of them; many purpoſes and reſolves I ha then to turn to God, which had they been pe fected by anſwerable Executions, I had neve come to this place of Torment; but there I ſtuc and that was my Eternal undoing. Many Sou have I known ſo terrified with the guilt of ſi that they have come roaring under horrors Conſcience to the Preacher; ſo that one wou think ſuch a breach had been made betwixt the and ſin, as could never be reconciled; and yet angry as they were in that fit with ſin, they ha hug'd and imbraced them again.

(6.) 'Tis beſt plowing when the Earth is p pared and mollified by the Showers of Rain, th the work goes on ſweetly and eaſily. And ne doth the Heart ſo kindly melt, as when the Go

Clo

Clouds diſſolve, and the free Grace and Love of *Jeſus Chriſt* comes ſweetly ſhowring down upon it; then it relents and mourns ingenuouſly, *Ezek.* 16. 63. *That thou may'ſt remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am paciſied towards thee for all that thou haſt done.* So it was with that poor Penitent, *Luke* 7. 38. when the Lord Jeſus had diſcovered to her the ſuper-abounding riches of his Grace, in the pardon of her manifold Abominations; her Heart melted within her, ſhe waſhed the Feet of *Chriſt* with Tears. And indeed, there is as much difference betwixt the Tears which are forced by the Terrors of the Law, and thoſe which are extracted by the Grace of the Goſpel, as there is betwixt thoſe of a CondemnedMalefactor, who weeps to conſider the miſery he is under, and thoſe of a pardoned *Malefactor*, that receives his pardon at the foot of the Laddar, and is melted by the Mercy and Clemency of his gracious *Prince* towards him.

(7.) The Plow kills thoſe rank Weeds which grew in the Field, turns them up by the Roots, buries and rots them. So doth ſaving Conviction kill ſin at the Root, makes the Soul ſick of it, begets indignation in the Heart againſt it, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. The word 'Αγανάκτησιν there ſignifies the riſing of the Stomach, and being angry even unto ſickneſs, religious wrath is the fierceſt wrath, now the Soul cannot endure Sin, trembles at it. *I find a woman more bitter then death,* (ſaith penitent *Solomon*) *Eccl.* 7. 26. Conviction, like a Surfeit, makes the Soul to loath what it formerly loved and delighted in.

(8.) That Field is not well plowed, where the Plow jumps and skips over good ground; and makes baulks, it muſt run up the whole Field alike; and that Heart is not ſavingly convicted where any Luſt is ſpared and left untouched. Saving Conviction extends it ſelf to all ſins, not only to ſin in general, with this cold confeſſion, *I am a ſinner*; but to the particulars of ſin, yea, to the particular circumſtances and aggravations of time, place, manner, occaſions, thus and thus have I done; to the ſin of *nature*, as well as *practiſe*; *Behold I was ſhapen in iniquity, Pſal.* 51. 5. There muſt be no *baulking* of any ſin; the ſparing of one ſin, is a ſure Argument thou art not truly humbled for any ſin. So far is the convinced Soul from a ſtudious concealment of a beloved ſin, that it weeps over that more than over any other actual ſin.

(9.) New ground is much more eaſily plowed than that, which by long lying out of Tillage, is more conſolidated and clung together, by deep-rooted Thorns and Brambles, which render it difficult to the Plowman. This old ground is like an old Sinner, that hath lain a long time hardening under the means of Grace. O the difficulty of convincing ſuch a Perſon! Sin hath got ſuch rooting in his Heart, he is ſo habituated to the reproofs and calls of the Word, that few ſuch are wrought upon. How many young Perſons are called to one obdurate, invetarate Sinner? I do not ſay but God may call home ſuch a Soul at the eleventh Hour, but I may ſay of theſe, compared with others, as *Solomon* ſpeaks, *Ecc.* 7. 28. *One man among a Thouſand have I found,* &c. Few that have long reſiſted the Goſpel, that come afterwards to feel the ſaving efficacy thereof.

## REFLECTIONS.

*true Con- ts Reflecti-*

1. O Grace, for ever to be admired! that God ſhould ſend forth his Word and Spirit to plow up my hard and ſtony Heart! yea, mine, when he hath left ſo many of more tender, ingenuous, ſweet, and melting Tempers, without any Culture, or means of Grace. Oh bleſſed Goſpel: Heart-diſſolving Voice! I have felt thine Efficacy, I have experienced thy Divine and Irreſiſtable Power; thou art indeed ſharper than any two-edged Sword, and woundeſt to the Heart; but thy wounds are the wounds of a Friend. All the wounds thou haſt made in my Soul, were ſo many doors opened to let in Chriſt; all the blows thou gaveſt my Conſcience, were but to beat off my Soul from ſin, which I embraced and had retained to my everlaſting ruin, hadſt thou not ſeperated them and me. O Wiſe and Merciful Phyſician, thou didſt indeed bind me with Cords of Conviction and Sorrow; but it was only to cut out that Stone in my Heart, which had killed me if it had continued there. Oh, how did I ſtruggle and oppoſe thee, as if thou hadſt come with the Sword of an Enemy, rather than the Lance and Probe of a skilful and tender-hearted Phyſician? Bleſſed be the day wherein my ſin was diſcovered and imbittered! O happy Sorrows which prepared for ſuch matchleſs Joys! O bleſſed Hand which turned my Salt Waters into Pleaſant Wine! And after many pangs and ſorrows of Soul didſt bring forth the Manchild of Deliverance and Peace.

*The Stubborn Hearts Reflection.*

2. But O, what a Rock of Adamant is this Heart of mine! that never yet was wounded and ſavingly pierced for ſin by the Terrors of the Law, or melting voice of the Goſpel! long have I ſate under the Word, but when did I feel a relenting pang? O my Soul! my ſtupified Soul! thou haſt got an *Antidote* againſt Repentance, but haſt thou any againſt Hell? Thou canſt keep out the ſenſe of ſin now, but art thou able to keep out the Terrors of the Lord hereafter? If thou couldſt turn a deaf Ear to the ſentence of Chriſt in the day of Judgment, as eaſily as thou doſt to the intreaties of Chriſt in the day of Grace, it were ſomewhat; but ſurely there is no defence againſt that. Ah, *Fool* that I am, to quench theſe *Convictions*, unleſs I knew how to quench thoſe flames they warn me of.

*The Miſcarrying Souls Reflection.*

3. And may not I challenge the firſt place among all the Mourners in the World, who have loſt thoſe Convictions which at ſeveral times came upon me under the Word? I have been often awakened by it, and filled with terrors and tremblings under it; but thoſe troubles have ſoon worn off again and my Heart (like Water removed from the Fire) return'd to its native coldneſs. Lord, What a diſmal caſe am I in? Many Convictions have I choaked and ſtrangled, which it may be ſhall never more be reviv'd, until thou revive them againſt me in Judgment. I have been in pangs, and brought forth nothing but Wind; my Troubles have wrought no deliverance, neither have my Luſts fallen before them? My Conſcience indeed hath been ſometimes ſick with ſin, yea, ſo ſick as to vomit them up by an external, partial reformation; but then with the Dog, have I turned again to my Vomit, and now I doubt am given over to an Heart that cannot repent. Oh that thoſe travelling pangs could be quickned again! but alas! they are ceaſed. I am like a Priſoner eſcaped, and again recovered, whom the Jaylor loads with double Irons. Surely, O my Soul! if thy Spiritual Troubles return not again, they are but gone back to bring Eternal Troubles. It

is with thee, O my Soul! as with a man whoſe Bones have been broken, and not well-ſet; who muſt, (how terrible ſoever it appear to him) endure the pain of breaking and ſetting them again, if ever he be made a ſound man. O that I might rather chuſe to be the Object of thy wounding mercy, than of thy ſparing Cruelty! If thou plow not up my Heart again by compunction, I know it muſt be rent in pieces at laſt by deſperation.

### The POEM.

*THere's skill in Plowing, that the Plowman knows,*
*For if too ſhallow, or too deep he goes;*
*The ſeed is either buried, or elſe may*
*To Rooks and Daws become an eaſie prey.*
*This, as a lively Emblem, firmly may*
*Deſcribe the bleſſed Spirits work and way:*
*Whoſe work on Souls, with this doth ſymbolize;*
*Betwixt them both, thus the reſemblance lyes.*
*Souls are the Soyl, Conviction is the Plow,*
*God's Workmen draw, the Spirit ſhews them how.*
*He guides the work, and in good ground, doth bleſs*
*His Workmens pains, with ſweet and fair ſucceſs.*
*The heart prepar'd, he ſcatters in the ſeed,*
*Which, in its ſeaſon, ſprings, no Fowl nor Weed*
*Shall pick it up, or choak this ſpringing Corn,*
*Till it be houſed in the heavenly Barn.*
*When thus the Spirit plows up the fallow ground,*
*When with ſuch fruits his ſervants work is crown'd;*
*Let all the friends of Chriſt, and Souls ſay now;*
*As they paſs by the Fields,* God ſpeed the Plow.
*Sometimes this Plow, thin ſhelfy ground doth turn;*
*That little ſeed which ſprings, the Sun-beams burn.*
*The reſt uncovered lyes, which Fowls devour:*
*Alas! their hearts were touch'd, but not with power.*
*The cares and pleaſures of this world have drown'd*
*The ſeed, before it peep'd above the ground.*
*Some ſprings indeed, the Scripture ſaith that ſome*
*Do taſte the powers of the World to come.*
*Theſe Embrio's never come to timely Birth,*
*Becauſe the ſeed that's ſown wants depth of earth.*
*Turn up, O God, the bottom of my heart;*
*And, to the ſeed that's ſown do thou impart*
*Thy choiceſt bleſſing. Though I weep and mourn;*
*In this wet ſeed-time; if I may return*
*With ſheaves of joy; theſe fully will reward*
*My pains and ſorrows, be they ne'r ſo hard.*

## CHAP. VIII.

### Upon the Seed-Corn.

*The choiceſt Wheat is ſtill reſerv'd for Seed,*
*But gracious Principles are choice indeed.*

### OBSERVATION.

HUsbandmen are very careful and curious about their Seed-Corn, that it may not only be clean and pure, but the beſt and moſt excellent in its kind. Iſa. 28. 25. *He caſteth in the principal Wheat.* If any be more full and weighty than other, that is reſerved for Seed. 'Tis uſual with Husbandmen to pick and leaſe their Seed-Corn by hand, that they may ſeparate the Cockel and Darnel, and all the lighter and hollow Grains from it, wherein they manifeſt their diſcretion, for according to the vigour and goodneſs of the Seed, the fruit and production is like to be.

### APPLICATION.

THe choice and principal Seed-corn with which the Fields are ſowed, after they are prepared for it, doth admirably ſhadow forth thoſe excellent principles of Grace infuſed into the regenerate Soul. Their agreement, as they are both Seed, is obvious in the Ten following Particulars, and their excellency above other Principles in Seven more.

1. The Earth at firſt naturally brought forth Corn, and every Seed yielding Fruit, without human Induſtry; but ſince the Curſe came upon it, it muſt be plowed and ſowed, or no Fruit can be expected. So Man at firſt had all the Principles of Holineſs in his nature, but now they muſt be infuſed by Regeneration, or elſe his nature is as void of holineſs as the barren and untilled Deſart is of Corn.

2. The earlier the Seed is ſown, the better it is rooted and enabled to endure the Aſperities of the Winter; ſo when Grace is early infuſed, when nature is ſanctified in the Bud, Grace is thereby exceedingly advantaged? 'Twas *Timothy's* ſingular advantage, that he knew the Scriptures of a Child.

3. Froſts and Snows conduce very much to the well-rooting of the Seed, and makes it ſpread, and take Root much the better. So do ſanctified Afflictions, which uſually the People of God meet with after their Calling, and often in their very Seed-time, 1 Theſ. 1. 6. *And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction.* But if they have fair Weather then, to be ſure they ſhall meet with Weather hard enough afterwards, Heb. 10. 32. *But call to remembrance the former days, in which after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great ſight of afflictions.*

4. When the Seed is caſt into the Earth, it muſt be covered up by the Harrow; the uſe whereof in Husbandry, is not only to lay a plain floor (as they ſpeak) but to open and let in the Corn to the boſom of the Earth, and there cover it up for its ſecurity, from Birds that would devour it. Thus doth the moſt wiſe God provide for the ſecurity of that Grace, which he at firſt diſſeminated in the Hearts of his people. He is as well the finiſher as the Author of their Grace, *Heb.* 12. 2. And of this they may be confident, that he that hath begun a good work in them, will perform it unto the day of Chriſt. The care of God over the Graces of his People, is like the covering of the ſeed for ſecurity.

5. Seed-corn is in its own nature, of much more value and worth than other Corn; the Husbandman caſts in the principal Wheat. So are the Seeds of Grace ſown in the renewed Soul; for it's called, *The ſeed of God,* 1 John 3. 9. *The divine nature,* 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. One dram of Grace is far beyond all the glory of this World; it's more precious than Gold which periſhes, 1 Pet. 1. 7. *The price of it is above Rubies, and all that thou canſt deſire is not to be compared with it,* Prov. 3. 15.

6. There is a great deal of ſpirit and vigour in a little Seed, though it be ſmall in bulk, yet it is great in vertue and efficacy. Gracious habits are alſo vigorous and efficacious things. Such is their efficacy that they overcome the World, 1 John 5. 4. *Whatſoever is born of God, overcometh the World.* They totally alter and change the Perſon in whom they are. *He that perſecuted us in times paſt, no*

*Preacheth the Faith which once he deſtroyed.* They enable the Soul to do and ſuffer great things for God, *Heb.* 11. 33, 34, 35.

7. The ſtalk and ear are potentially and virtually in a ſmall Grain of Corn. So are all the fruits of obedience which Believers afterwards bring forth to God, virtually contained in thoſe habits or ſeeds of Grace. 'Tis ſtrange to conſider, that from a *Muſtard-ſeed* (which, as Chriſt ſaith, is the leaſt of all Seeds) ſhould grow ſuch great Branches, that the Birds of the Air may build their Neſts in them. Surely, the Heroical and Famous Acts and Atchievements of the moſt enowned Believers ſprang from ſmall beginnings t firſt, to that eminency and glory.

8. The fruitfulneſs of the Seed depends upon the Sun and Rain, by which they are quickned, as s opened largely in the next Chapter. And the Principles of Grace in us have as neceſſary a dependance upon the aſſiſting and exciting Grace without us. For though it be true, they are Im- ortal Seeds; yet that is not ſo much from their wn ſtrength, as from the Promiſes made to them, nd that conſtant influx from above, by which hey are revived and preſerved from time to ime.

9. The Seed is fruitful in ſome Soyls more than n others, proſpers much better, and comes ſoon- r to maturity. So doth Grace thrive better, and row faſter in ſome Perſons than in others. *Your ith groweth exceedingly*, 2 Theſ. 1. 3. *Whilſt the ings that are in others are ready to dye*, Rev. 3. 2. Though no man's Heart be naturally a kind Soyl o Grace, yet doubtleſs Grace is more advantaged n ſome diſpoſitions than in others.

10. And laſtly, their Agreement as Seed ap- ears in this, the Seed-corn is ſcattered into all arts of the Field, as proportionably and equally s may be. So is Grace diffus'd into all the Facul- ies, Judgment, Will, and all the Affections are wed with theſe new Principles. *The God of peace nctifie you wholly*, 1 Theſ. 5. 23.

And thus you ſee, why Principles of Grace are alled Seed. Now in the next place (which is the econd thing promiſed, and mainly deſigned in is Chapter) to ſhew you the choiceneſs and ex- ellency of theſe holy Principles with which nctified Souls are embelliſht and adorned; and convince you that true Grace excels all other inciples, by which other Perſons are acted, even the principal Wheat doth the Chaff, and refuſe uff, I ſhall here inſtitute a compariſon betwixt race and the moſt ſplendid, common Gifts in e World, and its tranſcendent excellency above em all will evidently appear in theſe ſeven fol- wing particulars.

1. The moſt excellent common Gifts come out the common Treaſury of God's bounty, and t in a natural way. They are but the Improve- nt of a Man's natural Abilities, or (as one calls m) the ſparks of nature blown up by the Wind a more benign and liberal Education; but nciples of Grace are of a Divine and Heavenly ginal and extraction, not enduced or raiſed n Nature, but ſupernaturally infuſed by the rit from on high, John 3. 6. *That which is born he fleſh is fleſh, and that which is born of the ſpirit pirit.* When a Soul is ſanctified by them, *he akes of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. *Is born not eſh, nor of blood, nor of the will of Man, but of* , John 1. 13. In this reſpect they differ from s, as the heavenly *Manna* which was rained down from Heaven differs from common Bread, which by pains and induſtry the Earth produces in a natural way.

2. The beſt natural Gifts afford not that ſweetneſs and ſolid comfort to the Soul that Grace doth; they are but a dry ſtalk that affords no Meat for a Soul to feed on. A Man may have an underſtanding full of light, and an heart void of comfort at the ſame time; but Grace is a fountain of pureſt living ſtreams of peace and comfort, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Believing we rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of glory: Light is ſown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.* All true pleaſures and delights are ſeminally in Grace, *Pſal.* 97. 11. They are ſown for them in theſe Divine and Heavenly Graces, which are glory in the Bud.

3. Gifts adorn the Perſon, but do not ſecure the Soul from wrath. A man may be admired for them among men, and rejected Eternally by God. Who can conſiderately read that ſixth Chapter of the *Hebrews*, and not tremble to think in what a forlorn caſe a Soul may be, though ſet off and accompliſht with the rareſt Endowments of this kind, *Mat.* 7. 22. We read, that many ſhall ſay to *Chriſt* in that day, *Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name caſt out Devils,* &c. and yet themſelves at laſt caſt out as a prey to Devils. How Divinely and Rhetorically did a *Balaam* ſpeak and propheſie, *Numb.* 23. What rare and excellent Parts had the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*? Who upon that account were ſtiled *principes ſeculi*, the Princes of the World; 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. What profound and excellent Parts had the Heathen *Sages* and *Philoſophers*? Theſe things are ſo far from ſecuring the Soul againſt the wrath to come, that they often expoſe it unto wrath, and are as Oyl to increaſe the Eternal Burnings; but now gracious Principles are the τὰ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας, as the Apoſtle calls them, *Heb.* 6. Things that accompany and have ſalvation in them. Theſe are the things on which the Promiſes of Salvation run; and theſe Treaſures are never found but in Elect Veſſels. Glory is by promiſe aſſured and made over to him that poſſeſſes them. There is but a little point of time betwixt him and the glorified Spirits above. And how inconſiderable a matter is a little time, which contracts and winds up apace? For *now is our ſalvation nearer than when we believed.* And hence the Scriptures ſpeak of them as already ſaved, *Rom.* 8. 24. *We are ſaved by hope*, becauſe its as ſure as if we were in Heaven. We are made to ſit in heavenly places.

Like a precious Stone in a Toads Head.

4. Gifts may damnifie the Perſon that poſſeſs them; and it may be better in reſpect of a Mans own condition he had never had them. *Knowledge* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *puffeth up*, 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. makes the Soul proud and flatulent. 'Tis a hard thing to know much, and not to know it too much. The Saints knowledge is better than the Scholars; for he hath his own heart inſtead of a Commentary to help him. *Ariſtotle* ſaid, A little knowledge about heavenly things, though conjectural, is better than much of earthly things, though certain. *The world by wiſdom knew not God*, (ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 1 12.) (*i. e.*) Their Learning hanged in their light, they were too wiſe to ſubmit to the ſimplicity of the Goſpel. The excellent Parts of the old Hereticks, did but ſerve to Midwife into the World the Monſtrous Birth of Soul-damning Hereſies. *Cupit abs te ornari diabolus*, as *Auſtin* ſaid to that ingenious young Scholar; The Devil deſires

to be adorned by thee. But now Grace in it ſelf is not ſubject to ſuch abuſes, it cannot be the proper *univocal cauſe* of any evil effect: It cannot puff up the Heart, but always humbles it; nor ſerve the Devils deſigns, but ever oppoſes them.

5. Gifts may be given a Man for the ſake of others, and not out of love to himſelf, they are but as an excellent Diſh of Meat which a Man ſends to a Nurſe, not for her ſake ſo much as for his Child that ſucks her. God indeed makes uſe of them to do his Children good, the Church is benefited by them, though themſelves are but like Cooks, they prepare excellent Diſhes on which the Saints feed and are nouriſhed, though themſelves taſte them not. They are *dona miniſtrantia non ſanctificantia*, miniſtring but not ſanctifying Gifts, proceeding not from the good will of God to him that hath them, but to thoſe he benefits by them. And Oh, what a ſad conſideration will this be one day to ſuch a Perſon, to think, I helped ſuch a Soul to Heaven, while I my ſelf muſt lodge in Hell?

6. Sin in the reign and power of it, may cohabit with the moſt excellent natural Gifts under the ſame roof, I mean in the ſame Heart. A Man may have the Tongue of an *Angel*, and the Heart of a *Devil*. The wiſdom of the *Philoſophers* (ſaith *Lactantius*) *non excindit vitia ſed abſcondit*, did not root out, but hide their Vices. The Learned *Phariſees* were but painted Sepulchers: Gifts are but as a fair Glove drawn over a foul hand. But now Grace is incompatible with ſin in dominion; it purifies the Heart, *Acts* 15. 9. cleanſes the Conſcience, *Heb.* 9. 14. crucifies the Affections and Luſts of the Fleſh, *Gal.* 5. 24. is not content with the concealment, but ruin of corruptions.

7. And laſtly, Gifts muſt leave us at laſt. *Whether there be knowledge, that ſhall ceaſe. All fleſh is graſs, and the goodlineſs of it as the flower of the graſs; the graſs withers, the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord abideth for ever*, Iſa. 40. 6, 8. Many times they leave a Man before Death. One knock, if it hit right, (as one ſaith) may make a Wiſe man a Fool. But to be ſure, they all leave us at Death. *Doth not his excellency which is in him go away?* *Job* 4. 21. yea, then all natural excellency departs. Death ſtrips the Soul of all thoſe ſplendid Ornaments, then the Rhetorical Tongue is ſtruck Dumb; the nimble Wit and curious Fancy ſhall entertain your Ears with no more pleaſant diſcourſes. *Nunquam jocos dabis*, as *Adrian* ſaid to his departing Soul; but Grace aſcends with the Soul into Eternity, and there receives its perfection and accompliſhment. Gifts take their leave of the Soul, as *Orpha* did of *Naomi*; but Grace ſaith then as *Ruth*, Where thou goeſt I will go, and *where thou lodgeſt I will lodge, and nothing ſhall ſeparate thee and me.* Now put all this together, and then judge whether the Apoſtle ſpake Hyperboles, when he ſaid, *Covet earneſtly the beſt gifts, and yet I ſhew unto you a more excellent way*, 1 *Cor.* 12. *ult.* And thus you have the choiceneſs of theſe Principles alſo.

## REFLECTIONS.

The Gracious Soul's Reflection.

The Lines are fallen to me in a pleaſant place, may the gracious Soul ſay. How defective ſoever I am in Gifts, yet bleſſed be the Lord, who hath ſown the Seeds of true Grace in my Heart. What though I am not famed and honoured among men, let it ſuffice me that I am precious in the Eyes of the Lord. Though he hath not abounded to me in Gifts of Nature, *yet bleſſed be the God and Father of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath abounded to me in all ſpiritual bleſſings, in heavenly places, in Chriſt Jeſus*, *Eph.* 1. 3. Is not a true Jewel, though ſpurn'd in the dirt, more precious than a falſe one, though ſet in Gold? Why art thou troubled, O my Soul, for the want of theſe things which Reprobates may have? And are not rather admiring and bleſſing God for thoſe things which none but the Darlings and Favourites of Heaven can have? Is not an Ounce of pure Gold more valuable than many Pounds of gilded Braſs? What though the Dews of *Helicon* deſcend not upon my *Head*, if in the mean time the ſweet influences of *Sion* fall upon my *Heart*? O my God! how much ſoever others are elated by the light of their knowledge, I have cauſe with humility to adore thee for the heavenly heat with which thou haſt warmed my Affections.

The Deceived Soul's Reflection.

Pauſe a while my Soul upon this point. With what Seed is my Heart ſown, and of what kind are thoſe things wherein I excel others? Are they indeed ſpecial Seeds of Grace, or common Gifts and natural Excellencies? If the latter, little cauſe have I to pride my ſelf in them, were they ten thouſand times more than they are. If theſe things be indeed the things that accompany Salvation, the Seed of God, the true and real work of Grace, then (1.) How comes it to paſs, that I never found any throws or travelling pangs in the production of them? It's affirmed, and generally acknowledged, that the *new Creature* is never brought forth without ſuch pains and compunctions of *heart*, *Acts* 2. 37. I have indeed often felt an aking *Head*, whilſt I have read and ſtudied to increaſe my knowledge? but when did I feel an aking *Heart* for ſin? Oh, I begin to ſuſpect, that it is not right. Yea, (2.) And my ſuſpicion increaſes whiles I conſider that Grace is of an humbling nature, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. Lord, how have I been elated by my Gifts, and valued my ſelf above what was meet? O how have I delighted in the noiſe of the *Phariſees* Trumpet! *Mat.* 6. 2. No Muſick ſo ſweet as that. Say, O my Conſcience, have I not delighted more in the Theater, than the Cloſet? In the praiſe of Men, than the approbation of God? Oh, how many evidences doſt thou produce againſt me? Indeed theſe are ſad ſymptoms that I have ſhewed thee, but there is yet another which renders thy caſe more ſuſpicious yet; yea, that which thou canſt make no rational defence againſt, even the ineffectualneſs of all thy Gifts and Knowledge to mortifie any one of all thy Luſts. It's beyond all diſpute, that Gifts may, but Grace cannot conſiſt without mortification of ſin, *Gal.* 5. 24. Now what Luſt hath fallen before theſe excellent Parts of mine? Doth not Pride, Paſſion, Covetouſneſs, and indeed the whole body of ſin live and thrive in me as much as ever? Lord, I yield the cauſe, I can defend it no longer againſt my Conſcience, which caſts and condemns me by full proof, to be but in a wretched, curſed, lamentable ſtate, notwithſtanding all my Knowledge and flouriſhing Gifts. O ſhew me a more excellent way. Lord! that I had the ſincerity of the pooreſt Saint; though I ſhould loſe the applauſe of all my Parts: With theſe I ſee I may go to Hell, but without ſome better thing no hope of Heaven.

### The POEM.

*GReat difference betwixt that Seed is found,*
*With which you ſow your ſeveral plots of ground.*
*Seed-wheat doth far excel in dignity,*
*The cheaper Barley, and the courſer Rye.*
*Though in themſelves they good and wholſom are;*
*Yet theſe with choiceſt Wheat may not compare.*
*Mens hearts like fields are ſow'd with different Grain;*
*Some baſer, ſome more noble, ſome again*
*Excelling both the former, more than Wheat*
*Excels that Grain, your Swine and Horſes eat.*
*For Principles of meer Mortality,*
*Like Cummin, Barley, Fitches, Peaſe, or Rye,*
*In thoſe men's hearts are often to be found,*
*Whom yet the Scripture calleth curſed ground.*
*And nobler Principles than theſe ſometime*
*Call'd common Grace, and Spiritual Gifts which ſhine*
*In ſome mens heads, where is their habitation;*
*Yet they are no companions of Salvation.*
*Theſe purchaſe honour both from great and ſmall;*
*But I muſt tell thee that if this be all;*
*Though like an Angel in theſe Gifts thou ſhine,*
*Among blind Mortals for a little time:*
*The day's at hand, when ſuch as thou muſt take*
*Thy Lot with Devils in th' infernal Lake.*
*But Principles of ſpecial ſaving Grace,*
*Whoſe ſeat is in the heart, not head or face:*
*Like ſolid Wheat ſown in a fruitful field*
*Shall ſpring and flouriſh, and at laſt will yield*
*A glorious Harveſt of Eternal Reſt,*
*To him that nouriſh'd them within his breaſt.*
*O Grace! how Orient art thou! how Divine!*
*What is the glory of all Gifts to thine!*
*Diſſeminate this Seed within my heart,*
*My God I pray thee, though thou ſtouldſt impart*
*The leſs of Gifts; then I may truly ſay,*
*That thou haſt ſhew'd me the more exc'lent way.*

## CHAP. IX.

## Upon Springing Weather after Seed-time.

*By Heavens influence, Corn and Plants do ſpring,*
*God's ſhowers of Grace do make his Valleys ſing.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE Earth after that it is plowed and ſowed, muſt be watered and warm'd with the Dews nd Influences of Heaven, or no Fruit can be exected. If God do not open to you his good Treare, the Heavens to give Rain unto the Land in s ſeaſon, and bleſs all the work of your hands, s it is *Deut.* 28. 12. The Earth cannot yield her ncreaſe. The order and dependance of natural uſes in the productions of Fruit, is excellently eſcribed, *Hoſ.* 2. 21, 22. *I will hear the Heavens, d they ſhall hear the Earth; and the Earth ſhall ar the Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and they ſhall hear ezreel.* *Jezreel* muſt have Corn, and Wine, and yl, or they cannot live; they cannot have it unſs the Earth bring it forth, the Earth cannot bring forth without the Heavens, the Heavens cannot yield a drop unleſs God hear them; that is, unlock and open them. * Nature and natural Cauſes are nothing elſe but the order in which God works. This ſome *Heathens* by the light of Nature acknowledged, and therefore when they went to plow in the Morning they did lay one hand upon the Plow (to ſpeak their own part to be painfulneſs) and hold up the other hand to *Ceres* the Goddeſs of Corn, to ſhew, that their expectation of plenty was from their ſuppoſed Deity. I fear many *Chriſtians* lay both hands to the Plow, and ſeldom lift up heart or hand to God, when about that work.

*Natura nihil ud eſt quam inorum o- um ordo. entius.*

**Wecm's Cerem. Law.**

There was an Husbandman (ſaith Mr. *Smith*) that always ſowed good *Seed*, but never had good Corn; at laſt, a Neighbour came to him, and ſaid, I will tell you what probably may be the cauſe of it; it may be (ſaid he) you do not ſteep your Seed; no truly, ſaid the other, nor ever did I hear that Seed muſt be ſteeped; yes ſurely, ſaid his Neighbour, and I will tell you how, it muſt be ſteeped in Prayer. When the party heard this, he thanked him for his Counſel, reformed his fault, and had as good Corn as any Man whatſoever! Surely, it is not the Husbandman's, but God ſteeps that drop fatneſs. *Almator terra,* the Earth indeed is a fruitful Mother, but the Rain which fecundates and fertilizes it, hath no other Father but God, *Job* 38. 28.

**Smith's** *Eſſex* **Dove.**

### APPLICATION.

AS impoſſible it is (in an ordinary way) for Souls to be made fruitful in Grace and Holineſs, without the Dews and Influences of Ordinances, and the bleſſing of God upon them, as for the Earth to yield her Fruit without the natural influences of Heaven; for look, what Dews, Showers, and clear ſhinings after Rain are to the Fields, that the Word and Ordinances of God are to the Souls of Men. *My doctrine ſhall drop as the rain, my ſpeech ſhall diſtil as the dew, as the ſmall rain upon the tender herb, and as the ſhowers upon the graſs,* Deut. 32. 2. *For as the rain and ſnow cometh down from heaven, and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud; ſo ſhall my word be that goeth forth of my mouth, Iſa.* 55. 10, 11. And as the Doctrine of the Goſpel is Rain, ſo Goſpel Miniſters are the Clouds in which thoſe heavenly Vapours are bound up. The reſemblance lyes in the following particulars.

1. The Rain comes from Heaven, *Acts* 14. 17. *He gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons,* &c. The Doctrine of the Goſpel is alſo of an heavenly extraction and deſcent, they are Heavenly Truths which are brought to you in earthen Veſſels, things that were hid in God, and come from his Boſom, *Epheſ.* 3. 8, 9. What *Nicodemus* ſaid of Chriſt, is in a proportion true of every faithful diſpenſer of the Goſpel, *Thou art a teacher come from God, John* 3. 2. You are not to look upon the Truths which Miniſters deliver, as the meer effects and fruits of their Inventions and Parts, they are but the Conduits through which thoſe Celeſtial waters are conveyed to you. 'Tis all heavenly, the *Officers* from Heaven, *Eph.* 4. 12. Their *Doctrine* from Heaven, *Eph.* 3. 8, 9. The *Efficacy* and *Succeſs* of it from Heaven, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. *What I received of the Lord* (ſaith *Paul*) *that have I delivered unto you,* 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. The ſame may every Goſpel Miniſter ſay too. That's the firſt.

And then (2*dly.*) The Rain falls by Divine direction and appointment; *He cauſes it to rain upon one City, and not upon another Amos* 4. 7. You ſhall often ſee a Cloud diſſolve and ſpend it ſelf upon one place, when there is not a drop within a few Miles of it. Thus is the Goſpel ſent to ſhed its rich influences upon one place, and not upon another; it powers down ſhowers of bleſſings upon one Town or Pariſh, whilſt others are dry like the ground which lay near to *Gideon*'s wet Fleece. *To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent*, Acts 13. 26. *Sent*, it comes not by *chance*, but by *commiſſion* and appointment, and it's ſent *to you* by ſpecial direction. miniſters can no more go whither they pleaſe, then the ſailing Clouds can move againſt the Wind. *Paul* and *Timothy*, two fruitful Clouds (that ſent down many ſweet refreſhing ſhowers upon every Place whither they came) the Lord ſent them through *Phrygia* and *Galatia*, but forbad them to preach the Word in *Aſia*, *Acts* 16. 6. *And when they aſſayed to go into* Bithynia, *the ſpirit ſuffered them not*, *v.* 7. But a Man of *Macedonia* appears to *Paul* in a Viſion, and prayed him, ſaying, *Come over to* Macedonia *and help us*, *v.* 9. Thus you ſee how the *miſtical*, as well as the *natural* Clouds, are moved according to Divine Counſel; and though Miniſters are not now diſpoſed to their reſpective places, in ſuch an extraordinary way, yet there is ſtill a ſpecial hand of the Spirit guiding their motions, which is ſeen partly in qualifying them for ſuch a people, and partly in drawing out their hearts to elect and call them, and inclining their hearts to accept the Call.

3. There is a great deal of difference in the ſhowers of Rain that fall upon the Earth. Sometimes you have an haſty ſhower, which makes the ways float, and the Streets run, but it's gone preſently, the Earth hath but little benefit by it; and ſometimes you have a ſweet, gentle, ſoaking rain, that moderately ſoaks to the Roots, and refreſhes the Earth abundantly. This is called the *ſmall Rain*, and the former, *the great rain of his ſtrength*, *Job* 37. 6. So it is in theſe Spiritual ſhowers, the effects of ſome Sermons, (like a ſudden ſpout of Rain) are very tranſient, that touch the heart a little for preſent, by way of Conviction or Comfort, but it fleets away immediately, *Jam.* 1. 23. At other times the Goſpel like a ſetled moderate Rain, ſoaks to the Root, to the very Heart. So did that ſweet ſhower which fell, *Acts* 2. 37. It ſearched the Root, it went to the Heart; the influences of it are ſometimes abiding, and do much longer remain in, and refreſh the Heart; than the Rain doth the Earth. There be effects left in ſome hearts, by ſome Sermons and Duties, that will never out of it as long as they live, *I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou haſt quickned me*, Pſal. 119. 93.

The Rain is moſt beneficial to the Earth, when there come ſweet, warm Sun blaſts with, or after it. This the Scripture calls, *a clear ſhining after rain*, 2 *Sam.* 23. 4. by which the *ſeminal virtue* of the Earth is drawn forth, and then the Herbs and Flowers, and Corn ſprout abundantly. So it is with Goſpel-ſhowers, when the Sun of Righteouſneſs opens upon poor Souls under the Word, darting down the Beams of Grace and Love upon them, whilſt they are attending on it, (juſt as you ſometimes ſee a ſweet ſhower fall while the Sun ſhines out) O how comfortable is this! and effectual to melt the heart! And as the warm Rain is moſt refreſhing, ſo when the word comes warmly, from the melting Affections of the Preacher, who imparts not only the Goſpel, but his own Soul with it 1 *Theſ.* 2. 8. This doth abundantly more good than that which drops coldly from the Lips of the unaffected Speaker.

5. Showers of Rain do exceedingly refreſh the Earth, as a Man is refreſhed by a draught of Water, when his Spirits are even ſpent. O how welcome is a ſhower to the thirſty ground! Hence the little Hills are ſaid to rejoyce on every ſide, yea to ſhout for joy, and ſing when a ſhower comes. *Pſal.* 65. 12, 13. But never was ſhower of Rain ſo ſweetly refreſhing to the thirſty Earth, as Goſpel-ſhowers are to gracious Hearts, *Col.* 4. 8. it comforts their very Hearts. What joy was there in *Samaria*, when the Goſpel came to that place? *Acts* 8. 8. It revives the Soul, 'tis *mel in ore, melos in aure, jubilum in corde*, Honey in the Mouth, Melody in the Ear, and a very Jubilee in the Heart.

6. Rain is neceſſary at Seed time, to make ready the Earth, to receive the Seed, *Pſal.* 65. 9, 10. *Thou viſiteſt the earth, andватereſt it; thou greatly inricheſt it with the River of God, which is full of water; thou prepareſt them Corn, when thou haſt ſo provided for it; thou watereſt the ridges thereof abundantly, thou ſetteſt the furrows thereof, thou makeſt it ſoft with ſhowers, thou bleſſeſt the ſpringing thereof.* And this the Scripture calls the former Rain. And as this is neceſſary about Seed-time, ſo the latter Rain is as needful about earing-time, to diſcloſe the ear, and to bring it to perfection; both theſe are great Bleſſings to the Earth, and conduce to a plentiful Harveſt, *Joel* 2. 23, 24. *Be glad then ye children of* Sion, *and rejoyce in the Lord your God, for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cauſe to come down for you the rain, the former and the latter rain in the firſt month, and the floors ſhall be full of Wheat, and the fates ſhall overflow with Wine and Oyl.* Thus the Goſpel hath a double uſe and benefit alſo. It's neceſſary as the former Rain at Seed-time, it cauſes the firſt ſpring of Grace in the Heart. *Pſal.* 19. 7. And there could be, (in an ordinary way) no ſpring of Grace without it, *Prov.* 29. 18. And as this former Rain is neceſſary to cauſe the firſt ſpring of Grace, ſo alſo it hath the uſe of the latter Rain to ripen thoſe precious Fruits of the Spirit in the Souls of Believers, *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13. *He gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. Were all the elect* converted unto God, yet ſtill there would be a neceſſity of a Goſpel Miniſtry.

7. After a great glut of Rain, uſually there comes a drought; 'tis a common Countrey Proverb *Wet and dry pay one another*. And truly when a people are glutted with a fulneſs of Goſpel-mercies, it's uſual with God to ſhut up and reſtrain the Goſpel-clouds, that for a time (at leaſt) there be no Dews upon them, and thereby teach them to prize their deſpiſed (becauſe common) mercies at an higher rate. For as a good man once ſaid, mercies are beſt known by the Back, and moſt prized when moſt wanted. *In thoſe days the Wor of the Lord was precious, there was no open Viſi* 1 *Sam.* 3. 1. It is with ſpiritual as with temporal Food, ſlighted when plentuous, but if a Famine once come, then every bit of Bread is preci ous. *Jeruſalem* remembred in the days of her af fliction, and of her miſery, all her pleaſant thing that ſhe had in the days of old, *Lam.* 1. 7. 'T both a ſinful and dangerous thing to wantonni with Goſpel-mercies, and deſpiſe the plaineſt ( faithful ) miniſters of the Goſpel. The time ma

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come when you may be glad of the plaineſt Sermon, from the mouth of the meaneſt Embaſſador of Chriſt.

8. To conclude, the Prayers of Saints are the Keys that open and ſhut the natural Clouds, and cauſe them either to give out, or with-hold their influences, *James* 5. 18. Elias *was a man ſubject to like paſſions as we are, and he prayed earneſtly that it might not rain, and ſix months; and he prayed again, and three years and ſix months; and he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth fruit.* God hath ſubjected the works of his hands to the Prayers of his Saints, *Iſa.* 45. 11.

Prayer is alſo the golden Key which opens theſe Myſtical Goſpel-clouds and diſſolves them into ſweet gracious ſhowers. God will have the whole work of the Miniſtry carried on by the Prayers of his people, they firſt obtain their Miniſters by prayer, *Luke* 10. 2. *Pray ye the Lord of the Harveſt, to ſend forth labourers into the vineyard.* It is by the help of Prayer, that they are carried on, and enabled to exerciſe their Miniſtry. They may tell their people as a great General once told his Soldiers, *That he Flew upon their wings. Pray for me* (ſaith the great Apoſtle) *that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the myſteries of the Goſpel*, Eph. 6. 19. Yea by the Saints Prayers it is, that Miniſters obtain the ſucceſs and fruits of their Labours, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 1. *Finally Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free courſe, and be glorified, even as it is with you.* And thus you have the Metaphor opened. Now, Oh! that theſe Truths might come down in ſweet ſhowers upon the Hearts both of *Miniſters* and People, in the following Reflections.

## REFLECTIONS.

1. Reflections for Goſpel-Miniſters.

1. Am I then a Cloud? And is my Doctrine as Rain to water the Lord's Inheritance? And yet do I think it much to be toſſed up and own by the furious Winds and Storms of Perſecution? Do not I ſee the Clouds above me in continual motions and agitations? And ſhall I Dream f a fixed ſetled ſtate? No, falſe Teachers, who are Clouds without Rain, are more likely to enjoy that than I. Which of all the Prophets have not been oſſed and hurried worſe than I? *Acts* 7. 52. He at will not let Men alone to be quiet in their Luſts, muſt expect but little quiet from Men in this life. But it is enough Lord, that a reſt remaineth r thy Servant, let me be ſo wiſe to ſecure a reſt o come, and not ſo vain to expect it on Earth.

2. And, O that I might ſtudy thoſe inſtructing louds, from which, as from the Bottles of Heaven, God pours down refreſhing ſhowers to uench and ſatisfie the thirſty Earth! In this I may ſemble them, and come amongſt the people of e Lord, *in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the Goſpel of riſt*, Rom. 15. 29. O let not thoſe thirſty Souls at wait for me as for the Rain, Job 29. 23. *Return like the Troops of* Tema, *aſhamed, with their heads ered*, Job 6. 19. O that my Lips might refreſh any! Let me never be like thoſe empty Clouds, hich deceive the hopes of thirſty Souls; but let Doctrine deſcend as the Rain, and diſtil as the w, and let that plot of thine Inheritance, which u haſt aſſigned to me, be as a Field which the d hath bleſſed.

3. Once more, lift up thine eyes to the Clouds, behold, to how great an height the Sun hath unted them, for by reaſon of their ſublimity it is that they are called the Clouds of Heaven, *Mat.* 24. 30. Lord, let me be a Cloud of Heaven too! Let my Heart and Converſation be both there! Who is more advantaged for an heavenly Life than I? Heavenly Truths are the ſubjects of my daily ſtudy, and ſhall earthly things be the objects of my daily Delights and Loves? God forbid that ever my earthly Converſation ſhould contradict and ſhame my heavenly Calling and Profeſſion; Shine forth thou glorious Sun of Righteouſneſs, and my Heart ſhall quickly be attracted and mounted above theſe viſible Clouds, yea, and above the aſpectable Heavens.

3. Reflections for private Chriſtians.

For thoſe that want a Goſpel Miniſtry.

1. Is the Goſpel Rain, and its Miniſters Clouds? Wo is me then, that my Habitation is upon the Mountains of *Gilboa*, where there are no Dews! Ah ſad Lot, that I ſhould be like *Gideon*'s dry Fleece, whilſt the ground round about me is wet with the Dew of Heaven! O thou that commandeſt the Clouds above, and openeſt the Windows of Heaven; remember, and refreſh this parched Wilderneſs, wherein I live, with ſhowers of Grace, that we may not be as the Heath in the Deſart, which ſeeth not when good cometh, nor inhabit the parched places of the Wilderneſs.

For thoſe that enjoy a *Goſpel*-Miniſtry.

2. O Lord, thou haſt cauſed the Heavens above me to be black with Clouds, thou openeſt the Celeſtial Caſements from above, and daily ſendeſt down ſhowers of Goſpel-bleſſings: O that I might be as the parched Earth under them! not for barrenneſs, but for thirſtineſs. Let me ſay, *My ſoul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord*; that I might there ſee the Beauty of the Lord. Doth the Spungy Earth ſo greedily ſuck up the ſhowers, and open as many Mouths as there are clefts in it, to receive what the Clouds diſpenſe? And ſhall thoſe precious Soul-inriching ſhowers fleet away unprofitably from me? If ſo, then,

For unprofitable Hearers.

3. What an account have I to make for all thoſe Goſpel-bleſſings that I have enjoyed? For all thoſe Goſpel-dews and ſhowers wherewith I have been watered! Should I be found fruitleſs at laſt, it will fare better with the barren and uncultivated Wilderneſs than with me; more tolerable for *Indians* and *Barbarians* that never heard the Goſpel, than for me that have been ſo aſſiduouſly and plenteouſly water'd by it. Lord! What a difference wilt thou put in the great day, betwixt ſimple and pertinacious barrenneſs? Surely, if my root be not barrenneſs, ſuch heavenly waterings and influences as theſe, will make it ſprout forth into fruits of obedience.

## The POEM.

*THe Vegetables here below depend*
*Upon thoſe Treaſures which the Heavens do ſpend*
*Moſt bounteouſly upon them; to preſerve*
*Their being, and their beauty. This may ſerve*
*To ſhadow forth a heavenly Myſtery,*
*Which thus preſents it ſelf before your Eye.*
*As when the Sun draws near us in the Spring,*
*All Creatures do rejoyce, Birds chirp and ſing.*
*The face of nature ſmiles, the Fields adorn*
*Themſelves with rich Embroideries. The Corn*
*Revives, and ſhooteth up, the warm ſweet Rain*
*Makes Trees and Herbs ſprout forth and ſpring amain.*

*Walk but the Fields in ſuch a fragrant Morn,*
*How do the Birds your Ears with Muſick Charm !*
*The Flowers their flaming Beauties do preſent*
*Unto your Captiv'd Eyes ; and for their ſcent,*
*The ſweet* Arabian *Gums cannot compare ;*
*Which thus perfume the circumambient Air.*
*So, when the Goſpel ſheds its chearing Beams*
*On gracious Souls ; like thoſe ſweet-warming gleams,*
*Which God ordains in nature ; to draw forth*
*T virtue ſeminal that's in the Earth :*
*ns their Hearts, their languid Graces chears ;*
*ich Souls a ſpring-like face appears.*
*ous ſhowers theſe ſpiritual Clouds do yield,*
*In s them with ſweetneſs ; like a Field*
*W h God hath bleſt. Oh ! 'tis exceeding ſweet,*
*I en gracious hearts and heavenly truths do meet.*
*ow ſhould the hearts of Saints within them ſpring,*
*When they behold the Meſſengers that bring*
*Theſe gladſom Tydings ? Yea, their very Feet*
*Are beautiful ; becauſe their meſſage ſweet.*
*Oh what a Mercy do theſe Souls enjoy,*
*On whom ſuch Goſpel-dews fall day by day !*
*Thrice happy Land which in this pleaſant Spring,*
*Can hear theſe Turtles in her Hedges ſing.*
*O prize ſuch Mercies, if you ask'd me, why ?*
*Read on, you'll ſee there's reaſon by and by.*

## CHAP. X.

## Upon a Dearth through want of Rain.

*If God reſtrain the ſhowers, you howl and cry ;*
*Shall Saints not mourn when Spiritual Clowds are dry ?*

### OBSERVATION.

'TIS deſervedly accounted a ſad Judgment, when God ſhuts up the Heavens over our Heads, and makes the Earth as Braſs under our Feet, *Deut.* 28. 23. Then the Husbandmen are called to mourning, *Joel* 1. 11. All the Fields do languiſh, and the bellowing Cattel are pined with thirſt. Such a ſad ſtate the Prophet Rhetorically deſcribes, Jer. 14. 3, 4, 5, 6. *The Nobles have ſent their little ones to the Waters, they came to the Pits and found no Water ; they returned with their Veſſels empty, they were aſhamed and confounded, and covered their heads ; becauſe the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the Earth, the Plowmen were aſhamed, they covered their heads : Yea, the Hind alſo calved in the field, and forſook it, becauſe there was no graſs ! And the wild Aſſes did ſtand in the high places, they ſnuffed up the wind like Dragons, their Eyes failed becauſe there was no graſs.*

And that which makes the want of Rain ſo terrible a Judgment, is the Famine of Bread, which neceſſarily follows theſe extraordinary Droughts, and is one of the soreſt Temporal Judgments which God inflicts upon the World.

### APPLICATION.

AND truly, as much cauſe have they to weep and tremble, over whoſe Souls God ſhuts up the Spiritual Clouds of the Goſpel, and thereby ſending a Spiritual Famine upon their Souls. Such a Judgment the Lord threatens in *Amos* 8. 11. *Behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will ſend a famine in the Land, not a famine of Bread, nor a thirſt for Water ; but of hearing the Word of the Lord.* The meaning is, I will ſend a more fearful Judgment, than that of the Famine of Bread ; for this Particle [not] is not *excluſive*, but *exceſſive* ; implying, that a Famine of Bread is nothing, or but a light Judgment, compared with the Famine of the Word. Parallel to which is that Text, *Iſa.* 5. 6. *I will lay it waſte* ( ſaith God of the fruitleſs Church ) *it ſhall not be pruned nor digged, but there ſhall come up briars and thorns ; I will alſo command the Clouds, that they rain not upon it.* And we find both in Human and Sacred Hiſtories, that when God hath ſhut up the Spiritual Clouds, removing or ſilencing his Miniſters ; ſenſible Chriſtians have ever been deeply affected with it, and reckon'd it a moſt tremendous Judgment. Thus the Chriſtians of *Antioch*, when *Chryſoſtom* their Miniſter was baniſhed, * they judged it better to loſe the Sun out of the Firmament, than loſe that, their Miniſter. And when *Nazienzen* was taking his leave of *Conſtantinople*, as he was Preaching his *Farewel-Sermon*, the people were exceedingly affected with his loſs ; and among the reſt, an old man in the Congregation fell into a bitter paſſion, and cryed out, *Aude pater, & tecum trinitatem ipſam ejice.* ( *i. e.* ) Go farther, if you dare, and take away the whole Trinity with you ; meaning, that God would not ſtay when he was gone. How did the Chriſtians of *Antioch* alſo weep and lament, when *Paul* was taking his farewel of them ? *Acts* 20. 37, 38. He had been a Cloud of Bleſſings to that place, but now they muſt expect no more ſhowers from him. Oh, they knew not how to give up ſuch a Miniſter ! When the Ark of God (which was the Symbol of the Divine Preſence among the *Jews*) was taken, *all the City cried out*, 1 *Sam.* 4. 13. O, the loſs of a Goſpel-miniſtry is an ineſtimable loſs ! Not to be repaired but by its own return, or by Heaven. Mr. *Greenham* tells us, that in the Times of Popiſh Perſecution, when godly Miniſters were halled away from their Flocks to *Martyrdom*, the poor Chriſtians would meet them in the way to the Priſons or Stake, with their little ones in their Arms, and throwing themſelves at their Feet, would thus beſpeak them : " What ſhall be our Eſtate, now you " are gone to *Martyrdom* ? Who ſhall inſtruct theſe " poor Babes ? Who ſhall eaſe our afflicted Con" ſciences ? Who ſhall lead us in the way of Life ? " Recompence unto them, O Lord ! as they have " deſerved, who are the cauſes of this, Lord gi " them ſad Hearts. *Quis talia fando, temper lachrymis* ? And to let you ſee there is ſufficien ground for this ſorrow, when God reſtrains th influences of the Goſpel ; ſolemnly conſider th following particulars.

1. That it is a dreadful Token of God's gr anger againſt that People from whom he remov the Goſpel. The anger of God was fearfully i cenſed againſt the Church of *Epheſus*, when he but threaten to come againſt her, and remove t Candleſtick out of its place, *Rev.* 2. 5. 'Tis a ſtro at the Soul, a blow at the Root ; uſually the l and therefore the worſt of Judgments. There i Pedigree of Judgments, firſt *Gomer* bears *Je* next *Loruhama*, and at laſt brings forth *Lo* *Hoſ.* 1. 6, 8, 9.

2. There is cauſe of mourning, if you conſi the deplorable eſtate in which all the [illegible] Souls are left, after the Goſpel is removed fr them. What will become of theſe ? Or by wh ſhall they be gathered ? It made the Bowel

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* *Satius eſt ut ſol non luceat, quam ut non doceat.* Chryſoſtomus.

Chriſt yearn within him when he looked upon the ſcattered multitude that had no Shepherd, *Mat.* 9. 36. What an eaſie Conqueſt doth the Devil now make of them? How faſt doth Hell fill in ſuch Times? Poor Souls being driven thither in droves, and none to reſcue them! *Matthew Paris* tells us, that in the year 1072. when Preaching was ſuppreſt at *Rome*, Letters were then framed as coming from Hell; wherein the Devil gave them thanks for the multitude of Souls they had ſent to him that year. But truly we need not talk of Letters from Hell, we are told from Heaven, how deplorable the condition of ſuch poor Souls is. See *Prov.* 28. 19. Hoſ. 4. 6. Or,

3. The judgment will yet appear very heavy, if you conſider the loſs which God's own People ſuſtain by the removal of the Goſpel; for therein they loſe (1.) Their chief glory, *Rom.* 3. 2. the principal thing in which the peculiar glory of *Iſrael* conſiſted was this, *That unto them was committed the Oracles of God.* On that account it was called the glorious Land, *Dan.* 11. 16. This made them greater than all the Nations round about them, *Deut.* 4. 7, 8. (2.) By loſing the Ordinances, they loſe their quicknings, comforts, and Soul-refreſhments; for all theſe are ſweet ſtreams from the Goſpel Fountain, *Pſal.* 119. 50. *Col.* 4. 8. No wonder then to hear the people of God complain of dead hearts when the Goſpel is removed. (3.) In the loſs of the Goſpel they loſe their defence and ſafety. This is their Hedge, their Wall of protection, *Iſa.* 5. 5. Walls and Hedges (ſaith *Muſculus in loc.*) are the Ordinances of God, which ſerved both *ad ſeperationem, & munitionem*, to diſtinguiſh, and to defend them. When God plucks up this Hedge, and breaks down this Wall, all miſchiefs break in upon us preſently, 2 *Chron.* 15. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Now for a long ſeaſon* Iſrael *hath been without the true God, and without a teaching Prieſt, and without Law —— And in thoſe times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the Countries, and Nation was deſtroyed of Nation, and City of City; for God did vex them with all adverſity.* How long did *Jeruſalem* remain, after that voice was heard in the Temple, *migremu hinc*? Let us be gone? (4.) With the Goſpel, we loſe our Temporal Injoyments and Creature-comforts. Theſe uſually come and go with the Goſpel. When God had once written *Loammi* upon *Iſrael*, the next news is this, *I will recover my Wool and my Flax*, *Hoſ.* 2. 9. (5.) And laſtly, to come up to the very caſe in hand, they loſe with it their Spiritual Food and Soul-ſubſiſtence, for the Goſpel is their *Feaſt of fat things*, *Iſa.* 25. 6. their Spiritual Wells, *Iſa.* 12. 3. a dole diſtributed among the Lord's poor, *Rom.* 1. 11. In a word, it is as the Rain and Dews of Heaven, as hath been ſhewed, which being reſtrained, a Spiritual Famine neceſſarily follows; a Famine of all the moſt terrible. Now to ſhew you the Analogy betwixt this and a Temporal Famine, that therein you may ſee what cauſe you have to be deeply affected with it, take it in theſe ſix following Particulars.

1. A Famine is cauſed by the failing of Bread, or that which is in the ſtead, and hath the uſe of Bread. Dainties and ſuperfluous Rarities may fail, and yet Men may ſubſiſt comfortably. As long as People have Bread and Water, they will not famiſh; but take away Bread once, and the Spirit of man faileth. Upon this account Bread is called a Staff, *Pſal.* 105. 16. becauſe what a Staff is to an aged or feeble man, that Bread is to the faint and feeble Spirits, which even ſo do lean upon it. And look what Bread is to the natural Spirits, that, and more than that, the Word is to gracious Spirits, *Job* 23. 12. *I have eſteemed the words of thy mouth, more than my neceſſary food.* If once God break this Staff, the inner man, that hidden man of the Heart, will quickly begin to fail and faulter.

2. It is not every degree of ſcarcity of Bread that preſently makes a Famine, but a general failing of it; when no Bread is to be had, or that which is, yields no nutriment. For a Famine may as well be occaſioned by God's taking away *panis nutrimentum*, the nouriſhing vertue of Bread, that it ſhall ſignifie no more as to the end of Bread, than a Chip, *Hag.* 1. 6. as by taking away *panem nutrientem*, Bread it ſelf, *Iſa.* 3. 1. And ſo it is in a Spiritual Famine, which is occaſioned either by God's removing all the Ordinances, and making Viſion utterly to fail; or elſe, though there be Preaching, Prayer, and other Ordinances left, (at leaſt, the names and ſhadows of them) yet the preſence of God is not with them. There is no Marrow in the Bone, no Milk in the Breaſt; and ſo, as to Soul-ſubſiſtence, 'tis all one, as if there were no ſuch things.

3. In a Corporeal Famine, mean and courſe things become ſweet and pleaſant; Famine raiſes the price and eſteem of them. That which before you would have thrown to your Dogs, now goes down pleaſantly with your ſelves. To the hungry Soul every bitter thing is ſweet, *Prov.* 27. 7. 'Tis the *Dutch* Proverb, and a very true one, *Hunger is the beſt Book.*

> *Jejunus ſtomachus raro vulgaria temnit.* Horat.

*In time of Famine courſeſt fare contents,*
*The barking ſtomach ſtrains no complements.*

'Tis ſtoried of *Artaxerxes Memor*, that when he was flying before his Enemies, he fed hungrily upon Barley-bread, and ſaid, *Cujuſmodi voluptatis hactenus inexpertus fuit?* Oh, what pleaſure have I hitherto been ignorant of? When great *Darius* drank the puddled Water, that had been defiled with dead Carcaſes, which had been ſlain in that Famous Battel, he profeſſed he never drank more pleaſant Drink. And Famous *Hunniades* ſaid, He never fared more daintily, than when (in a like exigence) he ſupped upon Bread, Onions, and Water, with a poor Shepherd in his Cottage.

Juſt ſo doth the Famine of the Word raiſe the price and eſteem of vulgar and deſpiſed Truths. O what would we give for one of thoſe Sermons, one of thoſe Sabbaths we formerly enjoyed? *In thoſe days the Word of the Lord was precious.* When God calls to the Enemy to take away and remove his contemned, but precious Dainties, from his wanton Children, and a Spiritual Famine hath a little pinched them, they will then learn to prize their Spiritual Food at a higher rate.

4. In time of Famine ſome Perſons ſuffer more than others. It falls heavieſt and pincheth hardeſt upon the poorer ſort; as long as any thing is to be had for Money, the Rich will have it. So it falls out in a Spiritual Famine; although the moſt experienced and beſt furniſhed Chriſtian will have enough to do to live in the abſence of Ordinances, yet they are like to ſubſiſt much better, than weak, ignorant, and unexperienced ones.

Some Chriſtians have husbanded their time well, and like *Joſeph* in the ſeven years *plenty*, laid up for a *ſcarcity*. The Word of God dwells richly in them. Some ſuch there are, as *John* calls young Men, who are ſtrong, and the Word of God remaineth in them, of whom it may be ſaid, as *Jerom* ſpake of *Nepotianus*, that by long and aſſiduous meditation of the Scriptures, he had made his Breaſt the very Library of Chriſt. But others are Babes in Chriſt; and though God will preſerve that good work which he hath begun in them, yet thoſe poor Babes will ſooneſt find, and be moſt concerned in the loſs of their Spiritual Fathers and Nurſes.

5. In time of Famine there are pitiful cries, and heart-breaking complaints where-ever you go. O the many pale Faces you ſhall then ſee, and the ſad Language that rings in your Ears in every place! One cries, Bread, Bread, for Chriſt's ſake one bit of Bread; another faints and falls down at your door. *All her people ſigh, Lam.* 1. 11. Yea, the poor little ones are brought in, *v.* 12. crying to their Mothers, where is the Corn and Wine? And then pouring out their Souls into their Mothers Boſom. Juſt ſo it is in a Famine of the Word; poor Chriſtians every-where ſighing and crying, O where are our godly Miniſters? Our ſweet Sabbaths, Sermons, Sacraments, my Fathers, my Fathers, the Chariots of *Iſrael* and the Horſemen thereof? How beautiful were your Feet upon the Mountains! And then weeping, like the people at *Paul's departure*, to think they ſhall ſee their *faces* no more.

6. Laſtly, In time of Famine, there is nothing ſo coſtly or precious, but people will part with it to purchaſe Bread. *They have given their pleaſant things for meat to relieve their ſouls, Lam.* 1. 11. And doubtleſs when a Spiritual Famine ſhall pinch hard, thoſe that have been cloſe-handed to maintain a Goſpel-miniſtry, will account it a choice Mercy to enjoy them again at any rate. *Though the Lord feed you with the bread of affliction, and give you the waters of adverſity, yet it will ſweeten that bread and water to you, if your teachers be no more removed into corners,* Iſa. 30. 20.

## REFLECTIONS.

*The Ungrateful Soul's Reflection.*

1. Is the Famine of the Word ſuch a fearful Judgment? Then Lord pardon my unthankfulneſs, for the plentiful and long-continued enjoyment of ſuch a precious and invaluable Mercy. How lightly have I eſteemed the great things of the Goſpel? O that with Eyes and Hands lifted up to Heaven, I might bleſs the Lord, that ever I was brought forth in an Age of ſo much light. In a Valley of Viſions, in a Land flowing with Goſpel-mercies. *Hath not God made of one Blood all the Nations of Men, to dwell on the face of the Earth? and determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation? Acts* 17. 26. Many of theſe great and populous Nations are involved in groſs darkneſs. Now that of all the ſeveral Ages of the World, and places in it; God ſhould eſpy the beſt place for me, and bring me forth into it, in ſuch a happy nick of time, as can hardly be parallel'd in Hiſtory, for the plenty of Goſpel-mercies, that this Age and Nation hath enjoyed; that my Mother did not bring me forth in the Deſarts of *Arabia*, or waſtes of *America*, but in *England*, where God hath made the Sun of the Goſpel to ſtand ſtill, as the natural Sun once did over *Gibeon*; and that ſuch a Mercy ſhould no more affect my Soul, let ſhame cover my Face for this, and trembling ſeize my Heart.

*The deprived Chriſtian's Reflection.*

2. Is the Goſpel indeed departed? Its ſweet influences reſtrained? And a Famine worſe than that of Bread come upon us. *Alas! for the day, for it is a great day, ſo that none is like it; it is even the day of* Jacob's *trouble.* Woe is me, that ever I ſhould ſurvive the Goſpel, and the precious Liberties and mercies of it! What horrid ſins have been harboured amongſt us, for which the Lord contends by ſuch an unparellel'd Judgment? Lord, let me juſtifie thee even in this ſevere diſpenſation; the provocation of thy Sons, and of thy Daughters have been very great, and amongſt them none greater than mine. May we not this day read our ſin in our puniſhment? O what nice and wanton Appetites, what curious and itching Ears had thy people in the days of plenty? methods, tones and geſtures, were more regarded than the excellent Treaſures of Divine Truths. Ah my Soul! I remember my fault this day, little did I then conſider, that Sermons work not upon Hearts, as they are thus elegant, thus admirable, but as they are Inſtruments in the Hand of God appointed to ſuch an end. Even as *Auſtin* ſaid of the Conduits of Water, though one be in the ſhape of an Angel, another of a Beaſt, yet the Water refreſhes as it is Water, and not as it comes from ſuch a Conduit; By this alſo, O Lord, thou rebukeſt the ſupineneſs and formality of thy people. How drowſie, dull, and careleſs have they been under the moſt excellent and quickning means? Few more than I. Alas! I have often preſented my Body before the Lord in Ordinances, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἔξω, but my Soul hath been wandring abroad, as *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaks. I ſhould have come from under every Sermon as a ſheet comes from the Preſs, with all the ſtamps and lively impreſſions of the Truths I heard upon my Heart. But alas, if it had been demanded of me, as once it was of *Ariſtotle*, after a long and curious Oration, how he liked it, I might have anſwered as he did, truly I did not hear it; for I was all the while minding another matter. Righteous art thou, O Lord, in all that is come upon us.

*The Silent Miniſter's Reflection.*

3. I am now as a Spring ſhut up, that can yield no refreſhment to thirſty Souls ready to periſh. Thou haſt ſaid to me as once to *Ezekiel*, *Son of Man, behold, I will make thy Tongue cleave to the roof of thy Mouth, and thou ſhalt be dumb.* This is a heavy Judgment, but thou muſt be juſtified and cleared in it. Although Men may not, yet God, if he pleaſe, may put a lighted Candle under a Buſhel. And herein I muſt acknowledge thy Righteouſneſs. Many times have I been ſinfully ſilent, when both thy glory and the intereſt of Souls engaged me to ſpeak. Moſt juſtly therefore haſt thou made my Tongue to cleave to its Roof. Little did I conſider the preciouſneſs of Souls, or the tremendous Account to be given for them, at the appearing of the great Shepherd. I have now time enough to ſit down and mourn over former miſcarriages, and loſt opportunities. Lord reſtore me once again to a ſerviceable Capacity, to a larger Sphere of Activity for thee, for I am now become as a broken Veſſel. It grieves me to the Heart, to ſee thy Flock ſcattered, to hear thy People cry to me, as once to *Joſeph*, *Give us Bread, for why ſhould we die in thy preſence?* Thy Word is like fire

ſhut up in my Bones, and I am weary with forbearing. O, that thou wouldſt once again open the Doors of thine Houſe, that there may be Bread enough in thine Houſe for all thy Children.

### The POEM.

*WHen God doth make the Heavens above as Braſs,*
*The Earth's like Iron. Flowers, Herbs and Graſs*
*Have loſt their fragrant green, are turned yellow;*
*The Brooks are dry, the pining Cattel bellow.*
*The fat and Flowry Meadows ſcorch'd and burn'd.*
*The Countreys mirth is into morning turn'd.*
*The clefted earth, her thirſty mouth ſets ope*
*Unto the empty Clouds; as 'twere in hope*
*Of ſome refreſhing drops, that might allay*
*Her fiery thirſt; but they ſoon paſs away.*
*The penſive Husbandman with his own Eyes*
*Bedews his Land; becauſe he ſees the Skies*
*Refuſe to do it; juſt ſo ſtands the caſe,*
*When God from Souls removes the means of Grace.*
*God's Miniſters are Clouds, their Doctrine Rain;*
*Which when the Lord in Judgment ſhall reſtrain:*
*The peoples Souls in ſhort time will be found*
*In ſuch a caſe, as this dry parched ground.*
*When this ſad Judgment falls on any Nation,*
*Let Saints therein take up the lamentation.*
*O dreadful, dark, and diſmal day!*
*How is our glory fled away?*
*Our Sun gone down, our Stars o'recaſt;*
*God's Heritage is now laid waſte.*
*Our pining Souls no Bread can get,*
*With Wantons God hath juſtly met.*
*When we were fed unto the full,*
*This Man was tedious, that was dull.*
*But they are gone, and there remain*
*No ſuch occaſion to complain.*
*Stars are not now for lights, but ſigns,*
*God knows of what, heart-breaking times.*
*ure Heaven intends not peace, but Wars;*
*n calling home Ambaſſadors.*
*How long did* Sodom's *Judgment ſtay,*
*When righteous* Lot *was ſnatcht away?*
*How long remain'd that ſtately Hall,*
*When* Sampſon *made the Pillars fall?*
*When Horſemen and Commanders fly,*
*Woe to the helpleſs Infantry.*
*This is a ſad and fatal blow,*
*publick loſs and overthrow.*
*u that ſo long have wiſh'd them gone,*
*e quiet now, the thing is done.*
*id they torment you ere your day?*
*od hath remov'd them out o' th' way.*
*ow ſleep in ſin, and take your eaſe;*
*eir Doctrine ſhall no more diſpleaſe.*
*t Lord! what ſhall become of us?*
*r Teachers gone, and left us thus?*
*whom ſhall we our ſelves addreſs,*
*en Conſcience labours in diſtreſs?*
*who ſhall help us at our need?*
*pour in Balm when wounds do bleed?*
*Lord, for unto thee our Eyes*
*pour out tears; our groans, our cries*
*ll never ceaſe, till thou reſtore*
*Mercies which we had before.*
*Sion's paths where graſs now grows,*
*trodden by the feet of thoſe*
*love thy Name; and long t' enjoy*
*Mercies they have ſinn'd away.*

## CHAP. XI.

### Upon the Corrupting of the Seed before it Spring.

*Seeds die and rot, and then moſt freſh appear,*
*Saints Bodies riſe more Orient than they were.*

### OBSERVATION.

AFter the Seed is committed to the Earth, it ſeems to periſh and die, as our Saviour ſpeaks, John 12. 24. *Except a Corn of Wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.* The death of the Corn in the Earth is not a total death, but only the corruption or alteration of it: For if once the ſeminal Life and Vertue of it were quite extinguiſht, it could never put forth blade or ear without a Miracle. Yet, becauſe that alteration is a kind of death, therefore Chriſt here uſes it as a fit illuſtration of the Reſurrection. And indeed there is nothing in nature more apt to illuſturate that great Myſtery. What a fragrant, green and beautiful blade do we ſee ſpring up from a corrupted Seed? How black and mouldy is that? How beautiful, and verdant is this?

### APPLICATION.

EVen thus ſhall the Bodies of the Saints ariſe in beauty, and glory at the Reſurrection. *They are ſown in diſhonour, they are raiſed in glory, they are ſown natural bodies, they are raiſed ſpiritual bodies,* 1 Cor. 15. 43, 44. The Husbandman knows, that though the Seed rot in the Earth, yet it will riſe again. And the Believer knows, *That though after his skin worms deſtroy his body, yet in his fleſh he ſhall ſee God, Job* 19. 25. *&c.* And the reſemblance betwixt the Seed ſown, and ſpringing up; and the Bodies of the Saints dying, and riſing again, lyes in theſe following Particulars.

Firſt, The Seed is committed to the Earth from whence it came, ſo is the day of a Saint; Earth it was, and to Earth it is again reſolved. Grace exempts not the Body of the beſt man from ſeeing corruption, *Rom.* 8. 10. Though Chriſt be in him, yet the body is dead; that is, ſentenced to death, becauſe of ſin, *Heb.* 9. *But it is appointed for all men once to die.*

Secondly, The Seed is caſt into the Earth in hope, 1 *Cor.* 9. 10. Were there not a Reſurrection of it expected, the Husbandman would never be willing to caſt away his Corn. The Bodies of Saints are alſo committed to the Grave in hope, 1 Theſ. 4. 13, 14. *But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning thoſe which are aſleep, as them which have no hope; for if we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, even ſo alſo them which ſleep in Jeſus ſhall the Lord bring with him.* This bleſſed hope of a Reſurrection, ſweetens not only the troubles of Life, but the pangs of Death.

Thirdly, The Seed is caſt into the Earth ſeaſonably, in its proper ſeaſon. So are the Bodies of the Saints, *Job* 5. 26. *Thou ſhalt come to thy grave in a full age, as a ſhock of Corn cometh in, in its ſeaſon.* They always die in the fitteſt time, though ſometimes they ſeem to die immaturately. The time of their death was from all Eternity prefixt by God, beyond which they cannot go, and ſhort of which they cannot come.

Fourthly, The Seed lyes many days and nights under the Clods, before it riſe and appear again, *Even ſo man lyeth down, and riſeth not again till the Heavens be no more, Job* 14. 12. The days of darkneſs in the Grave are many.

5. When the time is come for its ſhooting up, the Earth that covered it can hide it no longer, it cannot keep it down a day more; it will find or make way through the Clods. So in that day when the great Trump ſhall ſound, Bone ſhall come to his Bone, and the Graves ſhall not be able to hold them a minute longer. Both Sea and Earth muſt render the dead that are in them, *Rev.* 20. 13.

6. When the Seed appears above-ground again, it appears much more freſh and orient than when it was caſt into the Earth. God cloaths it with ſuch beauty, that it is not like to what it was before. Thus riſe the Bodies of Saints, marvellouſly improved, beautified, and perfected with Spiritual Qualities and rich Endowments; in reſpect whereof they are called Spiritual Bodies, 1 *Cor.* 15. 43. not properly, but Analogically Spiritual; for look as Spirits ſubſiſt without Food, Raiment, Sleep, know no laſſitude, wearineſs or pain; ſo our Bodies after the Reſurrection ſhall be above theſe neceſſities and Diſtempers; for we ſhall be as the Angels of God, *Mat.* 22. 30. Yea, our vile Bodies ſhall be changed, and made like unto Chriſt's glorious Body; which is the higheſt pitch, and aſcent of Glory and Honour, that an human Body is capable of, *Phi.* 3. 21. Indeed the glory of the Soul ſhall be the greateſt glory; that's the Orient invaluable Jem; but God will beſtow a diſtinct glory upon the Body, and richly Enamel the very Caſe in which that precious Jewel ſhall be kept. In that glorious Morning of the Reſurrection, the Saints ſhall put on their new freſh Suits of Fleſh, richly laid and trimmed with glory. Thoſe Bodies which in the Grave were but duſt and rottenneſs, when it delivers them back again, ſhall be ſhining and excellent pieces, abſolutely and everlaſtingly freed, (1.) From all natural Infirmities and Diſtempers; Death is their good Phyſician, which at once freed them of all Diſeaſes. 'Tis a great affliction now to many of the Lord's people, to be clog'd with ſo many bodily Infirmities which render them very unſerviceable to God. *The ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak.* A crazy Body retorts and ſhoots back its Diſtempers upon the Soul with which it is ſo cloſely conjoined; but though now the Soul (as *Theophraſtus* ſpeaks) pays a dear rent for the Tabernacle in which it dwells, yet when Death diſſolves that Tabernacle, all the Diſeaſes and Pains under which it groaned ſhall be buried in the Rubbiſh of its Mortality; and when they come to be re-united again, God will beſtow rich Gifts and Dowries, even upon the Body, in the day of its Re-eſpouſals to the Soul. (2.) It ſhall be freed from all deformities, there are no breaches, flaws, montroſities in glorified Bodies; but of them it may much rather be ſaid, what was once ſaid of *Abſolom,* 2 Sam. 14. 25. *That from the Crown of his head, to the ſole of his foot, there was no blemiſh in him.* (3*ly.*) It ſhall be freed from all natural neceſſities, to which it is now ſubjected in this its Animal ſtate. How is the Soul now diſquieted and tortured with cares and troubles, to provide for a periſhing Body? Many unbelieving and unbecoming fears, it is now vexed with. What ſhall it eat? And what ſhall it drink? And wherewithal ſhall it be cloathed? *But meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; God ſhall deſtroy both it and them,* 1 Cor. 6. 13. (*i. e.*) as to their preſent uſe and office; for as to its exiſtence, ſo the Belly ſhall not be deſtroyed. But even as the Maſts, Poop and Stern of a Ship abide in the Harbour after the Voyage is ended, ſo ſhall theſe bodily Members, as *Tertullian* excellently illuſtrates it. (4*ly.*) They ſhall be freed from Death, to which thenceforth they can be ſubject no more; that formidable Adverſary of nature ſhall aſſault it no more. *For they which ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the reſurrection from the dead; neither marry, nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more; for they ſhall be equal to the Angels, and are the Children of God, being the Children of the Reſurrection, Luke* 20. 35, 36. Mark it (equal to the Angels) not that they ſhall be ſeperate, and ſingle Spirits without Bodies, as the Angels are, but equal to them in the way and manner of their living and acting. We ſhall then live upon God, and act freely, purely, and delightfully for God; for all kind of living upon, and delighting in Creatures, ſeems in that Text (by a Synecdoche of the part which is ordinarily in Scripture put for all Creature delights, Dependencies, and Neceſſities) to be excluded. Nothing but God ſhall enamour and fill the Soul, and the Body ſhall be perfectly ſubdued to the Spirit. Lord, what haſt thou prepared for them that love thee?

Ἰσαγγέλως βιῶντες.

## REFLECTIONS.

*The Healthful Saints Reflection.*

1. If I ſhall receive my Body again ſo dignified and improved in the World to come, then Lord let me never be unwilling to uſe my Body now for the Intereſt of thy Glory, or my own Salvation. Now, O my God, it grieves me to think how many precious opportunities of ſerving and honouring thee, I have loſt under pretence of endangering my Health.

I have been more ſolicitous to live long and healthfully, than to live uſefully and fruitfully; and like enough my Life had been more ſerviceable to thee, if it had not been ſo fondly overvalued by me.

Fooliſh Soul, hath God given thee a Body for a living Tool or Inſtrument? And art thou afraid to uſe it? Wherein is the Mercy of having a Body, if not in ſpending and wearing it out in the Service of God? To have an active vigorous Body, and not to imploy and exerciſe it for God, for fear of endangering its Health, is, as if one ſhould give thee a handſom and ſprightful Horſe, upon condition thou ſhouldſt not ride or work him. O! If ſome of the Saints had enjoyed the bleſſing of ſuch an healthy active Body as mine, what excellent Services would they have performed to God in it?

*The Sick Saints Re ction.*

2. If my Body ſhall as ſurely riſe again in glory, vigour and excellent endowments, as the Seed which I ſow doth, Why ſhould not this comfort me over all the pains, weakneſſes and dul neſs with which my Soul is now clogged? Tho knoweſt, my God, what a grief it had been my Soul, to be fettered and entangled with the D ſtempers and manifold Indiſpoſitions of this v Body. It hath made me ſigh and ſay, with holy A *ſelme,* when he ſaw the mounting Bird weigh down by the Stone hanging at her Leg. Lord, th it fares with the Soul of thy Servant! Fain woul

ſerv

rve, glorifie, and enjoy thee, but a diſtempered ody will not let me. However, it is reviving think, that though I am now forced to crawl ke a worm, in the diſcharge of my Duties, I ſhall hortly fly, like a Seraphim, in the execution of hy will. Chear up, drooping Soul, the time is at and, when thou ſhalt be made more willing than hou art, and thy Fleſh not ſo weak as now it is.

The Dying aints Reflection.

3. And is it ſo indeed? Then let the dying Saint, like *Jacob*, rouze up himſelf upon his Bed, and encourage himſelf againſt the fears of death by his refreſhing Conſideration. Let him ſay with oly dying *Muſculus*, Why trembleſt thou (O my oul) to go forth of this Tabernacle to the Land f reſt? Hath thy Body been ſuch a pleaſant Habitation, to thee, that thou ſhouldſt be ſo loth to part ith it, though but for a time? And with aſſu- ance of receiving it again with ſuch a glorious Im- rovement? I know (O my Soul) that thou aſt a natural inclination to this Body, reſulting rom the dear and ſtrict union which God himſelf ath made betwixt thee and it? Yea, even the oliest of men do ſometimes ſenſibly feel the like n themſelves, but beware thou love it not im- oderately or inordinately; 'tis but a Creature, ow dear ſoever it be to thee: Yea, a fading reature, and that which now ſtands in the way o the full enjoyment of God. But ſay my Soul, hy are the thoughts of parting with it ſo burdenſom to thee? Why ſo loth to take Death by ts cold Hand? Is this Body thy old and dear riend? True, but yet thou parteſt not with it pon ſuch ſad terms, as ſhould deſerve a Tear at arting. For maiſt thou not ſay of this departure, s *Paul* at the departure of *Oneſimus*, Philem. v. 5. *It therefore departeth for a ſeaſon that thou maiſt re- ive it for ever.* The day of Re-eſpouſals will uickly come, and in the mean time as thy Body hall not be ſenſible of the tedious length of inter- oſing time, ſo neither ſhalt thou be ſolicitous bout thine abſent Friend: For the Fruition f God in thine unbodied ſtate, ſhall fill thee ith infinite ſatisfaction and reſt.

Or is it not ſo much ſimply for parting with it, s for the manner of thy parting, either by the ſlow nd lingring approaches of a natural, or the quick nd terrible approaches of a violent Death: hy, trouble not thy ſelf about that; for if God lead thee through the long dark Lane of a edious Sickneſs, yet at the end of it is thy Fa- hers Houſe. And for a violent death 'tis not ſo aterial, whether Friends or Enemies ſtand eeping or triumphing over thy dead Body. *ibil corpus ſentit in nervo cum anima ſit in cœlo.* hen thy Soul ſhall be in Heaven, 'twill ot be ſenſible how the Body is uſed on Earth.

he ungodly oul's Reflection.

4. But Oh! What an uncomfortable parting will mine be? And how much more ſad our meeting again! How will this Soul and Body, luſh, yea tremble, when they meet, who have een Co-partners in ſo much guilt? I Damn'd y Soul, to pleaſe my Fleſh, and now have uin'd both thereby: Had I denied my Fleſh to rve Chriſt, worn out my Body in the Service my Soul; I had thereby happily provided r them both, but I began at the wrong end, d ſo have ruin'd both eternally.

### The POEM.

*Bare Seeds have no great beauty, but inhum'd*
*That which they had is loſt, and quite conſum'd,*
*They ſoon corrupt, and grow more baſe by odds*
*When dead, and bury'd underneath the clods,*
*It falls in baſeneſs, but at length doth riſe*
*In glory; which delights beholders Eyes.*
*How great a difference have a few days made*
*Betwixt it, in the Buſhel, and the blade!*
*This lovely, lively emblem aptly may*
*Type out the glorious Reſurrection-day.*
*When in the Saints that in the duſt do lye,*
*Shall riſe in glory, vigour, dignity.*
*With Singing in that morning they ariſe,*
*And dazling glory; ſuch as mortal eyes*
*Ne're view'd on Earth. The ſparkling beauties here,*
*No more can equalize their ſplendor there,*
*Than glimmering Glow worms do the faireſt Star*
*That ſhines in Heaven, or the Stones that are*
*In every Street, may competition hold*
*With glittering Diamonds in Rings of Gold.*
*For unto Chriſt's moſt glorious Body they*
*Shall be conform'd in glory at that day;*
*Whoſe luſtre would, ſhould it on mortals fall,*
*Tranſport a* Stephen, *and confound a* Paul.
*'Tis now a courſe and crazy houſe of Clay;*
*But O? How dear do Souls for Lodging pay!*
*Few more than I, for thou, my Soul, haſt been*
*Within theſe Tents of* Kedar *cooped in.*
*Where, with Diſtempers clog'd, thou mak'ſt thy Moans,*
*And, for Deliverance, with tears and groans,*
*Haſt often ſaid; Cheer up, the time will be,*
*When thou, from all theſe Troubles, ſhall be free,*
*No jarring Humours, cloudy Vapours, Rheums,*
*Pains, Aches, or whatever elſe conſumes*
*My days in grief; whilſt in the Chriſtian Race,*
*Fleſh lags behind, and can't keep equal pace*
*With the more equal Spirit; none of theſe*
*Shall thenceforth clog thee, or diſturb thine eaſe.*

## CHAP. XII.

## Upon the Reſemblance of Wheat and Tares.

*As Wheat reſembled is, by viler Tares,*
*So, vile Hypocriſy, like Grace, appears.*

### OBSERVATION.

IT is *Jerom*'s Obſervation, that Wheat and Tares are ſo much alike in their firſt ſpringing up, that it is exceeding difficult to diſtinguiſh the one from the other, Theſe are his words, *Inter triticum & lolium quamdiu herba eſt, & nondum culmus venit ad ſpicam; grandis ſimilitudo eſt: & indiſcernendo aut nulla, aut per difficilis diſtantia.* The difference (ſaith he) between them, is either none at all, or wonderful difficult to diſcern, which thoſe words of Chriſt, *Mat.* 13. 30. plainly confirm. Let them both alone till the Harveſt; thereby intimating, both the difficulty of diſtinguiſhing the Tares and Wheat; as alſo, the unwarrantable raſhneſs of bold and haſty Cenſures of Men's Sincerity or Hypocriſie, which is thereby ſhadowed by them.

### APPLICATION.

HOW difficult ſoever it be to diſcern the difference betwixt Wheat and Tares, yet doubtleſs the Eye of Sence can much eaſier diſcriminate them, than the moſt quick and piercing Eye of Man can diſcern the difference betwixt ſpecial and common Grace; for all ſaving Graces in the Saints have their Counterfeits in Hypocrites. There are *ſimilar works* in theſe, which a Spiritual and very judicious Eye may eaſily miſtake for the *ſaving and genuine effects* of the Sanctifying Spirit.

Doth the Spirit of God convince the Conſciences of his People of the evil of ſin? *Rom.* 7. 9. Hypocrites have their Convictions too, *Exod.* 10. 16. *Then* Pharaoh *called for* Moſes *and* Aaron *in haſte, and he ſaid, I have ſinned againſt the Lord your God, and againſt you.* Thus was *Saul* alſo convicted, 1 *Sam.* 15. 24.

Doth true Conviction and Compunction work Reformation of Life in the people of God? Even Hypocrites alſo have been famous for their Reformations. The unclean Spirit often goes out of the formal Hypocrite, by an external Reformation; and yet ſtill retains his propriety in them, *Mat.* 12. 43, 44. For that departure is indeed no more than a politick retreat. Many that ſhall never eſcape the Damnation of Hell, have yet eſcaped the pollutions of the World, and that by the knowledge of the Son of God, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20.

Doth the Spirit of the Lord produce that glorious and ſupernatural work of Faith in convinced and humble Souls? In this alſo the Hypocrite apes and imitates the Believer, Acts 8. 13. *Then* Simon *himſelf believed alſo*, Luke 8. 13. *Theſe are they which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

Doth the precious Eye of Faith, diſcovering the tranſcendent excellencies that are in Chriſt, inflame the Affections of the believing Soul with vehement deſires and longings after him? Strange motions of Heart have alſo been found in Hypocrites towards Chriſt and Heavenly things, Job 6. 34. *Lord, evermore give us this bread*, Mat. 25. 8. *Give us of your Oyl, for our Lamps are gone out.* With what a rapture was *Balaam* tranſported, when he ſaid, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and my laſt end be like his*, Numb. 23. 10.

Doth the work of Faith in ſome Believers bear upon its top Branches, the full ripe Fruits of a bleſſed aſſurance? Lo! What ſtrong confidences, and high-built perſwaſions of an intereſt in God, have ſometimes been found even in unſanctified ones? John 8. 54. *Of whom you ſay, that he is your God, and yet ye have not known him.* To the ſame height of confidence arrived thoſe vain Souls, mentioned in *Rom.* 2. 19. Yea, ſo ſtrong may this falſe aſſurance be, that they dare boldly venture to go to the Judgment-ſeat of God, and there defend it, Mat. 7. 22. *Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy Name?*

Doth the Spirit of God fill the Heart of the aſſured Believer with joy unſpeakable and full of glory, giving them, *through Faith*, a prelibation, or forctaſt of Heaven it ſelf, in thoſe firſt fruits of it? How near to this comes that which the *Apoſtle* ſuppoſes may be found even in *Apoſtates*? Heb. 6. 8, 9. who are there ſaid, *to taſte the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.* What ſhall I ſay, if real Chriſtians delight in Ordinances, thoſe that are none may alſo delight in approaching to God, *Ezek.* 33. 32. It may be you will ſay, though the difference be not eaſily diſcernable in their active obedience; yet, when it ſhall come to ſuffering, there every Eye may diſcern it: The falſe Heart will then flinch, and cannot brook that work. And yet even this is no infallible rule neither; for the Apoſtle ſuppoſes, that the *Salamander* of Hypocriſie may live in the very Flames of Martyrdom, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. *If I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity.* And it was long ſince determined in this caſe, *Non pœna, ſed cauſa facit Martyre*; ſo that without Controverſie, the difficulty of diſtinguiſhing them is very great.

And this difference will yet be more ſubtle and undiſcernable, if I ſhould tell you, that as in ſo many things, the Hypocrite reſembles the Saint: So there are other things in which a real Chriſtian may act too like a Hypocrite. When we find a *Pharaoh* confeſſing, an *Herod* practiſing, as well as hearing, a *Judas* preaching Chriſt, an *Alexander* venturing his Life for *Paul*; and on the other ſide, ſhall find a *David* condemning that in another, which he practiſed himſelf; an *Hezekiah* glorying in his Riches, a *Peter* diſſembling, and even all the Diſciples forſaking Chriſt in an hour of trouble and danger. O then how hard is it for the Eye of Man to diſcern betwixt Chaff and Wheat? How many upright Hearts are now cenſured, whom God will clear? How many falſe Hearts are now approved, whom God will condemn? Men ordinarily have no clear convictive proofs, but only probable ſymptoms, which, at moſt can beget but a conjectural knowledge of anothers ſtate. And they that ſhall peremptorily judge either way, may poſſibly wrong the Generation of the upright; or on the other ſide, abſolve and juſtifie the Wicked. And truly, conſidering what hath been ſaid, it's no great wonder that dangerous miſtakes are ſo frequently made in this matter. But though man cannot, the Lord both can, and will perfectly diſcriminate them. *The Lord knoweth who are his*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. He will have a day perfectly to ſever the Tares from the Wheat, to melt off the varniſh of the moſt reſplendent and refined Hypocrite, and to blow off the Aſhes of Infirmities, which have covered and obſcured the very ſparks of ſincerity in his People. He will make ſuch a diviſion as was never yet made in the World, how many diviſions ſoever there have been in it. *And then ſhall men indeed return, and diſcern betwixt the righteous and the wicked, betwixt him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not.* Mean while (my Soul) thou canſt not better imploy thy ſelf, whether thou be ſound or unſound, than in making theſe Reflections upon thy ſelf.

## REFLECTIONS.

The Cenſorious Soul's Reflection.

And is this ſo? Then Lord pardon the raſhneſs and precipitancy of my Cenſorious Spirit; for I have often boldly anticipated thy Judgment, and aſſumed thy Prerogative, although, thou haſt ſaid, *Why doſt thou judge thy brother? and why do thou ſet at nought thy brother? we ſhall all ſtand before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt; for it is written, as live (ſaith the Lord) every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God. Let us n therefore judge one another any more*, Rom. 14. 10, 11, 12, 13. And again, *He that judgeth me is the Lor Let us therefore judge nothing before the time until th Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidd things of darkneſs, and make manifeſt the counſels the heart; and then ſhall every man have praiſe God*, 1 Cor. 4. 4, 5.

Wh

What if God will own ſome of them for his Sons, to whom I refuſe to give the reſpect of Brethren? I may paſs haſty and headlong Cenſures upon others, but where is my Commiſſion for ſo doing? I want not only a Commiſſion, but fit Qualifications for ſuch a work as this. Can I pierce into the Heart as God? Can I infallibly diſcover the hidden motives, ends, and principles of actions? Beſides, O my Soul! Thou art conſcious of ſo much falſeneſs in thy ſelf, that were there no other conſideration, that alone might reſtrain thee from all uncharitable and haſty Cenſures. If others knew but what I know of my ſelf, would they not judge as ſeverely of me, as I do of others?

The Preſumptuous Soul's Reflection.

2. Though I may not judge the final ſtate of another, yet I may and ought to judge the ſtate of my own Soul; which is doubtleſs a more neceſſary and concerning work to me. For ſince every ſaving Grace in a Chriſtian hath its Counterfeit in the Hypocrite, how needful is it, for thee, (O my Soul) to make a ſtand here, and ſolemnly to ponder this great queſtion; Whether thoſe things whereon I depend as my beſt Evidences for the Life to come, be the real, or only the common works of the Spirit? Whether they be ſuch as can now endure the Teſt of the Word and abide a fair Tryal at the Bar of my own Conſcience?

Come then, my Soul! ſet the Lord before thee, to whom the ſecrets of all Hearts are manifeſt; and in the awful ſence of that great day, make true anſwer to theſe Heart-diſcovering Queries! for though thou canſt not diſcern the difference betwixt theſe things in another, yet thou mayſt and oughteſt to diſcern it in thy ſelf; for what Man knows the things of a Man, ſave the Spirit of Man that is in him?

Firſt, Is my obedience uniform? Am I the ſame Man at all times, Places and Companies? Or rather, am I not exact and curious in open and publick; remiſs and careleſs in private and ſecret Duties? Sincere Souls are uniform Souls, *Pſal.* 119. the Hypocrite is no Cloſet-man, *Mat.* 6. 5.

Secondly, Doth that which I call Grace in me, oppoſe and mortifie, or doth it not rather quietly conſiſt with, and protect my Luſts and Corruptions? True Grace tolerates no Luſt, *Gal.* 5. 17. No, not the Boſom Darling-corruptions, *Pſal.* 18. 3.

Thirdly, Doth that which I call my Grace, humble, empty, and abaſe my Soul? Or rather, doth it not puff it up with Self-conceitedneſs? All ving Grace is humbling-Grace, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. t *the Soul which is lifted up, is not upright*, Hab. 4.

Laſtly, Canſt thou (my Soul) rejoyce and bleſs d for the Grace imparted to others? And rece, if any deſign for *Chriſt* be carried on in the orld by other Hands? Or rather, doſt thou not vy thoſe that excel thee, and careſt for no work which thou art not ſeen?

But ſtay my Soul, it is enough: If theſe be the ſtantial differences betwixt ſpecial and common ace, I more than doubt, I ſhall not endure the of his coming, *Whoſe Fan is in his Hand.* Do thoſe ſpots appear upon me, which are not pots of his Children? Woe is me, poor Wretch, Characters of Death are upon my Soul! Lord, power to the Form, Life to the name to live, ice to the knowledge, or I periſh Eternally! O rather give me the *Saints Heart*, than the *Angels Tongue*; the pooreſt breathing of thy Spirit, than the richeſt Ornaments of common Gifts! Let me neither deceive my ſelf or others, in matters of ſo deep and everlaſting conſequence!

### The POEM.

*In Eaſtern Countries, as good Authors write,*
*Tares in their ſpringing up appear to ſight;*
*Not like it ſelf, a Weed, but real Wheat,*
*Whoſe ſhape and form it counterfeits ſo neat,*
*That 'twould require a moſt judicious Eye,*
*The one from t'other to diverſifie.*
*Till both to ſome maturity be grown,*
*And then the difference is eas'ly known.*
*Even thus Hypocriſie that curſed Weed,*
*Springs up ſo like true Grace, that he will need*
*More than a common inſight in this caſe,*
*That ſaith this is not, that is real Grace.*
*Ne're did the cunning Actor, tho' a Slave*
*Array'd in Princely Robes, himſelf behave*
*So like a King, as this doth act the part*
*Of ſaving Grace, by its deep helliſh Art.*
*So gracious Souls melt, mourn and weep for Sin?*
*The like in Hypocrite obſerv'd hath been.*
*Have they their comforts, joys, and raptures ſweet?*
*With them in comforts Hypocrites do meet.*
*In all religious Duties, they can go*
*As far as Saints; in ſome things farther too.*
*They ſpeak like Angels, and you'll think within*
*The very Spirit of Chriſt, and Grace hath been.*
*They come ſo near, that ſome like* Iſaac *take*
Jacob *for* Eſau; *thus for that miſtake.*
*And boldly call (their Eyes with his being dim)*
*True Grace Hypocriſie, and Duty Sin.*
*Yea, many alſo,* Jacob-*like, imbrace*
Leah *for* Rachel, *common Gifts for Grace.*
*And in their Boſoms hug it, till the light*
*Diſcover their miſtake, and clear their ſight.*
*And then like him, confounded they will cry,*
*Alas! 'tis* Leah, *curs'd Hypocriſie.*
*Guide me my God, that I may not inſtead*
*Of ſaving Grace, nurſe up this curſed Weed.*
*O let my Heart by thee at laſt be found*
*Sincere, and all thy workings on it ſound.*

## CHAP. XIII.

## Upon the Dangers incident to Corn from Seed-time to Harveſt.

*Fowls, Weeds, and Blaſtings do your Corn annoy;*
*Even ſo Corruptions would your Grace deſtroy.*

### OBSERVATION.

There are (amongſt many others) three Critical and dangerous periods betwixt the Seed-time and Harveſt. The firſt, when Corn is newly committed to the Earth, all that lies uncovered is quickly pickt up by the Birds; and much of that which is but ſlightly covered, is ſtockt up as ſoon as it begins to ſprout, by Rooks and other devouring Fowls, *Mat.* 13. 4. but if it eſcape the Fowls, and gets root in the Earth, yet then it is hazarded by noxious Weeds, which purloin and ſuck away its nouriſhment, whilſt it is yet in the tender blade. If by the care of the vigilant Husbandman it be freed from choaking Weeds; yet laſtly, as great a danger as any of the former ſtill attends it; for oftentimes, whilſt it is blowing in the ear, blaſtings, and mildews ſmite it in the ſtalk, which cuts off the juice and ſap that ſhould aſcend to nouriſh the ear; and ſo ſhrivels and dries up the Grain whilſt it is yet immaturate, whereby it becomes like thoſe Ears of Corn in *Pharoah*'s Viſion, which were thin, and blaſted with the Eaſt-wind; or like the Ears the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of upon the Houſe-top, wherewith the Reaper filleth not his Arms.

## APPLICATION.

TRue Grace from the Infancy to the Perfection thereof, conflicts with far more greater dangers, amongſt which it anſwerably meets with three dangerous periods which marvellouſly hazard it: So that it is a much greater wonder that it ever arrives at its juſt perfection. For, (1.) No ſooner hath the great Husbandman diſſeminated theſe holy Seeds in the regenerate Heart, but multitudes of impetuous Corruptions immediately aſſault, and would certainly devour them like the Fowls of the Air, did not the ſame Arm that ſowed them, alſo protect them. It fares with Grace, as with *Chriſt* its Author, whom *Herod* ſought to deſtroy in his very Infancy. The new Creature is ſcarce warm in its ſeat, before it muſt fight to defend it ſelf. This Conflict is excellently ſet forth in that famous Text, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh, and theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

By *Fleſh* here, underſtand the corruption of nature by Original Sin, and the ſinful motions thereof; by *Spirit*, not the Soul, or natural Spirit of man, but the Spirit of God in man, *viz.* thoſe Graces in man which are the Workmanſhip of the Spirit, and therefore called by his Name. The oppoſition betwixt theſe two is expreſſed by luſting, (*i. e.*) deſiring the mutual ruin and deſtruction of each other; for even when they are not acting, yet then they are luſting, there is an oppoſite diſpoſition againſt each other; which oppoſition is both a *formal* and an *effective* oppoſition. There are two contrary forms, two men in every Saint, *Col.* 3. 9, 10. From hence an effective oppoſition muſt needs follow; for as things are in their Natures and Principles, ſo they are in their Operations and Effects; Workings always follow Beings; Fire and Water are of contrary qualities, and when they meet, they effectually oppoſe each other. Sin and Grace are ſo oppoſite, that if Sin ſhould ceaſe to oppoſe Grace, it would ceaſe to be Sin; and if Grace ſhould not oppoſe Sin, it would ceaſe to be Grace. And this doth much more endanger the work of Grace, than any other Enemy it hath; becauſe it works againſt it more *inwardly*, *conſtantly*, and *advantagiouſly*, than any thing elſe can do. (1.) More inwardly, for it hath its being and working in the ſame Soul where Grace dwells; yea, in the ſelf-ſame Faculties, ſo that it not only ſets one Faculty againſt another, but the ſame Faculty againſt it ſelf, the Underſtanding againſt the Underſtanding, and the Will againſt the Will; ſo that ye cannot do the Good, nor yet the Evil that ye would; not the good that ye would, becauſe when the Spirit moves to good, and beats upon Heart by Divine Pulſations, exciting it to Duty, the Fleſh croſſes and oppoſes it there; and if it cannot totally hinder the performance of a Duty, yet it lames the Soul upon the working hand; whereby the performance is not ſo Spiritual, free and compoſed, as it deſires; nor yet the evil that you would commit, if Grace were not there, becauſe when Luſt ſtirs in its firſt motions, Grace puts a rub in its way. *How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God? Gen.* 39. 9. And if it cannot (which for the moſt part it doth) hinder the acting of Sin, yet it ſo engages the Will againſt it, that it is not committed with complacency and full conſent, *Rom.* 7. 15. *What I do I allow not.* (2.) It oppoſes it more conſtantly, it's like a continual dropping; a Man can no more fly from this Enemy, than from himſelf. There is a time when the Devil leaves tempting, *Mat.* 4. 11. but no time when Corruption ceaſes from working. And laſtly, it oppoſes Grace more *advantagiouſly* than any other Enemy can do, for it is not only always in the ſame Soul with it, but it is there naturally; it hath the advantage of the Soyl which ſuits with it. And yet, Oh the wonder of free Grace! It is not not ſwallowed up in Victory, it eſcapes this hazard.

But (2*ly.*) It ſoon meets with another, though it eſcape this, even by Temptations which ſtrike deſperately at the very Life of it; for theſe, like the Weeds, which ſeemingly loving imbraces, claſp about it; and did not the faithful God now make a way to eſcape, inſtead of an Harveſt, we ſhould have an heap? For alas, what are we! to wreſtle with Principalities and Powers, and Spiritual Wickedneſſes in high Places?

Laſtly, ſad Relapſes, like blaſts and ruſtings, do often fade, and greatly endanger it when it's even ready for the Harveſt. Thus it fell out with *David*, whoſe laſt ways were not like its firſt; and yet by this, theſe holy Fruits are not utterly deſtroyed, becauſe it is the ſeed of God; and ſo is Immortal, 1 *John* 5. 4, 5. And alſo becauſe the Promiſes of Perſeverance and Victory made to it, cannot be fruſtrated, amongſt which theſe are excellent, *Iſa.* 54. 10. *Jer.* 34. 40. 1 *Cor.* 1. 8. *Pſal.* 1. 3. *Pſal.* 125. 1 *John.* 4. 14. So that here is matter of unſpeakable Comfort; though the Fleſh ſay, *Ego deficiam*, I will fail thee; though the World ſay, *Ego decipiam*, I will deceive thee; though the Devil ſay, *Ego eripiam*, I will ſnatch thee away; yet as long as *Chriſt* ſaith, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee; thy Graces are ſecure in the midſt of all theſe Enemies.

## REFLECTIONS.

*The Apoſta Reflection.*

1. This Soul of mine was once plowed up by Conviction, and ſown (as I thought) with the Seed of God. In thoſe days many purpoſes and good reſolutions began to chink and bud forth, prom ſing a bleſſed Harveſt: But O! (with what co ſternation and horror ſhould I ſpeak it?) the Ca and Pleaſures of this Life, the Luſts and Corru tions of my baſe Heart ſpringing up, have qu deſtroyed and choakt it; by which it appears was not the Seed of God, as I then imagined it be; and now my expected Harveſt ſhall be an he in the day of grief and deſperate ſorrow, *Iſa.* 1 11. I had Convictions, but they are gone: Tro bles for Sin, Conſcience of Duties, but all is bl ed, and my Soul is now as a Barren Field, wh God hath curſed.

Woe is me! I have revolted from God, and that dreadful word, *Jer.* 17. 5, 9. is evidently filled upon me; *For I am like the Heath in the de that ſeeth not when good cometh; my Soul inhabit* parched places of the Wilderneſs. Alas! all my formal and heartleſs duties were but as ſo many ſcarecrows in the Field, which could not defend theſe ſlight workings from being devoured by the Infernal Fowls. Had theſe Principles been the Seed of God, no doubt they would have continued and overcome the World, 1 *John* 2. 19. Wretched Soul! thy Caſe is ſad, it will be better with the uncultivated Wilderneſs, than with ſuch a miſcarrying Soyl, unleſs the great Husbandman plow thee up the ſecond time, and ſow thy Heart with better Seed.

*The Careleſs Souls Reflection.*

2. And are the Corruptions of my Heart to Grace, what Fowls, Weeds, and Mildews are to the Corn? O what need have I then to watch my Heart, and keep it with all diligence; for in the Life of that Grace is wrapt up the Life of my Soul. He that carries a Candle in his Hand in a bluſtring Stormy Night, had need to cover it cloſe, leſt it be blown out, and he left in darkneſs. O let me never ſay, God hath promiſed it ſhall perſevere, and therefore I need not be ſo ſolicitous to preſerve it; for as this inference is quite oppoſite to the nature of true Grace and Aſſurance, which never incourage to careleſneſs, but provoke the Soul to an induſtrious uſe of Means to preſerve it. So it is in it ſelf an irrational and ſenſleſs Concluſion, which will never follow from any Scripture Promiſe: For although it is readily granted, that God hath made many comfortable and ſweet Promiſes to the Graces of his People, yet we muſt expect to enjoy the Benefits and Bleſſings of all thoſe Promiſes, in that way and order in which God hath promiſed them; and that is in the careful and diligent uſe of thoſe means which he hath preſcribed, *Ezek.* 36. 36, 37. for Promiſes do not exclude, but imply the uſe of means, *Acts* 27. 31. I know my Life is determined to a day, to an hour, and I ſhall live out every minute God hath appointed; but yet, I am bound to provide Food, Raiment and Phyſick to preſerve it.

*The Doubting Soul's Reflections.*

To conclude, Let all doubting Chriſtians reflect ſeriouſly upon this Truth, and ſuck Marrow and Fatneſs out of it to ſtrengthen and eſtabliſh hem againſt all their Fears; your Life, your Spiitual Life, hath for many years hanged in ſuſpence before you; and you have often ſaid with *David*, I ſhall one day fall by the Hand of *Saul.* Deſponding, trembling Soul, lift up thine Eyes nd look upon the Fields, the Corn lives ſtill, and grows up; though Birds have watcht to devour it, nows have cover'd it, Beaſts have cropt it, Weeds ave almoſt choakt it, yet it's preſerved. And ath not God more care of that precious Seed of is own Spirit in thee, than any Husbandman hath f his Corn? Hath he not ſaid, *That having begun e good work in thee, he will perfect it to the day of hriſt?* Phil. 1. 6. Hath he not ſaid, *I give unto em eternal Life, and they ſhall never periſh?* John 0. 28. Haſt thou not many times ſaid, and ought of it, as thou doſt now, and yet it lives? what matter of unſpeakable Joy and Comfort is is to upright Souls! Well then, be not diſcouged, for thou doſt not run as one uncertain, nor ht as one that beats the Air, 1 *Cor.* 9. 26. but Foundation of God ſtands ſure, having this l, the Lord knows who are his, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. hough thy Grace be weak, thy God is ſtrong; though the Stream ſeem ſometimes to fail, yet it's fed by an ever-flowing Fountain.

### The POEM.

'TIS *juſtly wondered that an ear of Corn,*  
*Should come at laſt in ſafety to the Barn.*  
*It runs through many hazards, threatning harms,*  
*Betwixt the Sower's Hands, and Reaper's Arms.*  
*The Earth no ſooner takes it from the Sack,*  
*But you may ſee behind the Sower's Back*  
*A Troop of Thieves, which would at once deſtroy*  
*That Seed in which lies hid the Seed of joy.*  
*This dangerous period paſt, it ſoon doth fall*  
*Into a ſecond, no leſs Critical.*  
*It ſhooteth forth the tender blade, and then*  
*The noxious Weeds endanger it agen.*  
*Theſe claſp about it till they kindly choak*  
*The Corn, as flattering Ivy doth the Oak.*  
*Are Weeds deſtroyed, and all that danger paſt?*  
*Lo now another comes, the worſt at laſt.*  
*For when i'th' Ear it blows, begins to kern,*  
*A mildew ſmites it which you can't diſcern;*  
*Nor any way prevent till all be loſt;*  
*The Corn deſtroy'd, with all your hopes and coſt.*  
*Thus ſaving Grace, that precious Seed of Joy,*  
*Which Hell and Nature plot how to deſtroy,*  
*Eſcapes ten Thouſand dangers firſt and laſt?*  
*O who can ſay now all the danger's paſt?*  
*'Tis like a crazy Bark toſt in a Storm,*  
*Or like a Taper which is ſtrangely born*  
*Without a Lanthorn in a bluſtering Night;*  
*Or like to glimmering ſparks whoſe dying light*  
*Is ſtill preſerv'd: The roaring waves ſwell high*  
*Like moving Mountains in the darkned Sky*  
*On their proud backs, the little Bark is even*  
*Mounted unto the Battlements of Heaven,*  
*From thence diſmounted to the deeps doth ſlide,*  
*Receiving Water upon every ſide;*  
*Yet he whoſe Voice the proudeſt Waves obey,*  
*Brings it at laſt unto the quiet Key.*  
*The bluſtring Winds ſtrive with a fatal puff,*  
*To bring the Taper to a ſtinking ſnuff;*  
*Their churliſh blaſts extinguiſh it, and then*  
*Our gentle breath recovers it agen.*  
*The fainting ſparks beneath the Aſhes lye,*  
*Where choakt and ſmother'd they begin to die;*  
*But theſe collected, we do gently blow,*  
*Till from faint ſparks to lively flames they grow.*  
*Even thus is Grace preſerv'd thus kept alive;*  
*By conſtant wonders, Grace doth live and thrive.*

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## CHAP. XIV.

## Upon the Patience of the Husbandman for the Harveſt.

*Our Husbandmen for Harveſt wait and ſtay,*  
*O let not any Saint do leſs than they.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE expectation of a good Harveſt at laſt, makes the Husbandman with untired patience to digeſt all his Labours. He that plows, plows in hope, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. and they are not ſo irrational to think, they ſhall preſently be partakers of their hope, nor ſo fooliſh to anticipate the Harveſt by cutting down their Corn before it be fully ripened, but are content to plow, ſow and weed it; and when it is fully ripe, then they go forth into their Fields and reap it down with joy.

## APPLICATION.

CAN a little Corn cauſe Men to digeſt ſo many difficult labours, and make them wait with invincible patience till the reaping time come; Much more ſhould the expectation of Eternal Glory ſteel and fortifie my Spirit againſt all intercurrent hardſhips and difficulties. It leaſt of all becomes a Chriſtian to be of an haſty and impatient Spirit. *Light is ſown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart*, Pſal. 92. 11. *Behold the Husbandman waiteth*, &c. Jam. 5. 7. *Be patient therefore my Brethren, for the coming of the Lord draws near.* There are three great Arguments to perſwade Chriſtians to a long-ſuffering and patient frame under ſufferings. (1.) The example of Chriſt, *Iſa.* 53. 7. to think how quietly he ſuffered all injuries and difficulties with invincible patience, is ſufficient to ſhame the beſt of Chriſtians, who are of ſuch ſhort Spirits. I have read of one *Elezarius*, a Nobleman, that when his Wiſe wondered at his exceeding great patience in bearing injuries; he thus anſwered her, You know ſometimes my heart is ready to riſe with indignation againſt ſuch as wrong me, but I preſently begin to think of the wrongs that Chriſt ſuffer'd, and ſay thus to my ſelf, although thy Servant ſhould pluck thy Beard, and ſmite thee on thy Face, this were nothing to what the Lord ſuffered: He ſuffered more and greater things; and aſſure your ſelf (Wiſe) I never leave off thinking on the injuries done to my Saviour, till ſuch time as my mind be ſtill and quiet. To this purpoſe it was well noted by *Bernard* ſpeaking of Chriſt's Humiliation; Was Chriſt the Lord of glory thus humble and emptied of his fulneſs of Glory? And ſhall ſuch a worm as I ſwell? (2.) The deſert of ſin, *Lam.* 3. 39. *Why doth the living man complain?* It was a good ſaying of the bleſſed *Greenham*: When ſin lyes heavy, affliction lyes light. And it is a famous inſtance which Dr. *Taylor* gives us of the Duke of *Conde*; I have read (ſaith he) when the Duke of *Conde* had voluntarily entered into the Incommodities of a Religious Poverty and Retirement; he was one day ſpyed and pityed by a Lord of *Italy*, who out of tenderneſs wiſht him to be more careful and nutritive of his Perſon; the good Duke anſwered, Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided of Conveniences, for I ſend an Harbinger before me that makes ready my Lodgings, and takes care that I be Royally entertained. The Lord asked him, who was his Harbinger? He anſwered, the knowledge of my ſelf, and the conſideration of what I deſerve for my ſins, which is Eternal Torments; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my Lodgings, how unprovided ſoever I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deſerve; and as the ſenſe of ſin, which merits Hell, ſweetens preſent difficulties; ſo, (to come home to the preſent ſimilitude) do the expectations and hopes of a bleſſed Harveſt and Reward in Heaven. This made *Abraham* willing to wander up and down many years as a Stranger in the World; for he looked for a City that hath Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God. The hopes of ſuch a Harveſt is encouragement enough to work hard, and wait long; yet ſome Chriſtians are ſo impatient of it, that they would fain be reaping before the time; but as God hath, by an unalterable Law of Nature, appointed both the Seaſons of Seed-time and Harveſt (which are therefore called the appointed Weeks of the Harveſt) *Jer.* 5. 24. and theſe cannot be haſten'd; but when we have done all that we can on our part, muſt wait till God ſend the former and the latter Rain, and given every natural cauſe its effect. So is it in reference to our Spiritual Harveſt; we are appointed to ſweat in the uſe of all God's appointments, and when we have done all, muſt patiently wait till the Divine Decrees be accompliſhed, and the time of the Promiſe be fully come; *In due time we ſhall reap, if we faint not.* To which patient expectation, and quiet waiting for the Glory to come, theſe following Conſiderations are of excellent uſe.

Dr. *Taylor's Great Exemplar*, p. 103.

1. As the Husbandman knows when the Seed-time is paſt, it will not be long to the Harveſt; and the longer he waits, the nearer ſtill it is. So the Chriſtian knows, *It is but yet a little while, and he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry*, Heb. 10. 37. *And that now his ſalvation is nearer than when he firſt believed*, Rom. 13. 11. What a ſmall point of time is our waiting time, compared with Eternity? Yet a few days more, and then comes the long expected and welcome Harveſt.

2. The Husbandman can find other work to do, before the reaping time come; he need not ſtand idle, though he cannot yet reap. And cannot a Chriſtian find any work to do for God, till he come to Heaven? O, there is much work to do, and ſuch work as is only proper to this Seaſon. You may now reprove ſin, exhort to duty, ſuccour the diſtreſſed; this is good work, and this is your only time for ſuch work; the whole of Eternity will be taken up in other Imployments. *I think it meet* (ſaith *Peter*) *as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to ſtir up your Minds, knowing ſhortly, that I muſt put off this Tabernacle*, 2 Pet. 1. 13, 14. *q. d.* I know I have but a little time to work among you, I am almoſt at Heaven; and therefore am willing to husband this preſent moment as well as I can for you. O Chriſtians! you need not ſtand idle, look round about you upon the multitude of forlorn Sinners, ſpeak now to them for God, ſpeak now to God for them; for ſhortly you ſhall ſo ſpeak no more, you ſhall ſee them no more till you ſee them at Chriſt's Bar; God leaves you here for their ſakes, up and be doing: If you had done all you were to do for your ſelves and them, he would have you to Heaven immediately, you ſhould not wait a moment longer for your Glory.

3. Husbandmen know, though they cannot yet gather in the precious Fruits of the Earth, yet all this while they are ripening and preparing for the Harveſt; they would not houſe it green, or take it before its time. And is not this alſo my preparation time for Glory? As God prepared Heaven for his People, by an Eternal *Decree*, Mat. 25. 34. by an Act of *Creation*, Heb. 11. 10. by the death of Chriſt, which made a purchaſe of it, *Heb.* 10. 19, 20. and by his Aſcenſion into it, *John* 14. 2, 3. So the reaſon why we are kept here, is in order to our fitting for it. Heaven is ready, but we are not fully ready; the Barn is fit to receive the Corn, but the Corn is not fit to be gathered into it. *But f this ſelf-ſame thing God is now working us*, 2 Co 5. 5. he is every day at work, by Ordinances, and by Providences, to perfect his work in us; and as ſoon as that is finiſhed, we ſhall hear a voic like that, Rev. 11. 12. *Come up hither, and imm diate*

*diately we ſhall be in the Spirit*; for how ardently ſoever we long for that deſireable day, Chriſt longs for it more than we can do.

4. The Husbandman is glad of the Firſt-fruits, that incourages him, though the greateſt part be yet out; and have not you received the Firſt-fruits of that Glory? Have you not Earneſts, Pledges, and Firſt-fruits of it? 'Tis your own fault, if every day you feed not upon ſuch bleſſed Comforts of the Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 23. *Rom.* 5. 2. *Pet.* 8. 9. O how might the interpoſing time, even all the days of your patience here, be ſweetned with ſuch prelibations of the Glory to come!

5. Husbandmen know 'tis beſt to reap, when 'tis fit to reap; one handful fully ripe is worth many Sheaves of green Corn. And you know, Heaven will be ſweeteſt to you, when you are fitteſt for it; the Child would pluck the Apple whilſt it's green, but he might gather it eaſier, and taſte it ſweeter, by tarrying longer for it. We would fain be glorified *per ſaltum*. When we have got a taſte of Heaven, we are all in haſte to be gone. Then, O that I had Wings as a Dove! I would fly away and be at reſt. Then we cry to God for our ſelves, as *Moſes* for his Siſter *Miriam*, *Heal her* [*now*] *O God, I beſeech thee*, Numb. 12. 13. Glorifie me now, O Lord, I pray thee! But ſurely, as God hath contrived thy Glory in the beſt of ways, ſo he hath appointed for thee the fitteſt of Seaſons; and whenever thou art gathered into Glory, thou ſhalt come as a ſhock of Corn in its Seaſon.

## REFLECTION.

The Longing Soul's Reflection.

I have waited for thy Salvation, O God! Having received thy Firſt-fruits, my Soul longs to fill its Boſom with the full ripe Sheaves of Glory. *As the Heart panteth for the Water-brooks, ſo panteth my Soul for thee, O God!* O, when ſhall I come and appear before God? I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt. When ſhall I ſee that moſt lovely Face? When ſhall I hear his Soul-tranſporting Voice? Some need Patience to dye, I need it as much to live! Thy ſights, O God, by faith, have made this World a Burden, this Body a burthen, and this Soul to cry like thirſty *David*, O that one would give me of the Waters of *Bethlehem* to drink! The Husbandman longs for his Harveſt, becauſe it is the reward of all his Toyl and Labour; but what is his Harveſt to mine? What is a little Corn to the enjoyment of God? What is the joy of Harveſt, to the joy of Heaven? What are the ſhoutings of Men in the Fields, to the acclamations of glorified Spirits in the Kingdom of God? Lord, I have gone forth bearing more precious Seed than they? When ſhall I return rejoycing, bringing my Sheaves with me? Their Harveſt comes when they receive their Corn, mine comes when I leave it. O much deſired Harveſt! O day of the gladneſs of my Heart! How long Lord! How long! Here I wait as the poor Man at *Bethſaida*'s *Pool*, looking when my turn will come, but every one ſteps into Heaven before me; but Lord, I am content to wait till my time be fully come. I would be content to ſtay for my *Glorification*, till I have finiſht the work of my *Generation*; and when I have done the Will of God, and to receive the Promiſe. If thou have any work on Earth to uſe me in, I am content to abide: Behold, the Husbandman waiteth, and ſo will I; for thou art a God of Judgment, and bleſſed are all they that wait for thee.

The Lingring Soul's Reflection.

2. But how doth my ſlothful Soul ſink down into the fleſh, and ſettle it ſelf in the Love of this Animal Life? How doth it hug and wrap up it ſelf in the Garment of this Mortality, not deſiring to be removed hence, to the more perfect and bleſſed ſtate? The Husbandman is indeed content to ſtay till the appointed Weeks of the Harveſt; but would he be content to wait always? O my ſenſual Heart! Is this Life of Hope as contentful to thee, as the Life of Viſion will be? Why doſt thou not groan within thy ſelf, that this Mortality might be ſwallowed up of Life? Doth not the Scripture deſcribe the Saints by their earneſt looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jeſus unto Eternal Life? Jude 21. *By their haſtening unto the coming of the day of God*, 2 Pet. 3. 12. What is the matter that my Heart hangs back? Doth guilt lye upon my Conſcience? Or have I gotten into a pleaſant condition in the World, which makes me ſay as *Peter* on the Mount, *It's good to be here*? Or want I the aſſurance of a better ſtate? Muſt God make all my Earthly Comforts die, before I ſhall be willing to die? Awake Faith, awake my Love; beat up the drowzy deſires of my Soul, that I may ſay, make haſte my Beloved, and come away.

## The POEM.

*No prudent Husbandman expects*
*The Fruit of what he ſows,*
*Till every cauſe have its effects;*
*And then he reaps and mows.*
*He works in hope the Year throughout,*
*And counts no labour loſt;*
*If when the Seaſon comes about,*
*His Harveſt quit his coſt.*
*His rare Example juſtly may*
*Rebuke and put to ſhame;*
*My Soul which ſows its Seed one day,*
*And looks to reap the ſame.*
*Is curſed Nature now become*
*So kind a Soyl to Grace,*
*That to perfection it ſhould come*
*Within ſo ſhort a ſpace.*
*Grace ſprings not up with ſpeed and eaſe,*
*Like Muſhrooms in a Night,*
*But rather by degrees increaſe,*
*As doth the Morning-light.*
*Is Corn ſo dear to Husbandmen?*
*Much more is Heaven to me,*
*Why ſhould not I have Patience then?*
*To wait as well as he.*
*To Promiſes appointed Years,*
*By God's Decrees are ſet;*
*Theſe once expir'd beyond its fears*
*My Soul ſhall quickly get.*
*How ſmall a part of haſty time*
*Which quickly will expire,*
*Doth me within this World confine,*
*And then comes my deſire.*
*Come, Lord, how long! my Soul hath gaſp'd,*
*Faith my Affections warms;*
*O when ſhall my poor Soul be claſp'd*
*In its Redeemers Arms.*
*The Time ſeems long, yet here I'll lye*
*'Till thou my God do call,*
*It is enough, Eternity*
*Will make amends for all.*

CHAP.

## CHAP. XV.

## Upon the Harveſt Seaſon.

*Corn fully ripe, is reap'd, and gather'd in,*
*So muſt your Selves, when ripe in Grace or Sin.*

### OBSERVATION.

WHen the Fields are white to Harveſt, then Husbandmen walk through them, rub the Ears; and finding the grain full and ſolid, they preſently prepare their Scythes and Sickles, ſend for their Harveſt-men, who quickly Reap and Mow them down; and after theſe follow the Binders, who ſtitch it up; from the Field where it grew its carryed to the Barn, where it is thraſhed out; the good Grain gathered into an heap, the Chaff ſeparated and burnt, or thrown to the Dunghil. How bare and naked do the Fields look after Harveſt, which before were pleaſant to behold? When the Harveſt-men enter into the Field, it is (to allude to that, *Joel* 2. 3.) before them, like the Garden of *Eden*, and behind them a deſolate Wilderneſs; and in ſome places it's uſual to ſet a Fire to the dry Stubble, when the Corn is houſed; which rages furiouſly, and covers all with Aſhes.

### APPLICATION.

THE Application of this, I find made to my Hands by Chriſt himſelf in Mat. 13. 38, 39. *The Field is the World; the good Seed are the Children of the Kingdom, the Tares are the Children of the wicked one, the Enemy that ſowed them is the Devil, the Harveſt is the end of the World, the Reapers are the Angels.*

The Field is the World; there both the godly and ungodly live and grow together, till they be both ripe, and then they ſhall both be reaped down by Death; Death is the Sickle that reaps down both. I will open this Allegory in the following Particulars.

1. In a catching Harveſt, when the Husbandman ſees the Clouds begin to gather and grow black, he hurries in his Corn with all poſſible haſte, and houſes day and night.

So doth God the great Husbandman, he hurries the Saints into their Graves, when Judgments are coming upon the World, *Iſa.* 57. 1. *The righteous periſh, and no Man layeth it to Heart, and merciful Men are taken away; none conſidering that the righteous is taken away from the Evil to come. Methuſelah* died the year before the Flood, *Auguſtine* a little before the Sacking of *Hippo*, *Pareus* juſt before the taking of *Heidelberge*, *Luther* a little before the Wars break out in *Germany*; but what ſpeak I of ſingle Saints? Sometimes the Lord Houſes great numbers together, before ſome ſweeping Judgment comes. How many bright and glorious Stars did ſet almoſt together, within the compaſs of a few years, to the aſtoniſhment of many wiſe and tender Hearts in *England*. I find ſome of them thus ranked in a Funeral *Elegy*.

*The Learned* Twiſſe *went firſt (it was his Right)*
*Then holy* Palmer, Burroughs, Love, Gouge, White,
Hill, Whitaker, *grave* Gataker, *and* Strong,
Perne, Marſhal, Robinſon, *all gone along.*
*I have not nam'd them half, their only Strife*
*Hath been (of late) who ſhould firſt part with Life.*
*Theſe few who yet ſurvive, ſick of this Age,*
*Long to have done their parts and leave the Stage.*

The Lord ſees it better for them to be underground than above-ground, and therefore by a merciful Providence ſets them out of harms way.

2. Neither the Corn, or Tares, can poſſibly reſiſt the ſharp and keen Sickle, when it's applyed to them by the Reapers Hand; neither can the godly or ungodly reſiſt the ſtroke of Death when God inflicts it, *Eccleſ.* 8. 8. *No man can keep alive his own Soul in the day of Death, and there is no diſcharge in that War.* The frail Body of Man is as unable to withſtand that ſtroke, as the weak Reeds, or feeble Stalks of the Corn are to reſiſt the keen Scythe and ſharp Sickle.

3. The Reapers receive the Wheat which they cut down, into their Arms and Boſome. Hence that expreſſion by way of imprecation upon the wicked, *Pſal.* 129. 7. *Let them be as the Graſs upon the Houſe-top, which withers before it grows up, wherewith the Mower filleth not his Hand, nor he that bindeth Sheaves, his Boſom.* Such withered Graſs are the wicked, who are never taken into the Reapers Boſom; but as ſoon as Saints are cut down by Death, they fall into the Hands and Boſoms of the Angels of God, who bear them in their Arms and Boſoms to God their Father, *Luke* 16. 22. For look, as theſe bleſſed Spirits did exceedingly rejoyce at their Converſion, *Luke* 15. 10. and thought it no diſhonour to miniſter to them whilſt they ſtood in the Field, *Heb.* 1. 14. So when they are cut down by death, they will rejoyce to be their Convoy to Heaven.

4. When the Corn and Weeds are reap'd or mowed down, they ſhall never grow any more in that Field; neither ſhall we ever return to live an Animal Life any more after death, *Job* 7. 9, 10. *As the Cloud is conſumed and vaniſheth away; ſo h that goeth down to the Grave, ſhall come up no more; he ſhall return no more to his Houſe, neither ſhall hi place know him any more.*

Laſtly, (to come home to the particular ſub-ject of this Chapter) the Reapers are never ſen to cut down the Harveſt, till it be fully ripe; neither will God reap down Saints or Sinners, ti they be come to a maturity of Grace or Wickedneſs. Saints are not reap'd down till their Grac be ripe, *Job* 5. 26. *Thou ſhalt come to thy Grave i a full Age, as a ſhock of Corn cometh in its Seaſo*
'Not that every godly Man dies in ſuch a fu
'old Age (ſaith Mr. *Caryl* on that place) but y
'in one Senſe it is an univerſal Truth, and eve
'fulfilled; for whenſoever they die, they die in
'good Age; yea, though they die in the Sprin
'and flower of their Youth, they die in a goo
'old Age, (*i. e.*) they are ripe for Death whe
'ever they die, When-ever a godly Man dies, i
'Harveſt time with him, though in a natural c
'pacity he be cut down while he is green, a
'cropt in the bud or bloſſom; yet in his ſpiritu
'Capacity, he never dies before he be ripe. G
'ripens him ſpeedily, when he intends to ta
'them out of the World ſpeedily; he can let o
'ſuch warm Rays and Beams of his Spirit up
'them, as ſhall ſoon maturate the Seeds of Gra
'into a preparedneſs for Glory.

The wicked alſo have their ripening time Hell and Judgment; God doth with much lo ſuffering endure the Veſſels of Wrath prep r Deſtruction. Of their ripeneſs for Judgment e Scripture often ſpeaks, *Gen.* 15. 16. *The ſin of e Amorites is not yet full.* And of *Babylon* it's aid, *Jer.* 51. 13. *O thou that dwelleſt upon many aters, thine end is come, and the meaſure of thy ovetouſneſs.*

'Tis worth remarking, that the meaſure of the in, and the end of the Sinner come together. So *oel* 3. 13. *Put ye in the ſickle, for the harveſt of the rth is ripe, for the preſs is full, the fats overflow, r their wickedneſs is great.* Where note, Sinners are ot cut down till they be ripe and ready. Indeed, hey are never ripe for death, nor ready for the Grave; that is, fit to die: Yet they are always ipe for wrath, and ready for Hell before they ie. Now as Husbandmen judge of the ripeneſs f their Harveſt, by the colour and hardneſs of he Grain; ſo may we judge of the ripeneſs both f Saints and Sinners, for Heaven or Hell, by heſe following Signs.

### *Three Signs of the Maturity of Grace.*

WHen the Corn is near ripe, it bows the head, and ſtoops lower than when it as green. When the People of God are near ipe for Heaven, they grow more humble and lf-denying, than in the days of their firſt Pro-ſſion. The longer a Saint grows in this World, e better he is ſtill acquainted with his own Heart, and his Obligations to God; both which e very humbling things. *Paul* had one foot in Heaven, when he called himſelf the chiefeſt of inners, and leaſt of Saints, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *Eph.* 3. . A Chriſtian in the progreſs of his Knowledge nd Grace, is like a Veſſel caſt into the Sea, the ore it fills, the deeper it ſinks. Thoſe that went Study at *Athens* (ſaith *Plutarch*) at firſt coming, eemed to themſelves to be wiſe Men; afterwards, nly Lovers of Wiſdom, and after that, only hetoricians, ſuch as could ſpeak of Wiſdom, but new little of it, and laſt of all, Ideots in their wn Apprehenſions; ſtill with the increaſe of earning, laying aſide their Pride and Arrogancy.

2. When Harveſt is nigh, the Grain is more lid and pithy than ever it was before; green orn is ſoft and ſpungy, but ripe Corn is ſubſtan-al and weighty: So it is with Chriſtians; the ffections of a young Chriſtian perhaps are more rverous and ſprightly, but thoſe of a grown hriſtian are more judicious and ſolid; their Love Chriſt abounds more and more in all Judgment, *hil.* 1. 9. The Limbs of a Child are more active d pliable, but as he grows up to a perfect ſtate, e parts are more conſolidated and firmly knit. he Fingers of an old Muſician are not ſo nimble, t he hath a more judicious Ear in Muſick, than his Youth.

3. When Corn is dead ripe, it's apt to fall of own accord to the ground, and there ſhed; hereby it doth as it were anticipate the Harveſt-an, and calls upon him to put in the Sickle. Not like to which are the lookings and longings, e groanings and haſtenings of ready Chriſtians their expected Glory; they haſten to the com-g of the Lord, or as *Montanus* more fitly renders They haſten the coming of the Lord; (*i. e.*) ey are urgent and inſtant in their deſires, and ies to haſten his coming; their deſires ſally rth to meet the Lord, they willingly take Death the Hand; as the Corn bends to the Earth, ſo theſe Souls to Heaven. This ſhews their Har-ſt to be near.

### *Six Signs of the Maturity of Sin.*

WHen Sinners are even dead ripe for Hell, theſe Signs appear upon them, or by theſe at leaſt, you may conclude thoſe Souls not to be far from wrath, upon whom they appear.

1. When Conſcience is waſted and grown paſt feeling, having no remorſe for ſin; when it ceaſes to check, reprove and ſmite for ſin any more, the day of that Sinner is at hand, his Harveſt is even come. The greateſt violation of Conſcience is the greateſt of ſins; this was the Caſe of the forlorn *Gentiles*, among whom Satan had ſuch a plentiful Harveſt; the patience of God ſuffered them to grow till their Conſciences were grown ſeared and paſt feeling, *Eph.* 4. 19. When a Member is ſo mortified, that if you lance and cut it never ſo much, no freſh Blood, or quick Fleſh appears, nor doth the Man feel any pain in all this, then 'tis time to cut it off.

2. When men give themſelves over to the ſatisfaction of their Luſts, to commit ſin with greedineſs, then are they grown to a maturity of Sin; when Men have ſlipt the Reins of Conſcience, and ruſh headlong into all Impiety, then the laſt Sands of God's patience are running down. Thus *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and the Cities about them, in like manner gave themſelves over to wickedneſs and ſtrange ſins; and then Juſtice quickly truſt them up for an example, ſuffering the vengeance of Eternal Fire.

3. That Man is even ripe for Hell, that is become a Contriver of ſin, a Deſigner, a Student in wickedneſs; one would think it ſtrange, that any Man ſhould ſet his Invention on work, upon ſuch a Subject, as ſin is; that any ſhould ſtudy to become a dextrous Artiſt this way, and yet the Scripture frequently ſpeaks of ſuch, *whoſe bellies prepare deceit*, Job 15. 35. *who travel in pain to bring forth*, this deformed Birth, *ver.* 20. *who wink with their eyes*, whilſt plodding wickedneſs, as Men uſe to do when they are moſt intent upon the Study of any knotty Problem, *Prov.* 6. 13. Theſe have ſo much of Hell already in them, that they are more than half in Hell already.

4. He that of a forward Profeſſor, is turn'd a bitter Perſecutor, is alſo within a few rounds of the top of the Ladder; the contempt of their light, the Lord hath already puniſhed upon them, in their obduracy and madneſs againſt the light. Reader, if thou be gone thus far, thou art almoſt gone beyond all hope of recovery. Towards other Sinners, God uſually exerciſes more patience, but with ſuch he makes ſhort work. When *Judas* turns Traytor to his Lord, he is quickly ſent to his own place. Such as are again intangled and overcome of thoſe Luſts they once ſeemed to have clean eſcaped, theſe bring upon themſelves ſwift Damnation, and their judgment lingers not, 2 *Pet.* 2. 3, 30.

5. He that can endure no reproof or controul in the way of his ſin, but derides all counſel, and like a ſtrong current rages at, and ſweeps away all obſtacles in his way, will quickly fall into the dead Lake, *Prov.* 29. 1. *He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy.* This is a Death-ſpot, a Hell-ſpot, where-ever it appears. From this very ſymptom the Prophet plainly predicted the approaching ruin of *Amaziah*, 2 *Chron.* 25. 16. *I know that God hath determined to deſtroy thee, becauſe thou haſt done this, and haſt not hearkened to my Voice.* He that

will not be timely counſelled, ſhall be quickly *deſtroyed.*

Laſtly, When a Man comes to glory in his Sin, and boaſt of his Wickedneſs, then it's time to cut him down; *whoſe end is deſtruction, whoſe glory is in their ſhame, Phil.* 3. 19. This is a braving, a daring of God to his Face, and with whomſoever he bears long, to be ſure theſe are none of them.

You ſee now what are the ſigns of a full ripe Sinner; and when it comes to this, either with a Nation, or with a ſingle Perſon, then ruin is near, *Joel* 3. 13. *Gen.* 15. 6. It is in the filling up of the meaſure of Sin, as in the filling of a Veſſel caſt into the Sea, which rowls from ſide to ſide, taking in the Water by little and little, till it be full, and then down it ſinks to the bottom. Mean, while, admirable is divine Patience, which bears with theſe Veſſels of Wrath, whilſt fitting for Deſtruction.

## REFLECTION.

The Reflection of a Growing Christian.

1. Chear thy ſelf, O my Soul! with the Heart-ſtrengthening Bread of this Divine Meditation. Let Faith turn every drop of this Truth into a Soul-reviving Cordial. God hath ſown the precious Seed of Grace upon my Soul; and though my Heart hath been an unkind Soyl which hath kept it back, and much hindered its growth, yet bleſſed be the Lord, it ſtill grows on, though by ſlow degrees; and from the ſpringing of the Seed, and ſhootings forth of thoſe gracious habits, I may conclude an approaching Harveſt: Now is my Salvation nearer than when I believed; every day I come nearer to my Salvation, *Rom.* 13. 11. O that every day I were more active for the God of my Salvation! Grow on my Soul, and add to thy Faith Vertue, to thy Vertue Knowledge, *&c.* Grow on from Faith to Faith; keep thy ſelf under the ripening influences of heavenly Ordinances; the faſter thou groweſt in Grace, the ſooner thou ſhalt be reaped down in Mercy, and bound up in the bundle of Life, 1 *Sam.* 25. 29. I have not yet attained the meaſure and proportion of Grace aſſigned to me, neither am I already perfect, but am reaching forth to the things before me, and preſſing towards the mark for the prize of my Heavenly Calling, *Phil.* 3. 12, 13. O Mercy to be admired! that I who lately had one Foot in Hell, ſtand now with one Foot in Heaven!

*The Reflection of the decaying Chriſtian.*

2. But the Caſe is far different with me, whilſt others are ripening apace for Heaven, I am withering; many a Soul plowed up by Conviction, and ſown by Sanctification long after me, hath quite over-topt and out-grown me; my ſweet and early Bloſſoms are nipt and blown off, my bright Morning over-caſt and clouded; had I kept on according to the rate of my firſt growth, I had either now been in Heaven, or at leaſt in the Suburbs of it on Earth; but my Graces wither and languiſh, my Heart contracts and cools to heavenly things; the Sun and Rain of Ordinances and Providence improve not my Graces; how ſad therefore is the ſtate of my Soul?

*The Reflection of a hardning Sinner.*

3. Thy Caſe, O declining Saint, is ſad! but not like mine; thine is but a temporary remiſſion of the Acts of Grace, which is recoverable; but I am judicially hardening, and *treaſuring up to my ſelf Wrath againſt the day of Wrath,* Rom. 2. 5. Time was, when I had ſome tender ſenſe of Sin, when I could mourn and grieve for it, now I have none at all. My heart is grown ſtupid and ſottiſh. Time was when I had ſome conſcientious care of Duty, and my Heart would ſmite me for the neglect of it; but now none at all. Wretched Soul! what wilt thou do? Thou are gone far indeed, a few ſteps further will put thee beyond hope; hitherto I ſtand in the Field, the long ſuffering God doth yet ſpare me; yea, ſpare me, while he hath cut down many of my Companions in Sin round about me. What doth this admirable Patience, this long-ſuffering drawn out to a wonder, ſpeak concerning me? Doth it not tell me, that the Lord is not willing I ſhould periſh, but rather come to Repentance? 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. And what Argument is like his Pity and Patience, to lead a Soul to Repentance? *Rom.* 2. 4. O that I may not fruſtrate at laſt, the end of a long-ſuffering God! leſt he proportion the degrees of his Wrath, according to the length of his Patience.

## The POEM.

*When Fields are white to Harveſt forth you go*
*With Scythes and Sickles to reap down and mow.*
*Down go the laden Ears flat to the Ground,*
*Which thoſe that follow having ſtitcht and bound,*
*It's carted home unto the Barn, and ſo*
*The Fields are rid where lately Corn did grow.*
*This World's the Field, and they that dwell therein;*
*The Corn and Tares, which long have ripening been.*
*Angels the Reapers, and the Judgment Day*
*The times of Harveſt, when like Corn and Hay,*
*The fading Flower of earthly Glory muſt*
*Be mow'd down, and levell'd with the duſt.*
*The Barns are Heaven and Hell; the time draws nigh*
*When through the darkned Clouds and troubled Sky*
*The Lord ſhall break, a dreadful Trumpet ſhall*
*Sound to the Dead, the Stars from Heaven fall.*
*The rowling Spheres with horrid flames ſhall burn,*
*And then the Tribes on Earth ſhall wail and mourn.*
*The Judgment ſet, before Chriſt's awful Throne*
*All Fleſh ſhall be conveen'd, and every one*
*Receive his Doom: which done, the juſt ſhall be*
*Bound in Lifes bundle; even as you ſee*
*The full ripe ears of Wheat bound up, and born*
*In Sheaves with joy unto the Owners Barn.*
*This done, the Angels next in bundles bind*
*The Tares together, as they had combin'd*
*In acting Sin, ſo now their lot muſt be*
*To burn together in one miſery.*
*Drunkards with Drunkards pinion'd ſhall be ſent*
*To Hell together in one Regiment.*
*Adulterers and Swearers there ſhall lye*
*In Flames among their old Society.*
*O dreadful howling! O the hideous moans*
*Of fetter'd Sinners! O the Tears! the Groans!*
*The doleful lamentation as they go,*
*Chain'd faſt together to their place of woe.*
*The world thus clear'd, as Fields when Harveſt's in,*
*Shall be no more a Stage for acting Sin.*
*With purifying Flames it ſhall be burn'd,*
*Its ſtately Fabricks into Aſhes turn'd.*
*Ceaſe then my Soul, to dote on, or admire*
*This ſplendid World, which is reſerv'd for Fire.*
*Decline the company of Sinners here,*
*As thou wouldſt not be ſhackel'd with them there.*

## CHAP. XVI.

## Upon the Care of Husbandmen to provide for Winter.

*Your Winter ſtore in Summer you provide;*
*To Chriſtian Prudence this muſt be apply'd.*

### OBSERVATION.

GOod Husbands are careful in Summer to provide for Winter, then they gather in their Winter ſtore; Food and Fewel for themſelves,and fodder for their Cattel. *He that gathers in Summer is a wiſe Son, but he that ſleeps in Harveſt is a Son that cauſes Shame*, Prov. 10. 5. A well choſen Seaſon is the greateſt advantage of any to Action, which as it is ſeldom found in haſte, ſo it is often loſt by delay. 'Tis a good Proverb which the frugal *Dutch* have among them; *Bonus Servatius, facit Bonum Bonifacium*; a good Saver, will make a good Benefactor. And 'tis a good Proverb of our own; he that neglects the occaſion, the occaſion will neglect him. Husbandmen know that Summer will not laſt all the year, neither will they truſt to the hopes of a mild and favourable Winter, but in ſeaſon provide for the worſt.

### APPLICATION.

WHat excellent Chriſtians ſhould we be,were we but as provident and thoughtful for our Souls? 'Tis doubtleſs a ſingular point of Chriſtian Wiſdom, to forſee a day of Spiritual Straits and Neceſſities, and during the day of Grace to make proviſion for it. This great Goſpel-truth is excellently ſhadowed forth in this natural Obſervation, which I ſhall branch out into theſe ſeven Particulars.

1. Husbandmen know there is a change and viciſſitude of Seaſons and Weather; though it be pleaſant Summer weather now, yet Winter will ead upon the heel of Summer: Froſts,Snows,and reat falls of Rains muſt be expected. This alter- at courſe of Seaſons in Nature is ſetled by a firm law of the God of Nature, to the end of the World, Gen. 8. 22. *Whilſt the Earth remaineth, ſeed- mes and harveſt, cold and heat, winter and ſummer, y and night, ſhall not ceaſe.*

And Chriſtians know, that there are changes in e Right-hand of the moſt High, in reference to eir Spiritual Seaſons. If there be a *Spring-time* the Goſpel, there will alſo be an *Autumn*; if a y of *Proſperity*, it will ſet in a Night of *Adverſity*; *God hath ſet the one over againſt the other*, Eccleſ.7. 4. In Heaven there is a day of everlaſting ſere- y, in a Hell a night of perfect endleſs horror d darkneſs; on Earth light and darkneſs take eir turns, Proſperity and Adverſity, even to uls as well as Bodies, ſucceed each other. If ere be a Goſpel-day, a day of Grace now cur- nt, it will have its period and determination, n. 3. 6.

2. Common Prudence and Experience inables e Husbandman in the midſt of Summer to fore- a Winter, and provide for it before he feel it; , natural Inſtinct teaches this to the very Birds the Air, and Beaſts of the Field.

And Spiritual Wiſdom ſhould teach Chriſtians exerciſe their foreſeeing Faculties, and not ſuf- them to feel Evil before they fear it. But O the ſtupifying nature of Sin! Though the Stork in the Heavens know her appointed time, and the Turtle, Crane and Swallow the time of their coming, yet Man, whom God hath made wiſer than the Fowls of the Air, in this acts quite below them, *Jer.* 8. 7.

3. The end of God's ordaining a Summer Seaſon, and ſending warm and pleaſant Weather, is to ripen the Fruits of the Earth,and give the Husbandman fit opportunity to gather them in.

And God's deſign in giving men a day of Grace, is to furniſh them with an opportunity for the everlaſting Happineſs and Salvation of their Souls, *Rev.* 2. 21. *I gave her a ſpace to repent.* It is not a meer reprieval of the Soul, or only a delay of the execution of threatned Wrath, though there be much Mercy in that; but the peculiar aim of this patience and bounty of God, is to open for them a way to eſcape the wrath to come, *by leading them to Repentance*, Rom. 2. 4.

4. The Husbandman doth not find all Harveſt-ſeaſons a like favourable, ſometimes they have much fair weather, and meet with no hindrance in their buſineſs; other times 'tis a catching-harveſt, but now and then a fair day, and then they muſt be nimble, or all is loſt.

There is alſo great difference in Soul-ſeaſons, ſome have had a long and fair ſeaſon of Grace; a hundred and twenty years did God wait upon the old World, in the Miniſtry of *Noah*. Long did God wait on the gainſaying *Iſraelites*, Iſa. 42. 14. *I have a long time held my Peace, I have been ſtill and refrained my ſelf.* Others have a ſhort and catching Seaſon, all lies upon a day, upon a nick of time, *Acts* 17. 30.

5. A proper ſeaſon neglected and loſt, is irrecoverable. Many things in Husbandry muſt be done in their ſeaſon, or cannot be done at all for that year; if he plow not, and ſow not in the proper time, he loſes the Harveſt of that Year.

'Tis even ſo as to ſpiritual ſeaſons,Chriſt neglected, and Grace deſpiſed, in the Seaſon when God offers them, are irrecoverably loſt, *Prov.* 1. 28. then (that is, when the ſeaſon is over) they ſhall call upon me, but I will not hear. O, there is a great deal of time in a ſhort opportunity! that may be done or prevented, in an hour rightly timed, which cannot be done or prevented in a Mans Life-time afterwards. There was one reſolved to kill *Julius Cæſar* ſuch a day; the night before, a Friend ſent him a Letter to acquaint him with it, but he being at Supper, and buſie in Diſcourſe, ſaid, To morrow is a new day, and indeed it was, *dies noviſſima*, his laſt day to him; whence it became a Proverb in *Greece*, *To morrow is a new day.* Our Glaſs runs in Heaven, and we cannot ſee how much or little of the Sand of God's patience is yet to run down; but this is certain,when that Glaſs is run, there is nothing to be done for our Souls, *Luke* 19. 42. *O that thou hadſt known, at leaſt, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine Eyes.*

6. Thoſe Husbandmen that are careful and laborious in the Summer, have the comfort and benefit of it in Winter; he that then provides Fewel, ſhall ſit warm in his Habitation, when others blow their Fingers. He that provides Food for his Family, and Fodder for his Cattel in the Harveſt, ſhall eat the Fruit of it, and enjoy the Comfort of his Labours, when others ſhall be expoſed to ſhifts and ſtraits. And he that provides for Eternity, and lays up for his Soul a good Foundation againſt the

the time to come, ſhall eat when others are hungry, and ſing when others howl, *Iſa.* 65. 13. A day of Death will come, and that will be a day of ſtraits to all negligent Souls; but then the diligent Chriſtian ſhall enjoy the Peace and Comfort that ſhall flow in upon his Heart, from his holy Care and ſincere diligence in Duties; as 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *This is our rejoycing, the teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in all Sincerity and godly Simplicity, we have had our Converſation in this World.* So *Hezekiah,* 2 Kings 20. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart.* A day of Judgment will come, and then fooliſh Virgins, who neglected the ſeaſon of getting Oyl in their Lamps, will be put to their ſhifts; then they come to the wiſe, and ſay, Give us of your Oyl, *Matt.* 25. 8, 9. but they have none to ſpare, and the ſeaſon of buying is then over.

7. No wiſe Husbandman will neglect a fit opportunity of gathering in his Hay and Corn, upon a preſumption of much fair weather to come; he will not ſay, The weather is ſettled, and I need not trouble my ſelf, though my Corn and Hay be fit for the Houſe, yet I may get it in another time as well as now.

And no wiſe Chriſtian will loſe a preſent ſeaſon for his Soul, upon the hopes of much more time, yet to come; but will rather ſay, Now is my time, and I know not what will be hereafter; hereafter I may wiſh to ſee one of the days of the Son of Man, and not ſee it, *Luke* 17. 22. 'Tis ſad to hear how cunning ſome Men are to diſpute themſelves out of Heaven, as if the Devil had hired them to plead againſt their own Souls; ſometimes urging the example of thoſe that were called at the eleventh hour, *Mat.* 20. 6. and ſometimes that of the penitent Thief: But, O! to how little purpoſe is the former pleaded; they that were called at the eleventh hour, were never called before, as theſe have been; no man had hired, that is, called or invited them to Chriſt, and for the Thief, (as Mr. *Fenner* rightly obſerves) it was a ſingular and extraordinary Example. It was done when Chriſt hang'd on the Croſs, and was to be Inaugurated; then Kings manifeſt ſuch Bounty, and pardon ſuch Crimes, as are never pardoned afterwards. Beſides, God was then in a way of working Miracles; then he rent the Rocks, open'd the Graves, raiſed the Dead, and converted this Thief; but God is now out of that way.

## REFLECTIONS.

The Careleſs Souls Reflection.

1. I have indeed been a good Husband for the World; with what Care and Providence have I looked out for my ſelf and Family, to provide Food to nouriſh them, and Cloaths to defend them againſt the Aſperities of Winter? Mean while, neglecting to make proviſion for Eternity, or take care for my Soul. O my deſtitute Soul! how much have I ſlighted and undervalued thee? I have taken more care for an Horſe, or an Ox, than for thee; a well-ſtored Barn, but an empty Soul. Will it not ſhortly be with me, as with that careleſs Mother, who, when her Houſe was on fire, buſily beſtir'd her ſelf to ſave the Goods, but forgot the Child? (though it were ſaved by another hand) and then minding her Child, ran up and down like one diſtracted, wringing her Hands, and crying, O my Child, my Child! I have ſaved my Goods, and loſt my Child. Such will be the caſe of thee, my Soul, *Mat* 16. 26. Beſides, how eaſie will my Conviction be at the bar of Chriſt? Will not my Providence and Care for the things of this Life, leave me ſpeechleſs and ſelf-condemned in that day? What ſhall I anſwer when the Lord ſhall ſay, Thou could'ſt foreſee a Winter, and ſeaſonably provide for it? Yea, thou hadſt ſo much care of thy very Beaſts, to provide for their Neceſſities; And why tookeſt thou no care for thy Soul? Was that only not worth the caring for?

The Preſumptuous Soul's Reflection.

2. Is it ſo dangerous to neglect a preſent proper ſeaſon of Grace? What then have I done, who have ſuffered many ſuch ſeaſons to dye away in my hand, upon a groundleſs hope of future opportunities? Ah, deluded Wretch! what if that ſuppoſition fail? Where am I then? I am not the Lord of time, neither am I ſure, that he who is, will ever vouchſafe an hour of Grace in old Age, to him that hath neglected many ſuch hours in youth; neither indeed is it ordinary for God ſo to do. 'Tis ſtoried of *Caius Marius Victorius,* who lived about Three hundred years after Chriſt, and to his Old Age continued a *Pagan,* but at laſt being convinced of the Chriſtian verity, he came to *Simplicianus,* and told him, He would be a Chriſtian; but neither he, nor the Church could believe it, it being ſo rare an Example for any to be converted at his Age: But at laſt, ſeeing it was real, there was a ſhouting and gladneſs, and ſinging of Pſalms in all Churches, the People crying, *Caius Marius Victorius* is become a Chriſtian. This was written for a wonder, and what ground have I to think, that God will work ſuch wonders for me, who have neglected his ordinary means of Salvation?

The Induſtrious Soul's Reflection.

3. Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul! who gave thee a ſeaſon, a day for Eternal Life, which is more than he hath done for thouſands; yea, bleſs the Lord for giving thee an Heart to underſtand and improve that ſeaſon. I confeſs I have not improved it as I ought; yet, this I can, (through Mercy) ſay, that however it fare in future times, with my outward Man, tho' I have no Treaſures or Stores laid up on Earth; or if I have, they are but corruptible, yet I have a bleſſed hope laid up in Heaven, *Col.* 1. 5. I have Bags that wax not old. Whilſt worldlings rejoyce in their ſtores and heaps, I rejoyce in theſe Eternal Treaſures.

## The POEM.

*OBſerve in Summers ſultry heat,*
*How in the hotteſt day,*
*The Husbandman doth toyl and ſweat*
*About his Corn and Hay.*
*If then he ſhould not reap and mow,*
*And gather in his ſtore,*
*How ſhould he live, when for the Snow*
*He can't move out of door?*
*The little Ants and painful Bees,*
*By Nature's inſtinct led;*
*Theſe have their Summer Granaries,*
*For Winter furniſhed.*
*But thou, my Soul, whoſe Summers day*
*Is almoſt paſt and gone;*
*What Soul-Proviſion doſt thou lay*
*In ſtock to ſpend upon?*

*If Nature teacheth to prepare,*
*For Temporal Life, much rather*
*Grace ſhould provoke to greater care,*
*Soul-food in time to gather.*
*Days of affliction and diſtreſs*
*Are haſting on apace,*
*If now I live in careleſſneſs,*
*How ſad will be my caſe:*
*Unworthy of the name of Man,*
*Who for that Soul of thine;*
*Wilt not do that which others can*
*Do for their very Kine.*
*Think frugal Farmers, when you ſee*
*Your Mows of Corn and Hay;*
*What a conviction this will be*
*To you another day.*
*Who ne're were up before the Sun,*
*Nor break an hours reſt*
*For your poor Souls, as you have done*
*So often for a Beaſt.*
*Learn once to ſee the difference,*
*Betwixt eternal things,*
*And theſe poor tranſient things of ſence*
*That fly with Eagles wings.*

## CHAP. XVII.

## Upon Reaping the ſame we Sow.

*When with Tare-Seeds you ſee choice Wheat to grow,*
*Then from your Luſts may Joy and Comfort flow.*

### OBSERVATION.

GOD gives to every Seed its own Body, 1 *Cor.* 15. 38. At firſt he Created every Tree and Herb of the Field, having its Seed in it ſelf, for the Conſervation of the *ſpices*, and they all inviolably obſerve the Law of their Creation. All Fruits naturally riſe out of the Seeds and Roots proper to them. *Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of Thiſtles.* Such productions would be monſtrous in Nature; and altho' the Juice or Sap of the Earth be the common matter of all kind of Fruits, yet it is ſpecificated according to the different ſorts of Plants and Seeds it nouriſhes. Where Wheat is ſown, it's turned into Wheat; in an Apple-tree, it becomes an Apple; and ſo in every ſort of Plants or Seeds, it's concocted into Fruit proper to the kind.

### APPLICATION.

TRanſlate this into Spiritual, and the Propoſition ſhadowed forth by it, is fully expreſſed by the Apoſtle, Gal. 6. 7. *What a man ſows, that ſhall be reap; they that ſow to the fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption; and they that ſow to the ſpirit, ſhall of the ſpirit reap life everlaſting.* And as ſure s the Harveſt follows the Seed-time, ſo ſure ſhall uch fruits and effects reſult from the Seeds of ſuch ctions. *He that ſoweth iniquity, ſhall reap vanity,* Prov. 22. 8. *And they that now go forth weeping, nd bearing precious ſeed, ſhall doubtleſs come again joycing, bringing their Sheaves with them,* Pſal. 1. 26.

. The ſum of all is this, That our preſent actions ave the ſame reſpect and relation to future Reards and Puniſhments, as the Seed we ſow in our ields, hath to the Harveſt we reap from it. Evey gracious action is the Seed of Joy, and every nful action the Seed of anguiſh and ſorrow, to the Soul that ſowed it. Two things are ſenſibly preſented to us in this ſimilitude.

1. That as the Seed ſown is preſently covered from our ſight under the clods, and for ſome time after we ſee no more of it, and yet at laſt it appears again, by which it's evident to us, that it is not finally loſt: So our preſent actions, though *Phyſically* tranſient, and perhaps forgotten, yet are not loſt, but after a time ſhall appear again, in order to a retribution.

If this were not ſo, all good and holy actions would be to the loſs of him that performed them. All the ſelf-denial, ſpending Duties, and ſharp ſufferings of the People of God, would turn to their damage; though not in point of honeſty, yet in point of perſonal utility; and then alſo, what difference would there be betwixt the actions of a Man and a Beaſt, with reſpect to future good or evil? Yea, Man would then be more feared and obeyed than God, and Souls be ſwayed in all their motions, only by the influence of preſent things; and where then would Religion be found in the World? 'Tis an excellent note of *Drexellius*; "Our works (ſaith he) "do not paſs away as ſoon as they "are done, but as Seed ſown, ſhall "after a time, riſe up to all Eternity; whatever we think, ſpeak or do, once ſpoken, thought or done, is Eternal, and abides for ever.

Drexellius *de æternitate prope fin.*

What *Zeuxes*, the Famous *Limner*, ſaid of his Work, may be truly ſaid of all our Works; *Æternitati pingo*, I Paint for Eternity. O, how careful ſhould Men be of what they ſpeak and do, whilſt they are commanded ſo to ſpeak, and ſo to do, as thoſe that ſhall be judged by the perfect Law of liberty, *Jam.* 2. 12. What more tranſient than a vain word? And yet for ſuch words, Men ſhall give an account in the day of Judgment, *Mat.* 12. 36. That's the firſt thing; Actions, like Seed, ſhall riſe and appear again in order to a retribution.

2. The other thing held forth in this ſimilitude is, That according to the nature of our actions now, will be the fruit and reward of them then. Though the fruit or conſequence of holy actions, for the preſent may ſeem bitter, and the fruit of ſinful actions ſweet and pleaſant, yet there is nothing more certain, than that their future fruits ſhall be according to their preſent nature and quality, 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. Then *Dioniſius* ſhall retract that ſaying, *Ecce quam proſpera navigatio à Deo datur ſacrilegis*, Behold how God favours our Sacriledges. Sometimes indeed (though but rarely) God cauſes Sinners to reap in this World, the ſame that they have ſown; as hath been their Sin, ſuch hath been their Puniſhment. It was openly confeſſed by *Adonibezek*, *Judg.* 1. 7. as I have done, ſo hath God requited me.

*Socrates* in his Church Hiſtory furniſhes us with a pertinent paſſage to this purpoſe, concerning *Valens* the Emperor, who was an *Arrian*, and a bitter Perſecutor of the Chriſtians: This man, when eighty of the Orthodox Chriſtians ſailed from *Conſtantinople* to *Nicomedia*, to treat with him about the Points of *Arrianiſm*, and to ſettle the matter by way of diſpute; the Emperor hearing of their arrival, while they were yet in the Harbour, and not a man landed, cauſed the Ships to be fired wherein they were, and ſo conſumed them all. Not long after, in his Wars againſt the *Goths*, he was overthrown; and hiding himſelf in a little Cottage, the Enemy coming by, burnt it and him together. Thus this Wretch reap'd what he ſowed, burning for burning, the very ſame in kind paid him again; it is not always ſo in this World, but ſo it ſhall be in that to come; the Table ſhall then be turned, and the *Scene* altered; for ſhall not the Judge of all the World do righteouſly? *Diogenes* was tempted to think, that God had caſt off the Government of the World, when he ſaw the wicked proſper in their wickedneſs. On the ſame ground many have been tempted to *Atheiſm*; but then the World ſhall ſee diſtributive Juſtice ſhining out in its glory. *Tribulation, anguiſh and wrath, to every ſoul of man that doth evil; but glory, honour and peace, to every man that worketh good*, Rom. 2. 9, 10. Then 'twill appear what Seed we ſowed, what lives we lived; *For God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good or evil*, Ecclef. 12. 14.

*Cum video mala fata bonis, ignoſcite quæſo: Sollicitor nullos eſſe putare Deos* Ovid.

## REFLECTIONS.

The Profane Perſon's Reflection.

1. This Meditation may be to me what the Hand-writing upon the Wall was to that profane Prince, *Dan.* 5. 5, 6. and a like effect it ſhould have upon me; for if all the actions of this Life be Seed ſown for the next, Lord, what a Crop, what a dreadful Harveſt am I like to have? How many Oaths and Curſes, Lies and vain Words, have I ſown with my Tongue? How have I wronged, oppreſſed, and over-reached in my Dealings? Ruſhed into all Profaneneſs, Drunkenneſs, Uncleanneſs, Sabbath-breaking, *&c. as the horſe ruſheth into the battle*; and what ſhall I reap from ſuch Seed as this, but vengeance and fury? Theſe ſins ſeemed pleaſant in the Commiſſion, but O, how bitter will they be in their account? *What ſhall I do when God riſeth up? and when he viſiteth, what ſhall I anſwer him?* Job 31. 14. Is it not reaſonable and juſt, (O my Soul) that thou ſhouldeſt eat the fruit of thine own planting, and reap what thou haſt ſown? I thought nothing but profit and pleaſure would ſpring from my Luſts, but now I ſee 'tis a Root bearing Gall and Wormwood, *Deut.* 29. 18. Wretched Soul, what ſhall I do? If theſe actions be not, then am I undone. I have been the Author of mine own Ruin, twiſted an Halter with mine own Fingers, for the execution of mine own Soul! O, let me rather taſte the bitterneſs of ſin, by Repentance now, than joy its preſent pleaſures, which betray the Soul to endleſs wrath?

The Moral Man's Reflection.

2. How have I alſo been deceived in this matter? I verily thought that Glory and Immortality would have been the fruit and product of my Moral Honeſty and Righteouſneſs, that joy and peace had been ſeminally contained in thoſe actions; but now I ſee ſuch Fruit can ſpring from no other Root but ſpecial Grace. Glory is diſcloſed from no other Bud but Holineſs. Alas! all my planting and ſowing was to little purpoſe, becauſe I ſowed not the right kind of Seed; the beſt Fruit I can expect from this, is but a leſſer degree of Damnation.

Deluded Soul, thy Seed is no better than what the *Moral Heathens* ſowed; and do I expect better Fruit than what they reaped? Civility without Chriſt, is but a freer Slavery; and Satan holds me as faſt in Captivity by this, as he doth the prophane by the pleaſure of their Luſts; either I muſt ſow better Seed, or look to reap bitter Fruit.

The Holy Soul's Reflection.

3. Mean while, bleſs the Lord (O my Soul) who inabled thee to ſow better Seed! Who kept thee watching, humbling thy ſelf, and praying, whilſt others have been Swearing, Drinking and Blaſpheming. This will yield thee the Fruit of Joy in the World to come; yea, it already yields preſent peace to thy Conſcience. Theſe Revenues are better than Gold, ſweeter than the Honey, and the Honey-comb; not that ſuch Fruits are meritoriouſly contained in theſe actions, I ſow to my ſelf in Righteouſneſs, but I reap in Mercy, *Hoſ.* 10. 12. This is the way in which God will ſave and Glorifie me. O then, let me be ever abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that my Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.

## The POEM.

*'TWould be a ſtrange and monſtrous thing to ſee*
*Cherries, or Plumbs grow on an Apple-tree.*
*Whoever gather'd from the Thiſtle, Figs?*
*Or fruitful Grapes from off the worthleſs Twigs*
*Of pricking Thorns? in nature ſtill we find*
*All its productions anſwering to their kind.*
*As are the Plants we ſet, or Seeds we ſow;*
*Such is the Fruit we ſhake, and Corn we mow.*
*And canſt thou think that from Corruptions root,*
*Thy Soul ſhall pluck the ſweet and pleaſant Fruit*
*Of ſpiritual peace? who ever that was wiſe,*
*Abus'd himſelf with ſuch abſurdities?*
*Look what you ſow, the very ſame you'll reap,*
*The Fruit of what you plant be ſure you'll eat.*
*How are they baffled by a ſubtle Devil?*
*That hopes for Heaven, whilſt their ways are evil.*
*Such reaſonings here their credulous Souls beguile,*
*At which in other things themſelves would ſmile.*
*Our preſent acts though ſlightly paſſed by,*
*Are ſo much Seed ſown for Eternity.*
*The Seeds of Prayers, ſecret Groans and Tears?*
*Will ſhoot at laſt into the full blown ears*
*Of Peace and Joy. Bleſſed are they that ſow*
*Beſide theſe* Waters, *yea, thrice bleſt that go*
*Bearing ſuch precious Seed; though now they mourn,*
*With Joyful Sheaves they ſhortly ſhall return.*
*Needs muſt the full ripe Fruits in Heaven be good,*
*When as the Seed was glory in the bud.*
*But O, the bitter, baneful Fruits of ſin!*
*When all the pleaſure Sinners have therein,*
*Like faded Bloſſoms to the ground ſhall fall,*
*Then they will taſte the Wormwood and the Gall.*
*What God and Conſcience now of ſin report,*
*You ſlight, and with their dreadful threatnings ſport.*
*But he'll convince you then your ways were naught,*
*As* Gideon *the men of* Succoth *taught.*
*If Sermons cannot, Fire and Brimſtone muſt*
*Teach men how good it is to pamper Luſt.*
*When Conſcience takes thee by the Throat, and cries,*
*Now Wretch, now Sinner, thou that didſt deſpiſe*
*My warnings; learn, and ever learning be*
*That Leſſon, which thou ne're wouldſt learn of me.*
*The ſtouteſt Sinner then would howl and roar,*
*O ſin! I never ſaw thy face before.*
*Is this the fruit of ſin? is this the place*
*Where I muſt lye? is this indeed the caſe*
*Of my poor Soul! muſt I be bound in Chains*
*With theſe Companions? Oh, is this the gains*
*I get by ſin? poor Wretch, I that would never*
*See this before, am now undone for ever.*

## CHAP. XVIII.

### Upon the Joy of Harveſt men.

*Great is the Joy of Harveſt-men, yet leſs*
*Than theirs, whom God doth with his favour bleſs.*

### OBSERVATION.

AMong all Earthly Joys, theſe four ſorts are noted in Scripture, as the moſt excellent and remarkable. (1.) *Nuptial Joys*, the day of Eſpouſals is the day of the gladneſs of a man's Heart, *Cant.* 3. 11. (2.) *The Joy of Children*; Though now it ſeems but a common *Mercy* to moſt, and a burden to ſome, yet the people of God were wont to eſteem it a choice *Mercy*, and rejoyced greatly in it, *John* 16. 21. there's joy that a man is Born into the World. (3.) *The Joy of Conqueſts and Victories*, when men divide the Spoyl. And laſtly, *The Joy of Harveſt*; theſe two we find put together as principal matters of joy, *Iſa.* 9. 3. *The joy before thee, according to the joy in Harveſt, and as men rejoyce when they divide the ſpoil.* The joy of Harveſt is no ſmall joy; *Gaudium meſſis, eſt meſſis gaudii*; the joy of Harveſt, is the Harveſt of their joy. 'Tis uſual with men, when they have reaped down their Harveſt, (or cut the neck, as they call it) to demonſtrate their joy by ſhouting, and loud acclamations.

### APPLICATION.

THus, and unſpeakable more than thus, do Saints rejoyce and ſhout for joy, when they reap the favour and love of God, for which they laboured in many a weary Duty. This Joy of Harveſt, as great as it is, and as much as carnal hearts are lifted up with it, is but a trifle, a thing of nought, compared with yours; after they have ſown to themſelves in Righteouſneſs, and waited for the effects and returns of their Duties with patience, and at laſt come to reap in Mercy, either the full Harveſt in Heaven, or but the Firſt-fruits of it on Earth, yet rejoyce, *with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8. *This puts more gladneſs into their hearts, than when Corn and Wine increaſes*, Pſal. 4. 7. Carnal Joys are but Soul-Fevers, the Agues of the inner Man; there is a great difference betwixt the unnatural Inflamations of a Feveriſh Body which waſtes the Spirits, and drinks up the Radical moiſture; and the kindly well tempered heat of an healthy Body; and as much between the ſweet, ſerene and heavenly Joys, which flow from the Boſom of Chriſt into the hearts of Believers, and thoſe earthly delights which carnal hearts in a ſenſual way ſuck out of Creature-enjoyments. I will ſhew you the trancendency of ſpiritual Joys, above the Joy of Harveſt, in theſe eight Particulars following.

1. You that Joy with the Joy of Harveſt, are ad, becauſe now you have Food for your ſelves d Families to live upon all the year; but the hriſtian rejoyceth, becauſe he hath Bread to eat t the World knows not of, *Rev.* 2. 17. Chriſt the Food of his Soul, and his Fleſh is Meat ined, and his Blood drink indeed, *John* 5. 55. . e.) the moſt real and excellent Food. You d, *Pſal.* 78. 25. that man did eat Angels Food . e.) *Manna*, which was ſuch excellent Bread, that if Angels did live upon material Food, this would be choſen for them; and yet this is but a type and dark ſhadow of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Food of Believers.

2. You rejoyce when your Harveſt is in, becauſe Corn is virtually many other things beſides Food; you can turn it into Cloaths to keep you warm, and many other neceſſaries may be purchaſed by it: But yet it is not like Chriſt, the object of a Saints Joy; though it anſwers many things, it doth not anſwer all things as Chriſt doth; turn it into what you will, it hath but a limitive and reſpective uſefulneſs: But Jeſus Chriſt is all in all to Believers, and out of him their Faith can fetch all ſupplies; he is their health in ſickneſs, their ſtrength in weakneſs, their eaſe in pain, their honour in reproach, their wealth in poverty, their Friend in Friendleſneſs, their habitation when harbourleſs, their enlargement in bonds, the ſtrength of their hearts, and life of their life. O, he is a full Chriſt, and whatever excellencies are ſcattered among all the Creatures, do meet all in him, and much more.

3. You rejoyce when you have gotten in your Harveſt, becauſe now you can free thoſe Engagements, and pay thoſe Debts which you have contracted. 'Tis a comfort to be out of Debt, and you may lawfully rejoyce that God gives you wherewith to quit your Engagements, that you may owe no Man any thing but love: But ſtill the joy of Harveſt falls ſhort of the Joy of Saints; for you rejoyce that you are, or have wherewith to help your ſelves out of mens Debts: But they rejoyce that they are out of God's Debt; that his Book is cancelled, and their Sins pardoned; that by reaſon of the imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, the Law can demand nothing from them, *Rom.* 8. 1. O, what matter of Joy is this!

4. You rejoyce, becauſe now your Corn is out of danger, all the while it was abroad it was in hazard, but now it's houſed you fear not the Rain. But Chriſtians rejoyce, not becauſe their Corn is ſafe, but becauſe their Souls are ſo. All the while they abode in an unregenerate ſtate, they were every moment in danger of the ſtorms of wrath; but now being in Chriſt, that danger is over; and what compare is there betwixt the ſafety of a little Corn, and the ſecurity of an Immortal Soul?

5. Your Joy is but in a gift of common Providence. *Turks* and *Heathens* can rejoyce with your Joy, but the Joy of a Chriſtian is a peculiar favour and gift of God. Corn is given to all Nations, even the moſt barbarous and wicked have ſtore of it; but Chriſt is the portion but of a few, and thoſe the dearly beloved of God. *Luther* ſaid of the whole *Turkiſh Empire* (where is the beſt and greateſt ſtore of Corn) that it is but a Crumb which the Maſter of the Family throws to the Dogs. He that had more Corn than his Barns could hold, now wants a drop of Water to cool his Tongue. Chriſt is a Gift beſtowed only upon God's Elect.

6. Your Joy will have an end; the time is coming, that when you have reaped down your Harveſts, your ſelves muſt be reaped down by death, and then you ſhall rejoyce in theſe things no more; but when your joy is ended, then is the joy of Saints perfected; they reap their Harveſt, when you leave your Harveſt; their Conſolation is everlaſting.

7. God can ſeparate your Joy from theſe Enjoyments, even while you have them, as well as when you leave them. 'Tis one thing for a Man to have Riches and full Barns, and another thing to have comfort in them, *Eccleſ.* 5. 19, 20. But now the Joy of Chriſtians is a thing inſeperable from their enjoyment of Chriſt; indeed the ſenſe of their intereſt may be loſt, and ſo the Acts of their Joy intermitted; but they always have it in the Seed, if not in the Fruit, *Pſal.* 97. 11. *Joy is ſown for the upright;* he hath it ſtill in the Principle, and in the Promiſe.

The Joy of Harveſt-men, for the moſt part, is only in their Harveſt, and in ſuch earthly things; take that away, and their Joy ceaſes. Earthly Hearts are acquainted with no higher Comforts; but the people of God can Joy in him, and take Comfort in their Earthly Injoyments too; and what Comfort they take in theſe things, is much more refined and ſweet than yours; for they enjoy all theſe things in God, and his love in giving them, puts a ſweetneſs into them, that you are unacquainted with. Thus you ſee, how far your Joy falls ſhort of theirs.

## REFLECTIONS.

*A Reflection for one that hath a full Barn, but no Chriſt.*

1. How have I rejoyced in a thing of nought, and pleaſed my ſelf with a vanity? God hath bleſſed me in my Fields, and in my Stores; but not with Spiritual Bleſſings in Heavenly places in Chriſt. My Barns are full of Corn, but my Soul is empty of Grace; common Bounty hath given me a fulneſs of the things of this Life, but what if the meaning of it ſhould be to fat me for the day of ſlaughter? What if this be the whole of my Portion from the Lord? What if the Language of his Providences to my Soul ſhould be this? Lo here I have given thee (with *Iſhmael*) the fatneſs of the Earth: Thou ſhalt not ſay, but thou haſt taſted of thy Creator's Bounty; but make the moſt of it, for this is all that ever thou ſhalt have from me: There be others in the World, to whom I have denyed theſe things, but for them I have reſerved better; for the moſt part they are poor in this World, but rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom? Is not this enough to damp all my carnal mirth? Should my Conſcience give me ſuch a *momento,* as *Abraham* in the Parable gave to *Dives; Remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things.* Ah, what a cut would that be to all my Comforts? A man in a Fever hath a lively Colour, but a dying Heart. I have an appearance, a ſhadow of Comfort, but a ſad ſtate of Soul.

*A Reflection for one that hath Chriſt but no Barn.*

2. *Bleſſed be the God the Father of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed me with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt,* Eph. 1. 3. Though he hath not ſeen fit to give me much of this World in hand, yet it hath pleaſed him to ſettle a Rich Inheritance upon me by Promiſe; the hopes and expectations whereof, yield my Soul more true Comfort than all the preſent Enjoyments of this world could have done. Bleſſed be the Lord, who hath not given me my portion in this Life, that by keeping me from the *Enjoyment,* hath alſo preſerved me from the *Snares* of a proſperous Eſtate.

Lord Jeſus, I have no Bags, I have no Barns; but thou ſhalt be to me inſtead of thoſe things. When others rejoyce in the fulneſs of their Earthly Comforts, I will rejoyce in the fulneſs of my Chriſt; they have that which (though I have not) I ſhall not want; and I have that which all their Riches cannot purchaſe. Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul!

*A Reflection for one that hath a full Barn, and Chriſt too.*

But Lord, how am I obliged, above Thouſands, to love and praiſe thee? to bleſs and admire thee, who haſt not only plentifully provided for my Soul, but for my Body too. Who haſt given me both the upper and the neither Springs, Heaven and Earth, things preſent, and things to come: Thou haſt not dealt ſo with all, no, not with all of thy own people; many of them are Strangers to the mercies which I enjoy. God hath done great things for me, O my Soul! What wilt thou do for God? The freer the condition is, he hath placed me in, the more am I both obliged and advantaged for his ſervice; and yet I doubt it will be found, that many a poor Chriſtian that labours with his Hands to get his Bread, redeems more hours for God than I do. Lord, make me wiſe to underſtand, and anſwer the double end of this gracious diſpenſation? Let me beſtow the more of my time on God, and ſtand ready to miniſter to the Neceſſities of his People.

*A Reflection for one that hath neither a Barn, nor a Chriſt.*

4. Oh! what an unhappy Wretch am I! that have nothing either in hand, or in hope; am miſerable here, and like to be ſo for ever: Had I but an Intereſt in Chriſt, as the godly poor have, that would ſweeten all preſent troubles, and ſhew me the end of them. But alas! I am poor and wicked, contemned of Men, and abhorred of God; an object of contempt both to Heaven and Earth. Lord, look upon ſuch a truly miſerable Object with Compaſſion, give me a portion with thy people in the World to come, if thou never better my outward condition here! O ſanctifie this poverty! bleſs theſe ſtraits and wants, that they may neceſſitate my Soul to go to Chriſt; make this poverty the way to glory, and I ſhall bleſs thee to Eternity that I was poor in this World.

## The POEM.

*OFT have I ſeen when Harveſt's almoſt in,*
*The laſt load coming, how ſome Men have bin*
*Rapt up with joy, as if that welcome Cart*
*Drew home the very treaſure of their heart.*
*What joyful ſhoutings! hooping! hollowing noiſe,*
*With mingled voices both of Men and Boys?*
*To carnal minds there is no greater mirth,*
*No higher joy, nor greater heaven on earth.*
*He ſpeaks pure Paradoxes, that ſhall ſay*
*Theſe are but trifles to what Saints enjoy.*
*But they deſpiſe your ſparks, as much as you*
*Contemn their Sun. Some that could never ſhew*
*A full ſtuft Barn, on which you ſet your heart;*
*But glean perhaps the ears behind your Cart:*
*Yet are the gleanings of their comfort more,*
*Than all your Harveſt, and admired ſtore.*
*Your mirth is mixt with ſorrow, theirs is pure,*
*Yours like a ſhadow fleets, but theirs endure.*
*God gives to you the husk, to them the pith;*
*And no heart-ſtinging ſorrow adds therewith.*
*Though at the Gates of death they ſometimes mourn,*
*No ſooner doth the Lord to them return,*

*But ſorrow's baniſht from their penſive Breaſt ;*
*Joy triumphs there, and ſmiles their Cheeks inveſt.*
*Have you beheld when with perfumed wings,*
*Out of the balmy Eaſt bright* Phebus *ſprings ;*
*Mounting th'* Olympick *Hill, with what a Grace*
*He views the Throne of Darkneſs ; and doth chaſe*
*The ſhades of night before him ; having hurl'd*
*His golden Beams about this lower world,*
*How from ſad Groves, and ſolitary Cells,*
*Where horrid darkneſs and confuſion dwells.*
*Batts, Owls, and doleful Creatures fly away,*
*Reſigning to the cheerful Birds of day,*
*Who in thoſe places now can ſit and chant,*
*Where lately ſuch ſad creatures kept their haunt.*
*Thus grief reſigns to Joy ; ſighs, groans and tears*
*To ſongs triumphant when the Lord appears.*
*O matchleſs Joy ! O countenance divine !*
*What are thoſe trifles, to theſe ſmiles of thine !*
*May I with poor* Mephiboſheth *be bleſt*
*With theſe ſweet ſmiles, let* Ziba *take the reſt.*
*My Life, my Treaſure, thou ſhalt ne're be ſold*
*For Silver Hills, or Rivers pav'd with Gold.*
*Wer't thou but known to worldlings, they would ſcorn*
*To ſtoop their hearts to ſuch poor things as corn.*
*For ſo they do, becauſe thou art above*
*That ſphere wherein their low conceptions move.*

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## CHAP. XIX.

### Upon the Thraſhing out of Corn.

*More ſolid Grain with greater ſtrength you thraſh,*
*The ableſt Chriſtians have the hardeſt laſh.*

### OBSERVATION.

HUsbandmen having to do with divers ſorts of Grain, ſome more tough and ſtubborn, others more free and tender, do not beat all alike in the Threſhing-floor ; but as they have Threſhals of ſeveral ſizes, ſo they beſtow on ſome Grain more, on others fewer ſtrokes, according to the different qualities of the Grain to be threſhed. This obſervation the Prophet *Iſaiah* hath, *chap.* 28. v. 27. *The Fitches are not threſhed with a threſhing inſtrument, neither is the Cart-wheel turn'd about upon the Cummin, but the Fitches are beaten out with a ſtaff and the Cummin with a rod.* The manner of beating out the Corn in ancient times, was far different from that which is now in uſe among us ; they had the Cart-wheel, which was full of Iron Spokes or Teeth, and the Hoofs of Beaſts for the harder ſort of Grain, as Wheat, Rye and Barly ; a Staff or Flail for the Fitches : and a Rod or Twig for the Cummin ; all which Inſtruments were proportioned according to the nature of the Grain.

### APPLICATION.

GOD having to do in a way of Correction with divers ſorts of Offenders, doth not uſe the e ſeverity with them all, but proportions his rrection to their abilities and ſtrength. *Jer.* 30. I will not make a full end of thee, but will rrect thee in meaſure] and will not leave thee ogether unpuniſhed, ( *q. d.* ) afflicted thou ſt be, my reſpect to my own glory and thy d, puts a neceſſity upon that ; but yet I will it moderately, I will not lay on without meae or mercy, as I intend to do upon the Enemies ; will mete out your ſufferings in a due proportion, even as a careful Phyſician in preſcribing Pills or Potions to his Patient, hath regard as well to the ability of the Patient, as to the nature and quality of the Diſeaſe ; even ſo thy God, O *Iſrael*, will not afflict thee according to the greatneſs of his power and his wrath anſwerable thereunto, *Pſa.* 90. 11. that would break thee to pieces, *Pſa.* 78. 38. Nor yet will he afflict thee according to the demerit' of thy ſin. As it ſhall be much leſs than what I could inflict ; ſo it ſhall be leſs than thine iniquities deſerve, *Ezra* 9. 13. Neither my power, nor thy deſert, ſhall be the rule of my proceedings ; but I will do it with moderation and mercy, as thou art able to bear. I that have inſtructed the Husbandman to proportion his Inſtrument to the quality of the Grain before him, will exerciſe the like wiſdom and mildneſs towards thee. And the ſimilitude betwixt the Husbandman's threſhing his Corn and the Lord's afflicting his People ſtands in theſe Particulars.

1. The Husbandmans end in threſhing the Corn, is to ſeparate it from the Husks and Chaff, and God's end in afflicting his People, is to ſeparate them from their ſins, *Iſa.* 27. 9. In meaſure when it ſhooteth forth, he will debate with it, ( *i. e.* ) he will moderately correct them ; and what the end of thoſe Corrections are, the next words inform us, *By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of* Jacob *be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin.* God uſes Afflictions, as we uſe Soap, to cleanſe away filthineſs, and fetch out ſpots, *Dan.* 11. 35. he aims not at the deſtruction of their Perſons, but of their Luſts.

2. If the Husbandman have Cockle, Darnel, or pernicious Tares before him in the Floor among his Corn, he little regards whether it be bruiſed and battered to pieces by the Threſhold or no ; 'tis a worthleſs thing, and he ſpares it not. Such Cockle and Tares are the Enemies of God ; and when theſe come under his Flail, he ſtrikes them without mercy ; for theſe the Lord prepares a new ſharp threſhing Inſtrument, having Teeth which ſhall beat them to duſt, Iſa 41. 15. *The daughter of* Babylon *is like a Threſhing-floor, 'tis time to threſh her*, Jer. 51. 33. And when that time is come, then ( in alluſion to the Beaſt that was to tread out the Corn ) Sion'*s horn ſhall be of iron, and her hoofs braſs*, Mic. 4. 13. He ſmites not his People, according to the ſtroke of them that ſmote them ; the meaning is, his ſtrokes on them ſhall be deadly ſtrokes. They ſhewed no mercy to *Sion*, and God will ſhew no mercy to them.

3. When the Husks and Chaff are perfectly ſeparated from the Grain, then the Husbandman beats it no more. When God hath perfectly purged and ſeparated the ſins of his people, then afflictions ſhall come to a perpetual end, he will never ſmite them again ; there is no noiſe of the threſhing Inſtrument in Heaven ; he that beat them with his Flail on Earth, will put them into his Boſom in Heaven.

4. Though the Husbandman lays on, and beats his Corn, as if he were angry with it, yet he loves and highly prizes it ; and though God ſtrike and afflict his people, yet he ſets a great value upon them ; and it is equally abſurd to infer God's hatred to his people from his afflicting of them, as the Husbandman's hatred of his Corn, becauſe he threſhes and beats it, Heb. 12. 6. *Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and chaſteneth every ſon whom he receiveth.*

5. Tho' the Husbandman threſh and beat the

Corn, yet he will not bruiſe or hurt it, if he can help it; though ſome require more and harder ſtrokes than others, yet none ſhall have more than it can endure. And tho' the Lord afflict his Servants, yet he will do them no hurt, *Jer.* 25. 6. Some need more Rods than others, but none ſhall have more than they can bear; the Lord knows the meaſures and degrees of his Servants Faith and Patience, and accordingly ſhall their tryals be, *Pſal.* 103. 13, 14. *Like as a Father pities his children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knows their frame, he remembers they are but duſt; he makes a way to eſcape, that they may be able to bear it,* 1 Cor. 10. 13. This care and tenderneſs of God over his afflicted, is eminently diſcovered in three Particulars.

(1.) In not expoſing them to, till he have prepared them for their tryals, Luke 24. 49. *Tarry ye at* Jeruſalem, *until ye be endued with power from on high.* He gives them ſometimes eminent diſcoveries of his love immediately before, and as a preparative to their ſufferings; in the ſtrength whereof, they are carried through all.

(2.) Or if not ſo, then he intermixeth ſupporting Comfort with their Troubles, as you ſometimes ſee the Sun ſhine out while the Rain falls. 'Twas ſo with *Paul*, Acts 27. 23. *This night* (and it was a ſad night indeed) *there ſtood by me the Angel of the Lord, whoſe I am.*

(3.) In taking off the Affliction, when they can bear it no longer, 1 Cor. 10. 13. *He makes a way to eſcape, that they may be able to bear it,* Pſal. 125. 3. The Rod is taken off, *when the righteous is even ready to put forth his hand to iniquity.* 'Tis a *Jewiſh* Proverb, When the Bricks are doubled, then comes *Moſes*. And it is a Chriſtian experience, When the Spirit is ready to fail, then comes *Jeſus*; according to that Promiſe, *Iſa.* 57. 16.

## REFLECTIONS.

A Reflection for Perſecutors.

1. How unlike am I to God, in the afflicting of his People? The Lord is pitiful when he ſmites them, but I have been cruel. He is kind to them, when moſt ſevere; but the beſt of my kindneſſes to them, may fitly enough be called ſeverity. God ſmites them in love, I have ſmitten them in hatred. Ah, What have I done? God hath uſed me as his hand, *Pſal.* 17. 14. or as his Rod to afflict them, *Jer.* 10. 7. but his end and mine have widely differed in that action, *Iſa.* 10. 7. I am but the Scullion, or rather the Whiſp to ſcour and cleanſe theſe Veſſels of Glory, and when I have done that dirty work, thoſe bright Souls ſhall be ſet up in Heaven, and I caſt into the Fire. If he ſhall have Judgment without Mercy that ſhewed no Mercy; How can I expect mercy from the Lord, whoſe People I have perſecuted mercileſly for his ſake?

A Reflection for ſuch as meet with no Afflictions.

2. Is the Lord's Wheat thus threſhed in the *floor* of *Afflictions*? What then ſhall I think of my condition, who proſper and am let alone in the way of ſin? Surely the Lord looks on me as on a Weed, and not as his Corn; and 'tis too probable, that I am rather reſerved for burning, than threſhing. Some there are whom God loves not ſo well as to ſpend a *rod* upon them, but ſaith, *Let them alone*, Hoſ. 4. 17. but miſerable is their condition, notwithſtanding their impunity, For what is the interpretation but this? I will come to a reckoning with them for altogether in Hell. Lord, how much better is thy afflicting mercy, than thy ſparing ſeverity! Better is the condition of an afflicted Child, than of a rejected Baſtard, *Heb.* 12. 7. O, let me rather feel thy Rod now, as the Rod of a loving Father, than feel thy Wrath hereafter, as the Wrath of an Omnipotent Avenger.

A Reflection for an Afflicted Saint.

3. Well then, deſpond not, O my Soul! Thou heareſt the Huſband-man loves his Corn, tho' he threſheth it; and ſurely the Lord loves thee not the leſs, becauſe he afflicts thee ſo much. If Affliction then be the way to Heaven, bleſſed be God for Affliction. The threſhing ſtrokes of God have come thick upon me, by which I may ſee, what a tough and ſtubborn Heart I have; if one ſtroke would have done the work, he would not have lifted up his hand the ſecond time. I have not had a ſtroke more than I had need of, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. and by this means he will purge my ſin, bleſſed be God for that. The Damned have infinitely more and harder ſtrokes than I, and yet their ſin ſhall never be ſeparated by their ſufferings. Ah, ſin, curſed ſin, I am ſo much out of love with thee, that I am willing to endure more than all this to be well rid of thee; all this I ſuffer for thy ſake, but the time is coming when I ſhall be rid of ſin and ſuffering together. Mean while, I am under my own Fathers Hand, ſmite me he may, but hate me he cannot.

## The POEM.

*THe ſacred Records tell us, heretofore*
*God had an Altar in a Threſhing-floor;*
*Where threſhing Inſtruments devoted were*
*To ſacred ſervice, ſo you find them here.*
*I now would teach the Threſher to beat forth,*
*A notion from his Threſhold much more worth*
*Than all his Corn; and make him underſtand*
*That Soul-inſtructing Engine in his hand.*
*With fewer ſtrokes, and lighter will you beat*
*The Oates and Barley than the ſtubborn Wheat,*
*Which will require and endure more blows*
*Than freer Grain. Thus deals the Lord by thoſe*
*Whom he afflicts. He doth not uſe to ſtrike*
*Offending Children with his Rod alike.*
*But on the ableſt Shoulders doth impoſe*
*The heavieſt Burdens, and the leſs on thoſe*
*Of weaker Grace. He ſhews himſelf a God*
*Of Judgments in his handling of the Rod.*
*God hath a Rate-book by him, wherein he*
*Keeps juſt accounts how rich his People be;*
*What Faith, Experience, Patience, more or leſs,*
*Each one poſſeſſeth, and doth them aſſeſs*
*According to their ſtock. Such as have not*
*A Martyrs Faith, ſhall have no Martyrs lot.*
*The kinds, degrees, and the continuance*
*Of all their ſufferings to a circumſtance,*
*Preſcribed are by him, who wiſely ſways*
*The World, and more than's right on no Man lay.*
*Be Man, or Devil, the Apothecary,*
*God's the Phyſician; Who can then miſcarry*
*In ſuch a hand? he never did, or will*
*Suffer the leaſt addition to his Bill.*
*Nor meaſure, nor yet mercy he obſerves*
*In threſhing* Babylon, *for ſhe deſerves*
*His heavieſt ſtrokes; and in his floor ſhe muſt*
*Be beaten ſhortly with his flail to duſt.*
*But* Sion's *God, in meaſure, will debate,*
*His Children he may ſmite, but cannot hate.*

*He beats them, true, to make their Chaff to fly,*
*That they, like purged Golden Grains, may lye*
*In one fair heap, with thoſe bleſs'd Souls that here*
*Once in like manner thraſh'd, and winnowed were.*

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## CHAP. XX.

### Upon the Winnowing of Corn.

*The Fan doth cauſe light Chaff to fly away,*
*So ſhall th' ungodly in God's winnowing day.*

### OBSERVATION.

WHen the Corn is threſhed out in the Floor where it lyes mingled with empty ears, and worthleſs Chaff, the Husbandman carries it out altogether into ſome open place, where having ſpread his ſheet for the preſervation of the Grain, he expoſes it all to the Wind ; the good, by reaſon of its ſolidity, remains upon the ſheet, but the Chaff being light and empty, is partly carried quite away by the Wind, and all the reſt ſeparated from the good Grain into a diſtinct heap, which is carried away, either to the Fire or the Dunghill as a worthleſs thing.

### APPLICATION.

MEN have their winnowing days, and God hath his ; a day to ſeparate the Chaff from the Wheat, the godly from the ungodly, who ſhall be held up to the Wind, but only the wicked ſhall be driven away by it. Such a day God hath in this World, wherein he winnows his Wheat, and ſeparates the Chaff. There is a double fanning or winnowing of Men here in this World ; one is *doctrinally*, in which ſenſe I underſtand that Scripture, *Mat.* 3. 12. ſpoken of Chriſt, when he was entring upon his Miniſterial Work. *His fan is in his hand, and he ſhall throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable fire.* The preaching of the Goſpel is as a Fan in Chriſt's Hand, and it is as much as if *John* had thus told the *Jews*, that tho' there were many hypocritical ones among them, that had now a place and name among the People of God, and gloried in their Church-priviledges, yet there is a purging blaſt of truth coming, which ſhall mall make them fly out of the Church, as faſt as Chaff out of the Floor. Thus Chriſt winnows or fans the World *doctrinally* : The other is *judicially*, by bringing ſore and grievous tryals and ſufferings upon the Churches, for this very end, that thoſe which are but Chaff, (*i.e.*) empty and vain Profeſſors may by ſuch Winds as theſe be ſeparated from his People.

The Church increaſes two ways, and by two divers means, *extenſively*, in breadth and numbers ; and *intenſively*, in vigour and power ; peace and proſperity cauſes the firſt, ſufferings and adverſity the laſt ; and well may a day of Perſecution be called a winnowing day, for then are the People of God toſſed to purpoſe, as Corn in the Sieve, though nothing but Chaff be loſt thereby. Of ſuch a winnowing day the Prophet ſpeaks, *Amos* 9. 9, 10. *I will ſift the houſe of* Iſrael *among all nations, like as Corn is ſifted in a ſieve; yet ſhall not the leaſt grain fall upon the earth ; all the ſinners of my people ſhall die.* (*q. d.*) I will cauſe great agitations and toſſings among you by the hands of the *Aſſyrians* and *Babylonians*, into whoſe Countreys you ſhall be diſperſt and ſcattered ; yet I will ſo govern thoſe your diſperſions by my *Providence*, that not one good grain, one upright Soul ſhall eternally periſh ; but the ſinners of my people, the refuſe ſtuff, that ſhall periſh.

To the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks another Prophet, *Zeph.* 1. 1, 2. *Gather your ſelves together*, ( or as ſome read ) *fan your ſelves*, yea, fan your ſelves, *before the decree bring forth, and the day paſs as the Chaff.* He doth not mean, that the time ſhall paſs as the Chaff, but there is a day of affliction and diſtreſs coming, in which the wicked ſhall paſs as the Chaff before the Wind ; and yet notwithſtanding, all theſe winnowings upon Earth, much Chaff will ſtill abide among the Corn ; therefore God hath appointed another day for the winnowing of the World, even the day of Judgment, in reference to which it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 1. 4, 5. *The ungodly are not ſo, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away ; therefore the ungodly ſhall not ſtand in judgment, nor ſinners in the congregation of the righteous ;* ( *i. e.*) God hath a day wherein he will ſift the World, like Corn in a Sieve, and then the wicked ſhall appear to be but Chaff, which God will eternally ſeparate from his Wheat. I will not ſtrain the ſimilitude, but fairly diſplay it in theſe Seven Particulars.

1. The Chaff and Wheat grow together in the ſame Field, and upon the ſame Root and Stalk. In this, wicked Men are like Chaff, who not only aſſociate with the people of God, but oftentimes ſpring up with them in the ſame Families, and from the ſame Root, or immediate Parents, *Mal.* 1. 2. *was not* Eſau Jacob's *brother* ? Yet the one was Wheat, the other Chaff. Inſtances of this are infinite.

2. The Husbandman would never endure the Husks, Chaff, and dry Stalks to remain in the Field if it were not for the good Corns ſake, he would quickly ſet fire to it, but that the Corn is among it, which he highly prizeth ; and be aſſured, God would never ſuffer the wicked to abide long in this World, were it not for his own Elect that are diſperſed among them. Except the Lord had ſuch a Remnant diſperſed in the World, he would quickly ſet fire to the four Quarters, and make it like *Sodom*, Iſa. 1. 9.

3. The Chaff is a very worthleſs thing, the Husbandman cares not what becomes of it, and of as little worth are wicked Men, *Prov.* 10. 20. *The heart of the wicked is little worth.* The Heart is the principal part of the Man, and yet that's but Chaff, no worth in it ; his Lands, his Cloaths, *&c.* are worth ſomewhat, but his Heart is worth nothing.

4. Though Chaff in it ſelf be nothing worth, yet, it is of ſome uſe to the Corn whiles 'tis ſtanding in the Field ; the ſtalk bears up the ear, and the Chaff covers the Grain, and defends it from the injury of the Weather. Thus God makes wicked Men of uſe to his people, in outward ſociety ; they help to ſupport and protect them in this World *Rev.* 12. 16. The Earth helped the Woman, ( *i. e.*) worldly Men for carnal ends helpt the Church, when a Flood of Perſecution was poured out. The Church often helps the World, it receives many benefits from the people of God ; and ſometimes God over-rules the World to help his Church.

5. When the Chaff and Wheat are both brought

forth and held up to the Wind in one Sieve, they ſall two ways; the Wheat falls down upon the Floor or Sheet, the Chaff is carried quite away: So although for a time godly and ungodly abide together, yet, when this winnowing time comes, God's Wheat ſhall be gathered into his Garner in Heaven, the Chaff ſhall go the other way, *Mat.* 3. 12.

6. If there be any Chaff among the Corn, it will appear when it is ſifted in a windy day, it cannot poſſibly eſcape if it be well winnowed; much more impoſſible it is for any wicked man to eſcape the critical ſearch of God in that day; the cloſeſt Hypocrite ſhall then be detected, for God will judge the ſecrets of men, 2 *Cor.* 16. *He will then bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and make manifeſt the counſels of the heart*, 1 Cor. 4. 5.

7. Laſtly, After Corn and Chaff are ſeparated by the winnowing Wind, they ſhall never lye together in one heap any more. The wicked ſhall ſee *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, but themſelves thruſt out; there is no Chaff in Heaven.

## REFLECTIONS.

A Reflection for a cloſe Hypocrite.

1. Am I an empty vain Profeſſor, that want the pith and ſubſtance of real godlineſs? Then am I but Chaff in God's account, though I grow among his Corn; the Eye of Man cannot diſcern my Hypocriſie, but when he comes whoſe Fan is in his Hand, then how plainly will it be detected? Angels and Men ſhall diſcern it and ſay, *Lo, this is the man that made not God his hope*; how ſhall I abide the day of his coming? Chriſt is the great Heart-Anatomiſt; things ſhall not be carried then by Names and Parties, as they are now; every one ſhall be weighed in a Juſt ballance, and a *Mene Tekel*, written upon every falſe Heart; great will be the perſpicuity of that trial: My own Conſcience ſhall joyn with my Judge, and ſhall then acknowledge, that there is not one drop of Injuſtice in all that Sea of wrath; and though I am Damned, yet I am not wronged; the Chaff cannot ſtand before the Wind, nor I before the Judgment of Chriſt.

A Reflection for one that neglects Self-examination.

2. Is there ſuch a fanning time coming? Why do not I then ſift my Heart every day by ſerious Self-examination? No work more important to me, and yet how much have I neglected it? O my Soul! thou hadſt been better imployed, in ſearching thine own Eſtate in reference to that day, than in prying ſinfully into the Hearts, and cenſuring the conditions of other Men: Judge thy ſelf, and thou ſhalt not be condemned with the World; the work indeed is difficult, but the neglect dangerous; Were I within a few days to ſtand at Man's Bar, there to be tryed for my Life, how buſie ſhould I be every hour of the day in writing to any that I thought could befriend me? And ſtudying every advantage to my ſelf? And yet, what a vaſt difference is there betwixt Man's Bar and God's? Betwixt a tryal for my Life, and for my Soul? Lord, rouze up my ſluggiſh Heart by awful and ſolicitous thoughts of that day, leſt I be found among that Chaff which ſhall be burnt up with unquenchable Fire!

A Reflection for a Sincere Soul.

3. Fear not, O my Soul! though there be a blaſt coming which ſhall drive all the Chaff into Hell, yet it ſhall blow thee no harm. *I know that when he hath tryed me, I ſhall come forth as Gold*, *Job* 23. 10. I confeſs I have too much Chaff about me, but yet I am not altogether Chaff; there is a ſolid work of Grace upon my Soul that will abide the trial: Let the Judgment to come be as impartial and exact as it's poſſible to be yet a Grain of Sincerity cannot be loſt in it; for *God will not caſt away a perfect* ( *i. e.* an upright-hearted ) *man*, Job 8. 20. He that's appointed to Judge the World is mine; and his imputed Righteouſneſs will make me full weight in the Balance. Bleſs the Lord ( O my Soul ) for ſincerity; this will abide, when common Gifts and empty Names will flee as the Chaff before the Wind.

## The POEM.

*THE winnowing Wind firſt drives the Chaff away,*
*Next light and hollow Grains; thoſe only ſtay*
*Whoſe weight and ſolid ſubſtance can endure*
*This tryal, and ſuch Grains are counted pure.*
*The Corn for uſe is carefully preſerv'd,*
*The uſeleſs Chaff for burning flames reſerv'd.*
No Wind but blows ſome good, *a Proverb is,*
*Glad ſhall I be if it hold true in this.*
*O, that the Wind when you to winnowing go,*
*This ſpiritual good unto your Souls might blow!*
*To make you pauſe, and ſadly ruminate,*
*In what a doleful plight and wretched ſtate*
*Their Souls are in, who cannot hope to ſtand*
*When he ſhall come, whoſe Fan is in his hand.*
*His piercing Eyes infallibly diſcloſe*
*The very Reins, and inward parts of thoſe*
*Whoſe outſide ſeeming Grace ſo neatly paints,*
*That with the beſt they paſs for real Saints.*
*No Hypocrite with God acceptance finds,*
*But like the Chaff diſpers'd by furious Winds!*
*Their guilt ſhall not that ſearching day endure,*
*Nor they approach th' Aſſemblies of the pure.*
*Have you obſerv'd in Autumn, Thiſtle-down*
*By howling* Eolus *ſcatter'd up down*
*About the Fields? Even ſo God's ireful ſtorm*
*Shall chaſe the Hypocrite, who now can ſcorn*
*The breath of cloſe reproofs; and like a Rock*
*Repel reproofs, and juſt reprovers mock.*
*How many that in ſplendid Garments walk,*
*Of high Profeſſions! and like Angels talk,*
*Shall God diveſt, and openly proclaim*
*Their ſecret guilt, to their eternal ſhame!*
*This is the day wherein the Lord will rid*
*His Church of thoſe falſe Friends, which now lye hid*
*Among his people. There will not be one*
*Falſe heart remain, to loſe our Love upon.*
*O, bleſſed Aſſembly! glorious ſtate! when all*
*In their uprightneſs walk, and ever ſhall.*
*O make my heart ſincere, that I may never*
*Prove ſuch light Chaff as then thy Wind will ſever*
*From ſolid Grain! O let my Soul deteſt*
*Unſoundneſs, and abide thy ſtricteſt Teſt.*

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND PART OF Husbandry.

*HOw is it Reader? have I tired thee? (with me.*
*Whilſt through theſe pleaſant Fields thou walk'ſt*
*Our path was pleaſant, but if length of way*
*Do weary thee we'll ſlack our pace, and ſtay,*
*Let's ſit a while, under the cooling ſhade*
*Of fragrant Trees; Trees were for ſhadow made.*
*Lo here a pleaſant Grove, whoſe ſhade is good;*
*But more than ſo, 'twill yield us fruit for food.*
*No dangerous fruits do on theſe branches grow,*
*No Snakes among the verdant Graſs below.*
*Here we'll repoſe a while, and then go view*
*The pleaſant Herds and Flocks; and ſo adieu.*

## CHAP. I.

## Upon the Ingraffing of Fruit-Trees.

*Ungrafted Trees can never bear good Fruit,*
*Nor we, till grafted on a better Root.*

### OBSERVATION.

A Wild Tree naturally ſpringing up in the Wood or Hedge, and never grafted or removed from its native Soyl, may bear ſome Fruit, and that fair and beautiful to the Eye; but it will give you no content at all in eating, being always harſh, ſower and unpleaſant to the taſte; but if ſuch a ſtock be removed into a good Soyl, and grafted with a better kind, it may become a good Tree, and yield ſtore of choice and pleaſant Fruit.

### APPLICATION.

UNregenerate Men who never were acquainted with the Myſtery of Spiritual Union ith Jeſus Chriſt, but ſtill grow upon their natu-l Root, old *Adam*, may by the force and power natural Principles bring forth ſome Fruit, which like the wild Hedge-fruit we ſpake of) ay indeed be fair and pleaſant to the Eyes of en, but God takes no pleaſure at all in it; it's wer, harſh, and diſtaſteful to him, becauſe it rings not from the Spirit of Chriſt, *Iſa.* 1. 13. *annot away with it, it is iniquity, &c.* But that I y not intangle the Thread of my Diſcourſe, I ll (as in the former Chapters) ſet before you parallel betwixt the beſt Fruits of natural men, d thoſe of a wild ungrafted Tree.

1. The Root that bears this wild Fruit is a de-nerate Root, and that's the cauſe of all this ſow-neſs and harſhneſs in the Fruit it bears; it's the Seed of ſome better Tree accidentally blown, or caſt into ſome waſte and bad Soyl, where not being manured and ordered aright, it's turned wild: So all the Fruits of unregerate men flow from the firſt *Adam*, a corrupt and degenerate Root; he was indeed planted a right Seed, but ſoon turned a wild and degenerate Plant; he being the Root from which every man naturally ſprings, corrupts all the Fruit that any man bears from him: It's obſerved by *Gregory*, pertinent to my preſent purpoſe *Genus humanum in parente primo, velut in radice putruit?* Mankind was putrified in the Root of his firſt Parent. *Mat.* 7. 18. *A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.*

This corrupt Root ſpoils the Fruit, by the tranſmiſſion of its ſower and naughty Sap into all the Branches and Fruits that grow on them; they ſuck no other nouriſhment, but what the Root affords them, and that being bad ſpoils all: For the ſame cauſe and reaſon, no meer natural or unregenerate man can ever do one holy or acceptable action, becauſe the corruption of the Root is in all thoſe actions. The neceſſity of our drawing corruption into all our actions, from this curſed Root *Adam*, is expreſſed by a quick and ſmart Interrogation, *Job* 14. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* The ſenſe of it is well delivered us (by Mr. *Caryl in loc.*) This queſtion (ſaith he) may undergo a threefold Conſtruction; Firſt, thus: Who can bring a morally clean Perſon, out of a Perſon originally unclean? And ſo he lays his Hand upon his Birth-ſin. Or, Secondly, (which ſpeaks to my purpoſe) it may refer to the action of the ſame man, man being unclean, cannot bring forth a clean thing; (*i. e.*) a clean or holy action; that which is originated, is like its original. And that this ſower Sap of the firſt ſtock (I mean *Adam*'s ſin) is tranſmitted into all Mankind, not only corrupting their Fruit, but ruining and withering all the Branches; the Apoſtle ſhews us in that excellent parallel betwixt the two *Adams*, Rom. 5. 12. *Wherefore as by one man* [one, not only *in individuo, ſed in ſpecie*, one repreſenting the whole Root or Stock,] *ſin entred into the world.* Not by imitation only, but by propagation; and this brought Death and Ruin upon all the Branches.

3. Although theſe wild Hedge-fruits be unwholſom and unpleaſant to the taſte, yet they are fair and beautiful to the Eye; a man that looks upon them, and doth not know what Fruit it is, would Judge it by its ſhew and colour to be excellent Fruit, for it makes a fairer ſhew oftentimes than the beſt and moſt wholeſom Fruit doth: Even ſo, thoſe natural Gifts and Endowments which ſome unregenerate Perſons have, ſeem exceeding fair to the Eye, and a Fruit to be deſired. What excellent qualities have ſome meer natural men and women? What a winning Affability, humble Condeſcention, Meekneſs, Righteouſneſs, ingenious Tenderneſs and Sweetneſs of Nature! As it was (Hyperbolically enough) ſaid of one, *In hoc homine, non peccavit Adam; Adam* never ſinned in this Man; meaning that he excelled the generality of *Adam*'s Children in ſweetneſs of Temper and natural Endowments. What curious Phantaſies, nimble Wits, ſolid Judgments, tenacious Memories, rare Elocution, *&c.* are to be found among meer natural Men? By which they are aſſiſted in diſcourſing, praying, preaching and writing to the admiration of ſuch as know them! But that which is highly eſteemed

of men, is abomination to God, *Luke* 16. 15. It finds no acceptance with him, becauſe it ſprings from that curſed Root of Nature, and is not the production of his own Spirit.

4. If ſuch a ſtock were removed into a better Soyl, and grafted with a better kind, it might bring forth Fruit, pleaſant and grateful to the Huſbandman; and if ſuch Perſons (before deſcribed) were but regenerated and changed in their Spirits and Principles, what excellent and uſeful Perſons would they be in the Church of God? And then their Fruits would be in ſweet and acceptable to him. One obſerves of *Tertullian*, *Origen* and *Jerom*, that they came into *Canaan* laden with *Egyptian* Gold, (*i. e.*) they came into the Church full of excellent humane Learning, which did Chriſt much Service.

5. When the Husbandman cuts down his Woods or Hedges, he cuts down theſe Crab-ſtocks with the reſt, becauſe he values them not any more than the Thorns and Brambles among which they grow; and as little will God regard or ſpare theſe natural Branches, how much ſoever they are laden with ſuch Fruit, The threatning is univerſal, *John* 3. 3. *Except you be regenerate and born again, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of heaven.* And again, *Heb.* 12. 14. *Without holineſs, no man* (be his natural Gifts never ſo excellent) *ſhall ſee God.* Imbelliſhed nature, is nature ſtill; *That which is born of the fleſh, is but fleſh,* however it be ſet off with advantage to the Eye of man.

## REFLECTIONS.

*A Reflection for an Accompliſhed Naturaliſt.*

1. To what purpoſe then do I glory in my natural Accompliſhments? Though I have a better nature than ſome others have, yet it is a curſed nature ſtill. Theſe ſweet Qualities and excellent Gifts, do only hide, but not kill the corruption of nature. I am but a rotten Poſt gilded over, and all my Duties but Hedge-fruit, which God makes no account of. O cutting thought! that the unlearned ſhall riſe and take Heaven, when I with all my excellent Gifts ſhall deſcend into Hell. Heaven was not made for Scholars, as ſuch, but for Believers; as one ſaid, when they comforted him upon his Death-bed, that he was a knowing man, a *Doctor of Divinity*: O, ſaid he, I ſhall not appear before God as a *Doctor*, but as a man; I ſhall ſtand upon a level with the moſt Illiterate in the Day of Judgment; what doth it avail me that I have a nimble Wit, whilſt I have none to do my ſelf good? Will my Judge be charm'd with a Rhetorical Tongue? Things will not be carried in that World as they are in this. If I could with *Berengarius* diſcourſe *de omni ſcibile*,* of every thing that is knowable; or with *Solomon* unravel Nature, from the *Cedar* to the *Hyſop*, what would this advantage me, as long as I am ignorant of Chriſt, and the Myſtery of Regeneration? my head hath often aked with Study, but when did my Heart ake for ſin? Methinks, O my Soul, thou trimmeſt up thy ſelf in theſe natural Ornaments to appear before God, much as that delicate *Agag* did, when he was to come before *Samuel*, and fondly conceited that theſe things will procure favour or (at leaſt) pity from him; but yet, think not for all that, *the bitterneſs of Death is paſt*; ſay not within thy ſelf, Will God caſt ſuch a one as I into Hell? Shall a man of ſuch parts be Damned? Alas! Juſtice will hew thee to pieces, as *Samuel* did that ſpruce King, and not abate thee the leaſt, for theſe things; many Thouſand Branches of Nature, as fair and fruitful as thy ſelf, are now blazing in Hell, becauſe not tranſplanted by Regeneration into Chriſt; and if he ſpared not them, neither will he ſpare thee.

*A Reflection for a true, but weak Believer.*

2. I am a poor deſpiſed Shrub, which have no beauty at all in me and yet ſuch a one hath the Lord choſen to tranſplant into Chriſt, whilſt he left many fragrant Branches ſtanding on their native ſtock, to be fuel of his wrath to all Eternity! O Grace! for ever to be admired! Ah, what cauſe have I to be thankful to free Grace, and for ever to walk humbly with my God; the Lord hath therefore choſen an unlikely, rugged, unpoliſht Creature as I am, that Pride may for ever be hid from mine Eyes, and that I may never glory in his preſence, 1 *Cor.* 1. 29. I now have the advantage of a better Root and Soyl than any carnal Perſon hath, it will therefore be a greater ſhame to me, and a reproach to the Root that bears me, if I ſhould be out-ſtript and excelled by them; yet Lord, how often do I find it ſo? I ſee ſome of them meek and patient, whilſt I am proud and paſſionate; gentle and affable, whilſt I am rough and ſurly; generous and noble, whilſt I am baſe and penurious. Truly, ſuch a Branch as I am, is no honour to the Root that bears it.

## The POEM.

*I Am a branch of that fair* Eden *Tree*
*Which to Mankind God had ordain'd to be*
*The common ſtock, his ſcituation good,*
*His branches many, of himſelf a Wood.*
*And like a Cedar by the River fed,*
*Unto the Clouds his ample branches ſpread.*
*Sin ſmote his Root, then Juſtice cut him down;*
*And levell'd with the Earth his lofty Crown.*
*What hope of branches when the Tree's o'return'd?*
*But like dry Faggots to be bound and burn'd.*
*It had been ſo, had not tranſcendent love,*
*Which in a ſphear above our thoughts doth move,*
*Prepar'd a better ſtock to ſave and nouriſh*
*Tranſplanted Twigs, which in him thrive and flouriſh.*
*In* Adam *all are curs'd, no ſaving Fruit*
*Shall ever ſpring from that ſin blaſted Root.*
*Yea all the branches that in him are found,*
*How flouriſhing ſoever muſt be bound*
*And pil'd together, horrid news to tell!*
*To make an everlaſting blaze in Hell.*
*God takes no pleaſure in the ſweeteſt bud*
*Diſclos'd by nature, for the Root's not good:*
*Some boughs indeed richly adorned are*
*With natural fruits, which to the Eye are fair;*
*Rare Gifts, ſweet Diſpoſitions, which attracts*
*The love of Thouſands, and from moſt exacts*
*Honour and Admiration. You'll admire*
*That ſuch as theſe are fuel for the Fire.*
*Indeed ten Thouſand pities 'tis to ſee*
*Such lovely Creatures in this caſe to be.*
*Did they by true Regeneration draw,*
*The Sap of Life from* Jeſſe's *Root, the Law*
*By which they now to wrath condemned are*
*Would ceaſe to curſe, and God ſuch Buds would ſpare.*

*But out of him there's none of theſe can move*
*His unrelenting heart, or draw his love.*
*Then cut me off from this accurſed Tree,*
*Leſt I for ever be cut off from thee.*

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## CHAP. II.

### Upon the Union of the Graff with the Stock.

*When'ere you Bud or Graft, therein you ſee,*
*How Chriſt and Souls muſt here united be.*

### OBSERVATION.

WHen the Husbandman hath prepared his Graffs in the Seaſon of the year, he carries them, with the Tools that are neceſſary for that work, to the Tree or Stock he intends to ingraft, and having cut off the top of the Limb, in ſome ſtraight ſmooth part, he cleaves it with his Knife or Chiſſel a little beſide the pith, knocks in his Wedge to keep it open, then (having prepared the Graff, he carefully ſets it into the cleſt, joining the inner ſide of the Barks, of Graff or Stock together (there being the main current of the Sap) then pulls out his wedg, binds both together (as in Barking) and Clays it up, to defend the tender Graff and wounded Stock from the injuries of the Sun and Rain.

Theſe tender Ciens quickly take hold of the Stock, and having immediate Coalition with it, drinks in its Sap, concoct it into their own nouriſhment, thrive better, and bear more and better Fruits than ever they would have done upon their natural Root; yea, the ſmalleſt Bud, being carefully inoculated and bound cloſe to the Stock, will in ſhort time become a flouriſhing and fruitful Limb.

### APPLICATION.

THis carries a moſt ſweet and lively reſemblance of the Souls Union with Chriſt by Faith; and indeed there is nothing in nature that ſhadows forth this great Goſpel-myſtery like it: 'Tis a Thouſand pities that any who are imployed about, or are but Spectators of ſuch an action, ſhould terminate their thoughts (as too many do) in that natural object, and not raiſe up their Hearts to theſe Heavenly meditations, which it ſo fairly offers them.

1. When a Twig is to be ingrafted, or a Bud inoculated, it's firſt cut off by a keen Knife from the Tree on which it naturally grew.

And when the Lord intends to graft a Soul into Chriſt, the firſt work about it is cutting work, s 2. 37. their Hearts were cut by Conviction deep Compunction; no Cyen is ingrafted hout cutting, no Soul united with Chriſt hout a cutting ſenſe of ſin and miſery, *John* 8, 9.

. When the tender ſhoot is cut off from the e, there are (ordinarily) many more left ind upon the ſame Tree, as promiſing and rous as that which is taken; but it pleaſeth the bandman to chuſe this, and leave them.

ven ſo it is in the removing or tranſplanting Soul by Converſion, it leaves many behind it he ſtate of Nature, as likely and promiſing as it ; but ſo it pleaſeth God to take this Soul, and leave many others; yea, often ſuch as grew upon the ſame Root; I mean, the immediate Parent, Mal. 1. 2. *Was not* Eſau Jacob*'s brother (ſaith the Lord) yet I loved* Jacob, *and I hated* Eſau.

3. When the Graffs are cut off, in order to this work, 'tis a Critical Seaſon with them; if they lye too long before they are ingrafted, or take not with the ſtock, they die, and are never more to be recovered; they may ſtand in the ſtock a while, but are no part of the Tree.

So when Souls are under a work of Conviction, it is a Critical time with them; many a one have I known then to miſcarry, and never recovered again; they have indeed for a time ſtood like dead Graffs in the ſtock, by an external dead-hearted Profeſſion, but never came to any thing; and as ſuch dead Graffs, either fall off from the ſtock, or moulder away upon it, ſo do theſe, 1 *John* 2. 19.

4. The Husbandman when he hath cut off Graffs or tender Buds, makes all the convenient ſpeed he can to cloſe them with the ſtock; the ſooner that's done, the better; they got no good by remaining as they are. And truly it concerns the Servants of the Lord, who are imployed in this work of ingraffing Souls into Chriſt, to make all the haſte they can, to bring the convicted Sinner to a cloſure with Chriſt. As ſoon as ever the trembling Jaylor cried, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved? Paul* and *Silas* immediately direct him to Chriſt, *Acts* 16. 30, 31. They do not ſay, it's too ſoon for thee to act Faith on Chriſt, thou art not yet humbled enough, but believe in the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

5. There muſt be an inciſſion made in the ſtock before any Bud can be inocculated, or the ſtock muſt be cut and cleaved, before the Cyen can be ingrafted, according to that in the Poet. *Venerit inſitio, fac ramum ramus ad optet.* (i. e.)

*To Graffs, no living Sap the ſtocks impart,*
*Unleſs you wound and cut them near the Heart.*

Such an Inciſſion or wound was made upon Chriſt, in order to our ingrafting into him, *John* 19. 34. the opening of that deadly Wound gives Life to the Souls of Believers.

6. The Graff is intimately united, and cloſely conjoyned with the ſtock, the conjunction is ſo cloſe, that they become one Tree.

There is alſo a moſt cloſe and intimate union betwixt Chriſt and the Soul that believeth in him. It is emphatically expreſſed by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 6. 17. *He that is joyned to the Lord, is one Spirit.* The word imports the neareſt, cloſeſt and ſtricteſt union. Chriſt and the Soul cleave together in a bleſſed oneneſs, as thoſe things do that are glued one to another; ſo that, looks as the Graff is really in the ſtock, and the Spirit or Sap of the ſtock is really in the Graff; ſo a Believer is really (though myſtically) in *Chriſt*; and the Spirit of *Chriſt* is really communicated to a Believer. *I live,* ſaith *Paul, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me,* Gal. 2. 20. *He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,* 1 John 4. 16.

7. Graffs are bound to the ſtock by Bonds made of Hay or Flags; theſe keep it ſteddy, elſe the Wind would loſe it out of the ſtock.

The Believing Soul is alſo faſtened to Chriſt by Bands, which will ſecure it from all danger of being looſed off from him any more. There are two

Bands of this Union; the Spirit on God's part, this is the firm Bond of Union, without which we could never be made one with Chriſt, *Rom.* 8. 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*; and *Faith* on our part, *Eph.* 3. 17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your Hearts by Faith.* Theſe hold ſtrongly.

8. Tho' the ſtock be one and the ſame, yet all Grafts do not thrive and flouriſh alike in it, ſome out-grow the reſt; and thoſe that grow not ſo well as the others do, the fault is in them, and not in the ſtock: So it is with Souls really united to Chriſt; all do not flouriſh alike in him, the Faith of ſome grows exceedingly, 2 *Theſ.* 1. 3. the things that be in others are ready to die, *Rev.* 3. 2. and ſuch Souls muſt charge the fault upon themſelves. *Chriſt* ſends up living Sap enough, not only to make all that are in him living, but fruitful Branches.

## REFLECTIONS.

Four Comfortable Reflections for a Regenerate Soul.

1. Is it ſo indeed betwixt Chriſt and my Soul, as it is betwixt the ingraſted Cyen and the Stock? What Honour and Glory then hath Chriſt conferred upon me, a poor unworthy Creature? What! to be made one with him, to be a living Branch of him, to be joyned thus to the Lord. Oh! what a preferment is this! It is but a little while ſince I was a wild and curſed Plant, growing in the Wilderneſs amongſt them that ſhall ſhortly be cut down and faggotted up for Hell, for me to be taken from amongſt them, and planted into Chriſt, O my Soul! fall down and kiſs the Feet of Free Grace, that moved ſo freely towards ſo vile a Creature! The Dignities and Honours of the Kings and Nobles of the Earth, are nothing to mine; 'twas truly confeſſed by one of them, that it is a greater Honour to be a Member of Chriſt, than the Head of an Empire. Do I ſay, a greater Honour than is put upon the Kings of the Earth? I might have ſaid, it's a greater Honour than is put upon the Angels of Heaven; for to which of them ſaid Chriſt at any time, thou art Bone of my Bone, and Fleſh of my Fleſh? *Behold! what manner of Love is this*! 1 *John* 3. 1.

2. Look again upon the ingraſted Cyens, O my my Soul! and thou ſhalt find, that when once they have taken hold of the ſtock, they live as long as there is any Sap in the Root; and becauſe he liveth, I ſhall live alſo, for my Life is hid with Chriſt in God, *Col.* 3. 3. The Graff is preſerved in the ſtock, and my Soul is even ſo *preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus*, Jude 1.

3. Am I joined to the Lord as a Myſtical part or Branch of him? How dear art thou then, O my Soul, to the God and Father of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt! what! a Branch of his dear Son! What can God with-hold from one ſo ingratiated? *Eph.* 1. 6. *All is yours* (ſaith my God) *for ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's*, 1 Cor. 3. 23.

4. Once more, draw matter of Inſtruction, as well as Comfort from this ſweet Obſervation. Seeing God hath put all this Honour upon thee, by this moſt intimiate Union with his Chriſt, look to it (my Soul) that thou live and walk as becomes a Soul, thus one with the Lord; be thou tender over his Glory; doth not that which ſtrikes at the Root, ſtrike at the very Life of the Graff? And ſhall not that which ſtrikes at the very Glory of Chriſt, tenderly touch and affect thee? Yea, be thou tenderly affected with all the Reproaches that fall upon him from abroad but eſpecially with thoſe that redound to him from thine own unfruitfulneſs. O, diſgrace not the Root that bears thee; let it never be ſaid, that any Evil Fruit ſhall be found upon a Branch that lives and is fed by ſuch a Root.

## The POEM.

*OH what conſidering ſerious Man can ſee*
*The cloſe conjunction of the Graff and Tree;*
*And whilſt he contemplates, he doth not find*
*This Meditation grafted on his Mind?*
*I am the Branch, and Chriſt the Vine,*
*Thy gracious hand did pluck*
*Me from that native ſtock of mine,*
*That I his Sap might ſuck.*
*The bloody Spear did in his Heart*
*A deep Inciſion make,*
*That Grace to me he might impart,*
*And I thereof partake.*
*The Spirit and Faith is that firm Band*
*Which binds us faſt together,*
*Thus we are claſped Hand in Hand,*
*And nothing can us ſever.*
*Bleſs'd be that Hand which did remove*
*Me from my native place,*
*This was the wonder of thy Love,*
*The triumph of thy Grace.*
*That I a wild and curſed Plant*
*Should thus preferred be,*
*Who all thoſe Ornaments do want,*
*Thou mayſt in others ſee.*
*As long as e're the Root doth live,*
*The Branches are not dry;*
*Whilſt Chriſt hath Grace and Life to give,*
*My Soul can never die.*
*O Bleſſed Saviour! never could*
*A Graff cleave to the Tree,*
*More cloſe than thy poor Creature would*
*United be with thee.*
*My Soul, diſhonour not thy Root,*
*'Twill be a ſhame for thee,*
*To want the choiceſt ſorts of Fruit,*
*And yet thus grafted be.*

*Thus you may ſhake from Grafts before they blow,*
*More precious Fruit than e're on Trees did grow.*

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## CHAP. III.

## Upon the Gathering in of Fruits in Autumn.

*When Trees are ſhak'd, but little Fruit remains,*
*Juſt ſuch a remnant to the Lord pertains.*

## OBSERVATION.

IT is a pleaſant ſight in Autumn to ſee the fruitful Branches hanging full of Cluſters, which weigh the Boughs to the Ground.

*Aſpice curvatos pomorum pondere ramos*
*Ut ſua quod peperit vix ferat arbor onus.*
Which I may thus Engliſh;
*O what a pleaſant ſight it is to ſee,*
*The fruitful Cluſters bowing down the Tree.*

But theſe laden Branches are ſoon eaſed of the burden, for as ſoon as they are ripe, the Husbandman aſcends the Tree, and ſhaking the Limbs ll his might, cauſe a fruitful ſhower to fall like Hailſtones upon the Ground below, which being gather'd to a heap, are carried to the Pound, broken all to pieces in a Trough, and ſqueez'd to a dry lump in the Preſs, whence all their juice and moiſture runs into the Fat. How few eſcape this Fat, of all thoſe multitudes that grew in the Orchard? If you now look upon the Trees, you may poſſibly ſee here one, and there another, two or three upon the utmoſt Branches, but nothing in compariſon to the vaſt numbers that are thus uſed.

## APPLICATION.

THis ſmall remains of Fruit, which are either left upon the Tree, or gather'd in for an hoard, do well reſemble that ſmall number of God's Elect in the World, which Free-Grace hath reſerved out of the general ruin of Mankind. Four things are excellently ſhadowed forth to us by this ſimilitude.

1. You ſee in a fruitful Autumn, the Tree even oppreſt and over-laden with the weight of their own Fruits before the ſhaking time come, and then they are eaſed of their burden. Thus, the whole Creation groans under the weight of their Sins who inhabit it, *Rom.* 8. 22. the Creatures are in Bondage, and by an Elegant *Proſopeia*, are ſaid, both to groan and wait for deliverance. The Original Sin of Man brought an Original Curſe, which burthens the Creature, *Gen.* 3. 17. *Curſed is the Ground for thy ſake;* and the Actual Sin of Man brings Actual Curſes upon the Creature, *Pſal.* 107. 34. Thus the Inhabitants of the World load and burden it, as the Limbs of a Tree are burthened, and ſometimes broken with the weight of their own Fruit.

2. You may obſerve in your Orchards every Year, what abundance of Fruits daily fall, either by Storms, or of their own accord; but when the ſhaking time comes, then the Ground is covered all over with Fruit. Thus it is with the World, that Myſtical Tree, with reſpect to Men that inhabit it; there is not a Year, a Day or Hour, in which ſome drop not, as it were, of their own accord by a natural Death; and ſometimes Wars, and Epidemical Plagues blow down thouſands together into their Graves; theſe are as high Winds in a fruitful Orchard, but when the ſhaking time, the Autumn of the World comes, then all its Inhabitants ſhall be ſhaken down together, either by Death, or a Tranſlation equivolent thereunto.

3. When Fruits are ſhaken down from their ees, then the Husbandman ſeparates them; the greater part for the Pound, and ſome few he rves for an hoard, which are brought to his ble, and eaten with Pleaſure. This excellently lows forth that great ſeparation, which Chriſt make in the end of the World, when ſome l be caſt into the Wine-preſs of the Almighty's ath, and others preſerved for Glory.

. Thoſe Fruits which are preſerved on the e, or in the hoard, are comparitively but an dful to thoſe that are broken in the Pound. s! 'tis ſcarce one of a thouſand, and ſuch a ll remnant of Elected Souls hath God reſerved Glory.

look upon the World as a great Tree, conſiſt- of four large Limbs or Branches; this Branch Diviſion of it on which we grow, hath doubtleſs eater number of God's Elect upon it, than the r three; and yet when I look with a ſerious and conſidering Eye upon this fruitful *European* Branch, and ſee how much rotten and withered Fruit there grows upon it, it makes me ſay as *Chryſoſtom* did of his populous *Antioch.* Ah, how ſmall a remnant hath *Jeſus Chriſt* among theſe vaſt numbers! *Many* indeed *are called,* but, ah, *how few are choſen!* Mat. 20. 16. Alas! they are but as the gleanings when the Vintage is done; here and there one upon its outmoſt Branches. To allude to that, *Iſa.* 17. 6. It was a ſad Obſervation which that ſearching Scholar (Mr. *Brierwood*) long ſince made upon the World, that dividing it into thirty equal parts, he found no leſs than nineteen of them wholly over-ſpread with Idolatry and Heatheniſh darkneſs; and of the eleven remaining parts, no leſs than ſix are *Mahometans;* ſo that there remains but five of thirty, which profeſs the Chriſtian Religion at large; and the far greater part of theſe remaining five, are invellop'd and drowned in Popiſh Darkneſs; ſo that you ſee the Reformed *Proteſtant Religion* is confined to a ſmall ſpot of Ground indeed. Now, if from theſe we ſubſtract all the groſly ignorant, openly profane, meerly civil, and ſecretly hypocritical; judge then in your ſelves, how ſmall a ſcantling of the World falls to Chriſt's ſhare.

Well might Chriſt ſay, *Mat.* 7. 14. *Narrow is the way, and ſtrait is the gate, that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.* And again, *Luke* 12. 32. *Fear not, little, little flock.* The large piece goes to the Devil, a little remnant is Chriſt's, *Rom.* 9. 27. Saints in Scripture are called *Jewels,* Mal. 3. 17. Precious Pearls and Diamonds, which the *Latines* call *Uniones. Quia nulli duo ſimul reperiuntur* (ſaith *Pliny*) becauſe Nature gives them not by pairs, but one by one. How many Pebbles to one Pearl? Suitable to this notion, is that complaint of the Prophet, *Mic.* 7. 1, 2. *Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the Summer Fruits, as the Grape gleanings of the Vintage, there is no cluſter to eat; my Soul deſired the firſt ripe Fruits; the good man is periſhed out of the Earth, and there is none,* (*i.e.* none comparitively) *upright among men.* The *Prophet* alludes to a poor hungry man, that after the gathering time is paſt, comes into an Orchard deſiring ſome choice Fruits to eat, but alas! he finds none; there is no Cluſter; poſſibly here and there a ſingle Saint, like a ſingle Apple, here and there one after the ſhaking time. True Saints are the World's Rarities.

## REFLECTIONS.

A Reflection for one that follows the example of the multitude.

1. What then will be my Lot, when that great ſhaking time ſhall come, who have followed the multitude, and gone with the Tyde of the World? How even when I have been preſſed to ſtrictneſs and ſingular diligence in the matters of Salvation, and told what a narrow way the way of Life is, have I put it off with this; if it be ſo, then wo to Thouſands. Ah, fooliſh Heart! Thouſands and ten Thouſands ſhall be woful and miſerable indeed to all Eternity. Will it be any mitigation to my Miſery, that I ſhall have Thouſands of miſerable Companions with me in Hell? Or will it be admitted for a good Plea at the Judgment-ſeat; Lord, I did as the generality of my Neighbours in the World did; except it were here and there a more Preciſe Perſon, I ſaw none, but lived as I lived. Ah, fooliſh Sinner! Is it not better to go to Heaven alone, than to Hell with Company? The worſt Courſes, have

always the moſt Imitators, and the Road to Deſtruction is thronged with Paſſengers.

A Reflection for an abuſer of Mercy.

2. And how little better is my Condition? Who have often fathered the wickedneſs of my own Heart, upon the Incouragement of Mercy. Thus hath my Heart pleaded againſt Strictneſs and Duty. God is a merciful God, and will not be ſo ſevere with the World to damn ſo many Thouſands as are in my Condition; deluded Soul, if God had damned the whole Race of *Adam*; he had done them no wrong; yea, there is more Mercy in ſaving but one Man, than there is of ſeverity and rigour in Damning all: How many Drunkards and Adulterers have lived and dyed with thy Plea in their Mouths? *God is a merciful God*; but yet his Word expreſly ſaith, *Be not deceived, ſuch ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. 6. 9. God indeed, is a God of infinite Mercy; but he will never exerciſe his Mercy to the prejudice of his Truth.

A Reflection for an Elect Soul.

3. O, what rich Grace is here! That in a general Shipwrack *Mercy* ſhould caſt forth a Line or Plank to ſave me! That when Millions periſh, I with a few more ſhould eſcape that Perdition. Was it the Father's good Pleaſure to beſtow the Kingdom upon a little Flock, and to make me one of that Number? What ſingular Obligations hath *Mercy* put upon my Soul! The fewer are ſaved, the more cauſe have they that are, to admire their Saviour! If but one of a Thouſand had been Damned, yet my Salvation would have been an act of infinite Grace; but when ſcarce one of a Thouſand are ſaved, what ſhall I call that Grace, that caſt my Lot among them!

## The POEM.

*He that with ſpiritual Eyes in Autumn ſees*
*The heaps of Fruit that falls from ſhaken Trees,*
*Like ſtorms of Hail-ſtones; and can hardly find*
*One of a thouſand that remains behind.*
*Methinks this Meditation ſhould awake*
*His Soul, and make it like thoſe Trees to ſhake.*
*Of all the Cluſters which ſo lately grew*
*Upon theſe Trees, how few can they now ſhew?*
*Here one, and there another; two or three*
*Upon the outmoſt Branches of a Tree.*
*The greateſt numbers to the Pound are born,*
*Squeez'd in the Trough, and all to pieces torn:*
*This little handful's left to ſhadow forth*
*To me God's remnant in this peopl'd Earth.*
*If o're the whole Terreſtrial Globe I look,*
*The Goſpel viſits but a little nook.*
*The reſt with horrid Darkneſs over-ſpread,*
*Are faſt aſleep, yea, in Tranſgreſſion dead.*
*Whole droves to Hell the Devil daily drives;*
*Not one amongſt them once reſiſts or ſtrives.*
*And in this little Heaven-inlightned ſpot,*
*How vaſt an Intereſt hath Satan got?*
*But few of Holineſs profeſſion make,*
*And if from thoſe that do profeſs I take*
*The ſelf-deluding Hypocrites, I fear*
*To think how few remain that are ſincere.*
*O tax not Mercy that it ſaves ſo few,*
*But rather wonder that the Lord ſhould ſhew*
*Mercy to any; quarrel not with Grace,*
*But for thy ſelf God's gracious terms embrace.*
*When all were Shipwrackt, thou ſhouldſt wonder more*
*To find thy ſelf ſo ſtrangely caſt aſhore,*
*And there to meet with any that can tell*
*How narrowly they alſo ſcap'd from Hell.*
*The ſmaller number Mercy ſaves, the higher*
*Ingagements lye on thee ſtill to admire.*
*Had the whole ſpecies periſh'd in their Sin,*
*And not one individual ſaved been;*
*Yet every Tongue before him muſt be mute,*
*Confeſs his righteouſneſs; but not diſpute.*
*Or had the hand of Mercy which is free*
*Taken another, and paſs'd over me;*
*I ſtill muſt juſtifie him, and my Tongue*
*Confeſs my Maker had done me no wrong.*
*But if my Name he pleaſe to let me ſee*
*Enroll'd among thoſe few that ſaved be,*
*What admiration ſhould ſuch Mercy move!*
*What thanks, and Praiſe, and everlaſting Love.*

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## CHAP. IV.

### Upon the cutting down of Dead Trees.

*Dead barren Trees you for the Fire prepare,*
*In ſuch a Caſe all fruitleſs Perſons are.*

## OBSERVATION.

After many years patience, in the uſe of al means to recover a Fruit-Tree, if the Hu bandman ſee it be quite dead, and that there ca be no more expectation of any Fruit from it, h brings his Axe, and hews it down by the Roo and from the Orchard it's carried to the Fire, i being then fit for nothing elſe; he reckons it im prudent to let ſuch a uſeleſs Tree abide in goo Ground, where another may be planted in it Room that will better pay for the ground it ſtand in. I my ſelf once ſaw a large Orchard of Fa but fruitleſs Trees, all rooted up, rived abroa and ricked up for the Fire.

## APPLICATION.

Thus deals the Lord by uſeleſs and barren Pro feſſors, who do but cumber his Ground, Ma 3. 10. *And now alſo the Axe is laid to the Root of th Trees; therefore every Tree that brings not forth g Fruit, is hewn down and caſt into the Fire.* And Luk 13. 7. *Then ſaid the dreſſer of the Vineyard, Behol this three years I came ſeeking Fruit on this Fig-tree, find none; cut it down, why cumbreth it the Groun* Theſe three years, alluding to the time of his Mi niſtry, he being at that time entring upon his la half year, as one obſerves, by harmonizing the E vangeliſts; ſo long he had waited for the Fru of his Miniſtry among thoſe dead hearted *Jew* now his Patience is even at an end, cut them do (ſaith he) why cumber they the Ground? I wi plant others, (*viz.* the *Gentiles*) in their Roo This hewing down of the barren Tree doth in lively manner ſhadow forth God's judicial Pr ceedings againſt formal and empty Profeſſors u der the Goſpel; and the reſemblance clearly ho in theſe following particulars.

1. The Tree that is to be hewn down for t Fire, ſtands in the Orchard among other flour ing Trees, where it hath enjoyed the benefit o good Soyl, a ſtrong Fence, and much Cultu but being barren, theſe Priviledges ſecure it from the Fire. It is not our ſtanding in the ble Church by a powerleſs Profeſſion among Saints with whom we have been aſſociated,

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enjoyed the rich and excellent waterings of Ordinances, that can ſecure us from the wrath of God, *Mat.* 3. 8, 9. *Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and think not to ſay within your ſelves, we have* Abraham *to our father.* Neither *Abraham*, nor *Abraham's* God, will acknowledge ſuch degenerate Children; if *Abraham's* Faith be not in your *Hearts*, it will be no advantage that *Abraham's* Blood runs in your *Veins.* 'Twill be a poor plea for *Judas*, when he ſhall ſtand before *Chriſt* in Judgment, to ſay, Lord I was one of thy Family, I Preached for thee, I did eat and drink in thy preſence. Let theſe Scriptures be conſulted, *Mat.* 7. 22. *Mat.* 25. 11, 12. *Rom.* 2. 17. and 25.

2. The Husbandman doth not preſently cut down the Tree, becauſe it puts not forth as ſoon as other Trees do, but waits as long as there is any hope, and then cuts it down. Thus doth God wait upon barren dead-hearted Perſons, from Sabbath to Sabbath, and from Year to Year; for the Lord is long-ſuffering to us-ward, and not willing that any ſhould periſh, but all come to Repentance, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. Thus the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of *Noah* upon thoſe dry Trees, who are now ſmoaking and flaming in Hell, 1 *Pet.* 3. 20. He waits long on Sinners, but keeps exact accounts of every year and day of his patience, *Luke* 13. 7. *Theſe three years.* And *Jer.* 25. 3. Theſe Twenty three years.

3. When the time is come to cut it down, the dead Tree cannot poſſibly reſiſt the ſtroke of the Axe, but receives the blow, and falls before it. No more can the ſtouteſt Sinner reſiſt the fatal ſtroke of death, by which the Lord hews him down, *Eccl.* 8. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the Spirit, to retain the Spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death, and there is no diſcharge in that war.* When the pale Horſe comes, away you muſt into the Land of Darkneſs: Though thou cry with *Adrian*, O my poor Soul, whither art thou going! Die thou muſt, thou barren Profeſſor; though it were better for thee to do any thing elſe than to die. What a dreadful ſcreech will thy Conſcience give, when it ſees the Axe at thy Root! And ſay to thee as it is, *Ezek.* 7. 6. *An end is come, the end is come; it watcheth for thee, behold it is come.* O ſaid *Henry Beauford*, (that rich and wretched Cardinal, Biſhop of *Winceſter*, and Chancellor of *England*, when he perceived whereto he muſt) wherefore muſt I die? If the whole Realm would ſave my life, I am able either by Policy to get it, or by Riches to buy it, Fye, (quoth he) will not death be hired? Will Riches do nothing? No, neither Riches nor Policy can then avail.

4. That ſide to which the Tree leaned moſt while it ſtood, that way it will fall when it is cut down; and as it falls ſo it lyes, whether to the South or North, *Eccleſ.* 11. 3. So it fares with theſe Myſtical Trees, I mean fruitleſs Profeſſors. Had their Hearts and Affections inclined and bended Heaven-ward whilſt they lived, that way no doubt they had fallen at their death; but as their Hearts inclined to ſin, and even bended to the World, ſo when God gives the fatal ſtroke, they muſt fall Hell-ward and Wrath-ward; and how dreadful will ſuch a fall be?

5. When the dead Tree is carried out of the Orchard, it ſhall never be among the living Trees of the Orchard any more; many years it grew among them, but now it ſhall never have a place there again. And when the barren Profeſſor is carried out of the Word by death, he ſhall never be aſſociated with the Saints any more. He may then ſay, Farewell all ye Saints among whom I lived, and with whom I ſo often heard, faſted, prayed. I ſhall never ſee your Face more, *Mat.* 8. 11, 12. *I ſay unto you, that many ſhall come from the Eaſt, and Weſt, and North, and South, and ſhall ſit down with* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob, *in the kingdom of Heaven; but the Children of the Kingdom ſhall be caſt forth into outer darkneſs, there ſhall be weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth.*

6. When the dead Tree is carried out of the Orchard, the Husbandman cuts off his Branches, and rives him aſunder with his Wedges. This alſo is the Lot of barren Profeſſors. *The Lord of that Servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and will cut him aſunder*; he ſhall be diſſected, or cut abroad *Luke* 12. 46.

Now therefore conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt I tear (or rend) you in pieces, *Pſa.* 50. 22. O direful day! when the ſame hand which planted, pruned, and watered thee ſo long, and ſo tenderly, ſhall now ſtrike mortal ſtrokes at thee, and that without pity: *For he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour.* Iſa. 27. 11. For the day of mercy is over, and the day of his Wrath is fully come.

7. When this Tree is cleav'd abroad, then it's rotten, hollow inſide appears, which was the cauſe of its barrenneſs; it looked like a fair and ſound, bodied Tree, but now all may ſee how rotten it is at the heart: So will God in that day, when he ſhall diſſect the barren Profeſſor, diſcover the rottenneſs of his Heart, and unſoundneſs of his Principles and End; then they who never ſuſpected him before, ſhall ſee what a hollow and rotten-hearted Profeſſor he was.

8. Laſtly, The fruitleſs Tree is caſt into the Fire. This alſo is the end and ſad iſſue of formality, *John* 15. 6. *He is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned.* This is an undoubted truth, that there is no Plant in God's Vineyard, but he will have glory from it by bearing Fruit, or glory on it by burning in the Fire. In this Fire ſhall they lye *gnaſhing their teeth, Luke* 13. 38. and that both in indignation againſt the Saints, whom they ſhall ſee in glory, and againſt Jeſus Chriſt, who would not ſave them; and againſt themſelves, for loſing ſo fooliſhly the opportunities of Salvation. Do you behold when you ſit by the Fire, the froth that boyls out of thoſe flaming Logs? O think of that foam and rage of theſe undone Creatures, foaming and gnaſhing their Teeth in that Fire which is not quenched, *Mark* 9. 44.

## REFLECTION.

How often have I paſſed by ſuch barren Trees with a more barren Heart? As little thinking ſuch a Tree to be the *Emblem* of my ſelf, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did, when he ſaw that Tree in a Dream which repreſented himſelf, and ſhadowed forth to him his enſuing miſery, *Dan.* 4. 13. But Oh my Conſcience! my drouzy, ſleepy Conſcience! wert thou but tender and faithful to me, thou wouldſt make as round and terrible an Application of ſuch a Spectacle to me, as the faithful Prophet did to him. *v.* 22. And thus wouldſt thou, O my Soul, bemoan thy condition!

*A Reflection for a formal Hypocrite.*

Poor wretch, here I grow for a little time, among the Trees of Righteouſneſs, the Plants of Renown; but I am none of them, I was never planted a right Seed; ſome green and flouriſhing Leaves of Profeſſion indeed I have, which deceive others, but God cannot be deceived; he ſees I am fruitleſs and rotten at the heart. Poor Soul, what will thine end be but burning! Behold, the Axe lyeth by thy Root, and wonder it is, that there it ſhould lye ſo long, and I yet ſtanding! ſtill mercy pleads for a fruitleſs Creature; Lord, ſpare it one year longer. Alas! he need ſtrike no great blow to ruin me, his very Breath blows to deſtruction, *Job* 4. 9. A frown of his Face can blaſt and ruin me, *Pſa.* 80. 6. He is daily ſollicited by his Juſtice to hew me down, and yet I ſtand. Lord, cure my Barrenneſs; I know thou hadſt rather ſee Fruit than Fire upon me.

### The POEM.

*IF after pains and patience you can ſee*
*No hopes of Fruit, down goes the barren Tree.*
*You will not ſuffer Trees that are unſound,*
*And barren too, to cumber uſeful ground.*
*The fatal Axe is laid unto the root,*
*Its fit for fire, when unfit for fruit*
*But though this be a dead and barren Tree,*
*Reader, I would not have it ſo to thee.*
*May it to thee this ſerious thought ſuggeſt,*
*In all the Orchard this dead Trees the beſt;*
*Think on it ſadly, lay it cloſe to heart,*
*This is the caſe in which thou waſt, or art.*
*If ſo thou waſt, but now doſt live and grow*
*And bring forth fruit, what praiſe and thanks doſt owe*
*To that wiſe Husbandman that made thee ſo!*
*O think when Juſtice lifted up its hand,*
*How mercy did then interceeding ſtand!*
*How pity did on thy behalf appear,*
*To beg reprival for another year.*
*Stop Lord, forbear him; all hope is not paſt,*
*He can but be for fire at the laſt.*
*Though many Sermons, many a gracious call*
*He hath reſiſted like a brazen Wall.*
*The next may win him, when thy Grace ſhall raiſe*
*Unto it ſelf a Monument of praiſe.*
*How ſhould this Meditation thaw and melt*
*The heart of him that hath ſuch mercy felt.*
*But if thou ſtill remain a barren Tree,*
*Then here, as in a mirrour, thou maiſt ſee*
*Thy wretched ſtate, when Juſtice at a blow,*
*Requites God's patience in thine overthow.*
*And canſt thou bear it, can thy heart indure*
*To think of everlaſting burnings? ſure*
*This muſt thy lot, thy fearful portion be,*
*If thou continue ſtill a barren Tree.*

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD PART OF Husbandry.

*NOW from the pleaſant Orchard let us walk*
*A turn i'th' Fields, and there converſe and talk*
*With Cows and Horſes, they can teach us ſome*
*Choice Leſſons, though irrational and dumb.*
*My Reader's weary, yet I do not fear*
*To be forſaken by one Reader here.*
*He'll doubtleſs ſtay to hear what queſtions I*
*Propound to Beaſts, and how they make reply.*
*The fatted Ox, and pamper'd Horſe you ride;*
*Their Careleſs Maſter for his care thus chide.*

## CHAP. I.

### Upon the Husbandman's Care for his Cattel.

*More care for Horſe and Oxen many take*
*Than for their Souls, or deareſt Childrens ſake.*

### OBSERVATION.

MAny Husbandmen are exceſſively careful about their Cattel, riſing themſelves early, or cauſing their Servants to riſe betimes to provinder and dreſs them. Much time is ſpent in ſome Countries, in trimming and adorning their Horſes with curious Trappings and plumes of Feathers; and if at any time a beaſt be ſick, what care is taken to recover and heal them? You will be ſure they ſhall want nothing that is neceſſary for them; yea, many will chuſe rather to want themſelves, than ſuffer their Horſes ſo to do; and take a great deal of Comfort to ſee them thrive and proſper under their hands.

### APPLICATION.

WHat one ſaid of Bloody *Herod*, who ſlew ſo many Children at *Bethlehem*, That it were better to be his Swine, than his Son, may be truly enough applyed to ſome Parents and Maſters, who take leſs care for the ſaving the Souls of their Children and Servants, than they do for the Bodies of thoſe Beaſts which daily feed at their Stalls and Cribs. Many there be who do in reference to their Souls, as *Jacob* did, with reſpect to the preſervation of their Bodies, when he put all the Herds of Cattel before, and his wives and little ones behind, as he went to meet his Brother *Eſau.* 'Tis a weighty ſaying of a grave Author; *It's vile ingratitude to rejoyce when Cattel multiply, and repine when Children increaſe; its Heatheniſh diſtruſtfulneſs to fear, that he who provides for your Beaſts, will not provide for your Children; and it's no leſs than unnatural cruelty to be careful of the Bodies of Beaſts, and careleſs of the Souls of Children.* Let us but a little compare your care and diligence in both reſpects, and ſee in a few Particulars, whether you do indeed value your own, or your Children and Servants Souls, as you do the Life and Health of a Beaſt.

*Jenk.* on *Jude* part. 2. p. 170.

1. Your care for your very Horſes is expreſſed early, whilſt they are but Colts, and not come to do you any Service; you are willing to be at pains and coſt, to have them broken and brought to their way. This is more then ever many of them did for their Children; they can ſee them wild and profane, naturally taking a ſtroke or way of wickedneſs, but yet never were at any pains or coſt to break them; theſe muſt be fondl'd and cockered up in the natural way of their own corruption and wickedneſs, and not a Rod or Reproof uſed to break them of it.

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Clark's Mir. p. 506.

'Tis obſerved of the *Perſians*, that they put out their Children to School as ſoon as they could ſpeak, and would not ſee them in ſeven years after, leſt their Indulgence ſhould do them hurt.

2. You keep your conſtant ſet times, *Morning* and *Evening*, to feed, water, and dreſs your Cattel, and will by no means neglect it once; but how many times have you neglected *Morning* and *Evening* Duties in your Families! Yea, how many be there, whoſe very Tables, in reſpect of any Worſhip God hath there, do very little differ from the very Cribs and Mangers at which their Horſes feed? As ſoon as you are up in a Morning, you are with your Beaſts before you have been with your God; how little do ſuch differ from Beaſts? And happy were it, if they were no more accountable to God than their Beaſts are?

The end of your care, coſt and pains about your Cattel is, that they may be ſtrong for labour, and the more ſerviceable to you; thus you comply with the end of their Beings. But how rare a thing is it to find theſe men as careful to fit their Poſterity to be uſeful and ſerviceable to God in their Generations, which is the end of their Beings? If you can make them rich, and provide good matches for them, you reckon that you have fully diſcharched the Duty of Parents; if they will learn to hole the Plow, that you are willing to teach them; but when did you ſpend an hour to teach them the way of Salvation?

Now to convince ſuch careleſs Parents of the heinouſneſs of their Sin, let theſe four Queries be ſolemnly conſidered.

*Qu.* 1. Whether this be a ſufficient diſcharge of that great Duty which God hath laid upon Chriſtian Parents, in reference to their Families? That God hath charged them with the Souls of their Families is undeniable, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7. *Eph.* 6. 4. If God had not cloathed you with his Authority to command them in the way of the Lord, he would never have charged them ſo ſtrictly to yield you obedience as he hath done, *Eph.* 6. 1. *Col.* 3. 20. Well, a great truſt is repoſed in you, look to your Duty, for, without diſpute, you ſhall anſwer for it.

*Qu.* 2. Whether it be likely, if the time of Youth ( which is the moulding Age) be neglected, they will be wrought upon to any good afterwards? Husbandmen, let me put a ſenſible Caſe to you? Do not you ſee in your very Horſes, that whilſt they are young, you can bring them to any way; but if once they have got a falſe ſtroke, and by long cuſtom it be grown natural to them, then there is no breaking them of it: Yea, you ſee it in your very Orchards, you may bring a tender twig to grow in what form you pleaſe; but when its grown to a ſturdy limb, there is no bending it afterwards to any other form than what it naturally took. Thus it is with Children, Prov. 22. 6. *Train up a Child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

*Qu.* 3. Whether if you neglect to inſtruct them in the way of the Lord, *Satan*, and their own natural Corruptions will not inſtruct them in the way to Hell? Conſider this ye careleſs Parents; if you will not teach your Children, the Devil will teach them; if you ſhew them not how to Pray, he will ſhew them how to Curſe and Swear, and take the Name of the Lord in vain; if you grudge time and pains about their Souls, the Devil doth not. Oh, 'tis a ſad conſideration, that ſo many Children ſhould be put to School to the Devil!

*Qu.* 4. What comfort are you like to have from them when they are old, if you bring them not up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord when they are young? Many Parents have lived to reap in their old Age, the fruit of their own folly and careleſsneſs, in the looſe and vain Education of their Children. By *Licurgus* his Law, no Parent was to be relieved by his Children in Age, if he gave them not good Education in their Youth; and it is a Law at this day among the *Switzers*, That if any Child be condemned to die for a Capital Offence, the Parents of that Child are to be his Executioners; theſe Laws were made to provoke Parents to look better to their Charge. Believe this as an undoubted Truth; That that Child which becomes (through thy default) an Inſtrument to diſhonour God, ſhall prove ſooner or later a Son or Daughter of Sorrow to thee.

## REFLECTIONS.

A Reflection for Careleſs Parents.

1. God hath found out my ſin this day. This hath been my practice ever ſince I had a Family committed to my Charge; I have ſpent more time and pains about the Bodies of my Beaſts, than the Souls of my Children; Beaſt that I am for ſo doing; little have I conſidered the preciouſneſs of my own, or their Immortal Souls. How careful have I been to provide Fodder to preſerve my Cattel in the Winter, whilſt I leave my own and their Souls to periſh to Eternity, and make no proviſion for them? Surely my Children will one day Curſe the time that ever they were born unto ſuch a cruel Father, or of ſuch a merciless Mother. Should I bring home the Plague into my Family, and live to ſee all my poor Children lie dead by the Walls, if I had not the heart of a Tyger, ſuch a ſight would melt my Heart; and yet the death of their Souls, by the Sin which I propagated to them, affects me not! Ah, that I could ſay, I had done as much for them, as I have done for a Beaſt that periſheth!

A Reflection for the Diſobedient Child of a Gracious Parent.

2. But unhappy wretch that I am, God caſt a better Lot for me, I am the Off-ſpring of *Religious* and tender Parents, who have always deeply concerned themſelvs in the everlaſting *ſtate of my Soul*; many Prayers and Tears have they poured out to God for me, both in my hearing as well as in ſecret; many holy and wholſom Counſels have they from time to time dropt upon me; many precious Examples have they ſet in their own practice before me; many a time when I have ſinned againſt the Lord, have they ſtood over me with a Rod in their Hands, and Tears in their Eyes, uſing all means to reclaim me, but like an ungracious wretch I have ſlighted all their Counſel, grieved their Hearts, and imbittered their Lives to them, by my ſinſul courſes. Ah, my Soul! thou art a degenerate Plant; better will it be with the Off-ſpring of Infidels than with thee, if Repentance prevent not; now I live in one Family with them, but ſhortly I ſhall be ſeparated from them, as far as Hell is from Heaven; they now tenderly pity my Miſery, but then they ſhall approve and applaud the Righteous Sentence of Chriſt upon me: So little Priviledge ſhall I then have from my Relation to them, that they ſhall be produced as Witneſſes,

neſſes againſt me, and all their rejected Counſels, Reproofs, and Examples, charged home upon me, as the aggravations of my wickedneſs; and better it will be, when it ſhall come to that, that I had been brought forth by a Beaſt, than ſprang from the Loins of ſuch Parents.

## The POEM.

*YOur Cattel in fat Paſtures thrive and grow,*
*There's nothing wanting that ſhould make them ſo.*
*The pamper'd Horſe commends his Maſters care,*
*Who neither Pains or Coſt doth grudge or ſpare.*
*But art not thou mean while the verieſt Fool,*
*That Pamper'ſt Beaſts, and ſtarv'ſt thy Precious Soul?*
*'Twere well if you could die as now you live*
*Like Beaſts; and had no more account to give.*
*O that theſe Lines your folly might detect!*
*Who both your own and Childrens Souls neglect*
*To care for Beaſts. O Man, prepare to hear*
*The doleful'ſt Language, that e're pierc'd thine ear!*
*When you your Children once in Hell ſhall meet,*
*And with ſuch Language their Damn'd Parents greet,*
“ *O curſed Father, wretched Mother, why*
“ *Was I your off-ſpring? Would to God that I*
“ *Had ſprung from Tygers, who more tender be*
“ *Unto their youngs than you have been to me.*
“ *How did you ſpend your thoughts, time, care and coſt*
“ *About my Body, whilſt my Soul was loſt?*
“ *Did you not know I had a Soul that muſt*
“ *Live, when this Body was deſolv'd to duſt?*
“ *You could not chuſe but underſtand if I,*
“ *Without an intereſt in Chriſt did die,*
“ *It needs muſt come to this; O how could you*
“ *Prove ſo remorſleſs, and no pity ſhew!*
“ *Oh cruel Parents! I may curſe the day*
“ *That I was born of ſuch as did betray*
“ *Their Child to endleſs Torments. Now muſt I*
“ *With, and through you, in flames for ever lye.*
*Let this make every Parent tremble, leaſt*
*He loſe his Child, whilſt caring for his Beaſt.*
*Or leſt his own poor Soul do ſtarve and pine,*
*Whilſt he takes thoughts for Horſes, Sheep and Kine.*

## CHAP. II.

## Upon the hard Labour and cruel Uſage of Beaſts.

*When under loads your Beaſts do groan, think then*
*How great a mercy 'tis that you are Men.*

### OBSERVATION.

THough ſome Men be exceſſively careful and tender over their Beaſts (as was noted in the former Chapter) yet others are cruel and mercileſs towards them, not regarding how they ride or burden them. How often have I ſeen them fainting under their loads, wrought off their Legs, and turned out, with galled Backs, into the Fields or High-ways to ſhift for a little Graſs? Many times have I heard and pitied them, groaning under unreaſonable Burdens, and beaten on by mercileſs drivers, till, at laſt, by ſuch cruel uſage, they have been deſtroyed, and then caſt into a Ditch for Dogs Meat!

### APPLICATION.

SUch ſights as theſe ſhould make Men thankful for the Mercy of their Creation, and bleſs their bountiful Creator, that they were not made ſuch Creatures themſelves. Some Beaſts are made *ad eſum*, only for Food, being no otherwiſe uſeful to Man, as *Swine*, &c. theſe are only fed for ſlaughter, we kill and eat them, and regard not their cries and ſtruglings when the Knife is thruſt to their very Hearts; others are only *ad uſum*, for ſervice, whilſt living, but unprofitable when dead; as *Horſes*, theſe we make to drudge and toyl for us from day to day, but kill them not; others are both *ad eſum, & uſum*, for food when dead, and ſervice whilſt alive, as the Ox. Theſe we make to Plow our Fields, draw our Carriages, and afterwards prepare them for ſlaughter.

*Luther in 3. Precept.*

But Man was made for nobler ends, created Lord of the lower World; not to ſerve, but to be ſerved by other Creatures; a Mercy able to melt the hardeſt Heart into thankfulneſs. I remember, *Luther* preſſing men to be thankful, that they are not brought into the loweſt condition of Creatures, and to bleſs God that they can ſee any Creature below themſelves, gives us a famous inſtance in the following Story: Two *Cardinals* (ſaith he) riding in a great deal of Pomp to the Council of *Conſtance*, by the way they heard a man in the Fields, weeping and wailing bitterly, they rode to him, and asked what he ailed? Perceiving his Eye intently fixed upon an ugly Toad, he told them that his Heart was melted with the conſideration of this Mercy, that God had not made him ſuch a deformed and loathſom Creature, though he were formed out of the ſame Clay with it: *Hoc eſt quod amare fleo*, ſaid he, This is that, that makes me weep bitterly. Whereupon one of the *Cardinals* cries out, Well, ſaid the Father, the unlearned will riſe and take Heaven, when we with all our Learning ſhall be thruſt into Hell. That which melted the Heart of this poor man, ſhould melt every Heart when we behold the Miſery to which theſe poor creatures are ſubjected. And this will appear a Mercy of no ſlight conſideration, if we but draw a compariſon betwixt our ſelves, and theſe irrational Creatures, in theſe three Particulars.

1. Though they and we were made of the ſame mould and clay, yet how much better hath God dealt with us, even as to the outward man? The ſtructure of our Bodies is much more excellent, God made other creatures by a word of Command, but man by Counſel; it was not be Thou, but let us make Man. We might have been made Stones without ſenſe, or Beaſts without reaſon, but we were made men. The noble ſtructure and ſymetry of our Bodies invites our Souls not only to thankfulneſs but admiration. *David* ſpeaking of the curious frame of the Body, ſaith, *I am wonderfully made*, Pſal. 139. 14. or as the vulgar reads it, painted as with a Needle; like ſome rich piece of Needle-work curiouſly Embroidered with Nerves and Veins. Was any part of the common lump of Clay thus faſhioned? *Galen* gave *Epicurus* an hundred years time to imagine a more commodious Situation, Configuration, or Compoſition of any one part of a humane Body; and (as one ſaith) if all the Angels in Heaven had ſtudied to this day, they could not have caſt the Body of man into a more curious Mould.

2. How little eaſe or reſt have they? They live not many years, and thoſe they do is in Bondage and Miſery, groaning under the effects of ſin; but God hath provided better for us, even as to our outward condition in the World; we have the more reſt, becauſe they have ſo little. How many refreſhments and comforts hath God provided for us, of which they are uncapable? If we be weary with labour, we can take our reſt; but freſh or weary, they muſt ſtand to it, or ſink under it from day to day.

3. What a narrow capacity hath God given to Beaſts! What a large capacity to Man! Alas, they are only capable of a little ſenſitive pleaſure; as you ſhall ſee ſometimes, how they will friſk in a green Paſture, this is all they be capable of, and this death puts an end to; but how comprehenſive are our Souls in their capacities? We are made in the Image of God; we can look beyond preſent things, and are capable of the higheſt happineſs, and that to all Eternity; the Soul of a Beaſt is but a material form, which wholly depending upon, muſt needs die with the Body; but our Souls are a Divine ſpark or blaſt; and when the Body dies, it dies not with it, but ſubſiſts even in its ſeparated ſtate.

## REFLECTIONS.

A Reflection for an Unthankful Sinner.

1. How great a ſin is ingratitude to God, for ſuch a common, but choice Mercy of Creation, and Proviſion for me in this World? There is no Creature made worſe by kindneſs, but Man. There is a kind of gratitude which I may obſerve even in theſe brute Beaſts; they do in their way acknowledge their Benefactors; *the Ox knows his Owner, and the Aſs his Maſters Crib.* How ready are they to ſerve ſuch as feed and cheriſh them? But I have been both unthankful and unſerviceable to my Creator and Benefactor, that hath done me good all my days; thoſe poor Creatures that ſweat and groan under the loads that I lay upon them, never ſinned againſt God, nor tranſgreſſed the Laws of their Creation as I have done; and yet God hath dealt better with me than with them. Oh that the Bounty of God, and his diſtinguiſhing Mercy between me and the Beaſts that periſh, might move and melt my Heart into thankfulneſs! O that I might conſider ſeriouſly what the higher and more excellent end of my Creation is, and might more endeavour to anſwer and live up to it! Or elſe (O my Soul) it will be worſe with thee than with the Beaſts. 'Tis true, they are under Bondage and Miſery; but it is but for a little time, death will end all their pains, and eaſe them of all their heavy loads; but I ſhall groan to all Eternity, under a heavier burden than ever they felt; they have no account to give, but ſo have I. What comfort is it that I have a larger capacity than a Beaſt hath? That God hath endowed me with Reaſon, which is denied to them? Alas! this will but augment my Miſery, and enlarge me to take in a greater meaſure of anguiſh.

A Reflection for an Elect Soul.

2. But how many ſteps (O my Soul) maiſt thou aſcend in the praiſes of thy God, when thou conſidereſt the Mercies that God hath owed upon thee! Not only in that he made thee, not a Stone or Tree without ſenſe, or an Horſe, or Dog without reaſon; but that thou art not an Infidel without light, or an unregenerate Perſon without grace. What! to have ſenſe, and all the delights of it, which Stones have not; reaſon, with the more high and noble pleaſures of it, which Beaſts have not; the light and and knowledge of the great things of the Goſpel, which the Heathens have not; and ſuch an expectation and hope of unconceivable Glory and Felicity, which the unſanctified have not. O my Soul! how rich! how bountiful hath thy God been to thee! Theſe are the overflowings of his love to thee, who waſt moulded out of the ſame lump with the *Beaſts* that groan on Earth, yea with the Damned that howl in Hell; well may I ſay, that God hath been a good God to me.

### The POEM.

*WHen I behold a tyred Jade put on*
*With Whip and Spur till all his ſtrength be (gone,*
*See ſtreams of ſweat run down his bleeding ſides,*
*How little mercy's ſhewn by him that rides.*
*If I more thankleſs to my God don't prove,*
*Than ſuch a Rider's mercileſs, 'twill move*
*My Soul to praiſe; for who ſees this, and can*
*But bleſs the Lord, that he was made a Man.*
*And ſuch a ſight the Rider ought to move,*
*This Meditation duly to improve.*
*What hath this Creature done, that he ſhould be*
*Thus beaten, wounded, and tyr'd out by me?*
*He is my Fellow-creature, 'tis meer Grace,*
*I had not been in his, he in my caſe.*
*Ungrateful, ſtupid Man, God might have made*
*Me bear the Saddle, as I ſee this Jade.*
*He never ſin'd, but for my ſin doth lye*
*Subjected unto all this miſery.*
*Lord, make my heart relent, that I ſhould be*
*To thee more uſeleſs, than my Horſe to me.*
*He did his utmoſt, went as long as ever*
*His Legs could bear him; but for me I never*
*Thus ſpent my ſtrength for God, but oft have been*
*Too prodigal thereof in ways of ſin;*
*Though he's the Horſe, and I the Man, 'twill be*
*Far better with my Horſe one day than me,*
*Unleſs thy Grace prevent, and ſuperadd*
*A new Creation unto that I had.*
*Could every Rider fix a ſerious thought*
*On ſuch a ſubject, and hereby be taught*
*To ſpiritualize it, and improve it thus;*
*How ſweet would tedious Journeys be to us!*
*But ſuch a task, a graceleſs heart digs out*
*More than the tyred Horſe I write about.*

## CHAP. III.

## Upon the ſeeking of loſt Cattel.

*When ſeeking your loſt Cattel, keep in mind*
*That thus Chriſt Jeſus ſeeks your Souls to find.*

### OBSERVATION.

WHen Cattel are ſtrayed away from your Fields, you uſe all care and diligence to recover them again, tracing their footſteps, crying them in Market-Towns, ſending your Servants abroad, and inquiring your ſelves of all that you think can give news of them. What care and pains Men will take in ſuch caſes, was exemplified in *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 9. 4, 5. who with his Servant paſſed through *Mount Ephraim*, to ſeek the Aſſes that were ſtrayed from his Father, and through the Land of *Shaliſha*, and through the Land of *Shalim*, and they were not there, and through the Land of the *Benjamites*, but found them not.

## APPLICATION.

THE care and pains you take to recover your loſt Cattel, carries a ſweet and lively repreſentation of the love of *Jeſus Chriſt*, in the recovery of loſt Sinners. *Jeſus Chriſt* came on purpoſe from Heaven upon a like Errand, to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt, *Mat.* 18. 11. There are ſeveral Particulars in which this glorious deſign of Chriſt, in ſeeking and ſaving loſt Man,and the care and pains of Husbandmen in recovering their loſt Cattel, do meet and touch, though there be as many particulars alſo in which they differ; all which I ſhall open under the following Heads.

1. We ſometimes find that Cattel will break out of thoſe very Fields where they have been bred, and where they want nothing that is needful for them. Juſt thus, loſt man departed from his God, brake out of that pleaſant encloſure where he was abundantly provided for, both as to Soul and Body; yet then he brake over the Hedge of the Command, and went aſtray, *Eccleſ.* 7. 29. *Lo this only have I found, that God made man upright, but he ſought out to himſelf many inventions.* He was not content and ſatisfied with that bleſſed ſtate God had put him into, but would be trying new concluſions to the loſs and ruin both of himſelf and his Poſterity.

2. Strayers are evermore ſufferers for it; all they get by it, is to be pinned and pounded; and what did Man get by departing from his God, but Ruin and Miſery to Soul and Body? Will you have an Abreviate of his Sufferings and Loſſes? (the full account none can give you) why? By ſtraying from his God, he loſt the rectitude and holineſs of his Nature; (like a true ſtrayer) he is all dirty and miry, overſpread and beſmeared both in Soul and Body,with the odious filthineſs of ſin; he loſt the liberty and freedom of his will to good; a precious Jewel of eſtimable value: This is a real Miſery incurr'd by the Fall, though ſome have ſo far loſt their underſtandings and humility, as not to own it; he hath loſt his God, his Soul, his Happineſs, and his very Bowels of Compaſſion towards himſelf in this miſerable ſtate.

3. When your Cattel are ſtrayed, yea, though it be but one of the Flock or Herd, you leave all the reſt, and go after that which is loſt: So did *Jeſus Chriſt*, who in the fore-cited place, *Mat.* 18. 12. compares himſelf to ſuch a Shepherd; he left Heaven it ſelf,and all the bleſſed *Angels* there,to come into this World to ſeek loſt Man. O the precious eſteem,and dear love that Chriſt had to poor Man! How did his Bowels yearn towards us in our loſt ſtate! How did he pity us in our miſery! As if he had ſaid, Poor Creatures they have loſt themſelves, and are become a prey to the Devil, in a periſhing ſtate; I will ſeek after them, and ſave them. The Son of Man is come to ſeek and to ſave.

4. You are glad when you have found your ſtrayers;much more is Chriſt, when he hath found a loſt Soul. O 'tis a great ſatisfaction to him to ſee the fruit of the travel of his Soul. *Iſa.* 53. *Yea, there is more joy in Heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, than ninety nine juſt perſons that need no repentance.* What demonſtrations of joy and gladneſs did the Father of the Prodigal give, when he had found his Son that was loſt? *Luke* 15. 20.

5. When you have brought home your ſtrayers, you ſometimes clog them, to prevent their wandring again, and ſtop up the gaps with Thorns; and ſo doth God oftentimes by ſuch Souls as are reeovered and brought home to Chriſt; he hangs a clog of affliction to prevent their departure from God again, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7.

But then there are five Particulars in which Chriſt ſeeking loſt Souls, and your ſeeking loſt Cattel differ.

1. Your Cattel ſometimes find the way home themſelves, and return to you of their own accord; but loſt Man never did, nor can do ſo; he was his own Deſtroyer, but can never be his own Saviour; it was poſſible for him not to have loſt his God, but having once loſt him, can never find him again of himſelf. Alas! his Heart is bent to backſliding, he hath no will to return. Hear how Chriſt complains, *John* 5. 40. *Ye will not come unto me.* Mans recovery begins in God, not in himſelf.

2. Your Servants can find, and bring back your loſt Cattel as well as you; but ſo cannot Chriſt's Servants. Miniſters may diſcover, but cannot recover them; they daily ſee, but cannot ſave them; lament them they can,but help them they cannot; intreat and beg them to return they can, and do, but prevail with them they cannot. *Melancthon* thought when he began to preach,to perſwade all; but old *Adam* was too hard for young *Melancthon.*

3. You ſeek all the Cattel that are ſtrayed from you, eſpecially the beſt; but Jeſus Chriſt only ſeeks poor loſt Man. There were other Creatures, and ſuch as by Nature were more excellent, that loſt their God and themſelves; I mean, the Apoſtate Angels; but he came not to ſeek them: Herein his ſingular love to Man appears.

4. When you have recovered and brought home your loſt Cattel, you may loſe them the ſecond time, and never recover them again, but ſo cannot Chriſt. Man once recovered is for ever ſecured by him. *All that thou haſt given me I have kept, and not one of them is loſt, but the Son of Perdition;* and he was never ſavingly found, *John* 17. 12.

5. Though you prize your Cattel, yet you will not venture your Life for the recovery of them; rather let them go than regain them with ſuch an hazard; but Jeſus Chriſt not only ventured, but actually laid down his Life to recover, and ſave loſt man: He redeemed them at the price of his own Blood; he is that good Shepherd that laid down his Life for the Sheep. O the ſurpaſſing love of Chriſt to loſt Souls!

## REFLECTIONS.

*A Reflection for a loſt Soul.*

1. Lord, I am a loſt Creature, an undone Soul; and herein lyes my miſery, that I have not only loſt my God, but have no Heart to return to him! Nay, I fly from Chriſt, who is come on purpoſe from Heaven to ſeek and to ſave me; hi Meſſengers are abroad ſeeking for ſuch as I am, but I avoid them, or at leaſt refuſe to obey the call and perſwaſions to return. Ah, what a miſerable ſtate am I in! Every ſtep I go is a a ſte towards Hell; my Soul, with the Prodigal i ready to periſh in a ſtrange Countrey! But I hav no mind with him to return home; wretche Soul, what will the end of this be? If God hav loſt thee, the Devil hath found thee; he takes u all ſtrayers from God: Yea, Death, and Hell wi ſhortly find thee, if Chriſt do not; and then th recovery (O my Soul!) will be impoſſible Why ſit I here periſhing and dying! I am n yet as irrecoverably loſt as the Damned are. let me delay no longer, leſt I be loſt for ever.

2.

*A Reflection for one that was loſt, but is found.*

2. O my Soul! for ever bleſs and admire the love of Jeſus Chriſt, who came from Heaven to ſeek and ſave, ſuch a loſt Soul as I was. Lord, how matchleſs is thy Love! I was loſt, and am found. I am found, and did not ſeek; nay, I am found by him from whom I fled. Thy love, O my Saviour, was a preventing love, a wonderful love; thou lovedſt me much more than I loved my ſelf; I was cruel to my own Soul, but thou waſt kind; thou ſoughteſt for me, a loſt Sinner, and not for loſt Angels; thy hand of Grace caught hold of me, and hath let go Thouſands, and the Thouſands, as good as my ſelf by nature. Like another *David*, thou didſt reſcue my poor loſt Soul out of the mouth of the Deſtroyer; yea, more then ſo, thou didſt loſe thine own Life to find mine: And now, dear Jeſus, ſince I am thus marvellouſly recovered, ſhall I ever ſtraggle again from thee? O let it for ever be a warning to me, how I turn aſide into by-paths of ſin any more.

### The POEM.

*When Cattel from your Fields are gone aſtray,*
*And you to ſeek them through the Country ride,*
*Enquiring for them all along the way,*
*Tracking their Foot-ſteps where they turn'd aſide.*

*One Servant this way ſent, another that,*
*Searching the Fields and Country round about:*
*This Meditation now falls in ſo pat,*
*As if God ſent it to enquire you out.*

*My Beaſts are loſt, and ſo am I by Sin;*
*My wretched Soul from God thus wandering went,*
*As I ſeek them, ſo was I ſought by him,*
*Who from the Father's Boſome forth was ſent.*

*Purſu'd by Sermons, follow'd cloſe by Grace,*
*And ſtrong Convictions Chriſt hath ſought for me,*
*Yea, though I ſhun him ſtill he gives me Chaſe,*
*As if reſolv'd I ſhould not Damned be.*

*When Angels loſt themſelves it was not ſo,*
*God did not ſeek, or once for them enquire,*
*But ſaid, let theſe Apoſtate Creatures go,*
*I'll plague them for it with Eternal Fire.*

*Lord, what am I, that thou ſhouldſt ſet thine Eye,*
*And ſtill ſeek after ſuch a Wretch as I?*
*Whoſe matchleſs Mercy, and rich Grace deſpiſe,*
*As if in ſpight thereof reſolv'd to die.*

*Why ſhould I ſhun thee? Bleſſed Saviour, why*
*ſhould I avoid thee thus? Thou doſt not chaſe*
*My Soul to ſlay it; O that ever I*
*Should fly a Saviour that's ſo full Grace.*

*ng haſt thou ſought me, Lord, I now return;*
*O let thy Bowels of Compaſſion ſound,*
*r my departure I ſincerely mourn;*
*And let this day thy wandring Sheep be found.*

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## CHAP. IV.

## Upon the Feeding of Fat Cattel.

*Fat Beaſts you kill, the Lean you uſe to ſave;*
*God's Diſpenſations ſome ſuch meaning have.*

### OBSERVATION.

It is a good Obſervation of a Father, and well applyed; *Vituli triturantes quotidie ligantur, vituli ctandi quotidie in paſcuis libere relinquuntur.* Oxen for uſe are daily yoaked and kept ſhort, whilſt thoſe that are deſigned for the Shambles, are let looſe in green Paſtures to feed at Pleaſure. Store Beaſts fare hard, and are kept lean and low; feeding Beaſts are excuſed from the Yoke, whilſt others are laboured and wrought hard every day; the one hath more than he can eat, the other would eat more if he had it.

### APPLICATION.

Thus deals the Lord of-times with his own Elect, whom he deſigns for Glory; and with the wicked, who are preparing for the day of wrath. Thus are they filled with earthly Proſperity, and Creature-enjoyments, like ruſty and wanton Beaſts turned out at liberty in a fat Paſture, whilſt poor Saints are kept hard and ſhort, *Amos* 1. 4. *Here this word ye kine of* Baſhan, *that are in the Mountains of* Samaria, *which oppreſs the Poor, and cruſh the needy.* Theſe Metaphorical Kine of the proſperous Oppreſſors of the World, full fed, and wanton wicked Men. 'Tis true, Heaven hath not all the Poor, nor Hell all the Rich; but it's a very common Diſpenſation of Providence, to beſtow moſt of the things of this World upon them that have no Portion in Heaven; and to keep them ſhort on Earth, for whom that Kingdom is provided. Let me draw forth the Similitude in a few Particulars.

1. The Beaſts of ſlaughter have the fatteſt Paſtures; ſo have the ungodly in the World; *Their Eyes ſtand out with Fatneſs, they have more than Heart could wiſh, Pſa.* 73. 7. Their hearts are as fat as *greaſe, Pſal.* 119. 70. Theſe be they that fleet off the Cream of earthly Enjoyments, *whoſe Bellies are filled with hidden Treaſures, Pſal.* 17. 14. *The Earth is given into the hand of the Wicked, Job* 9. 24. O, what full Eſtates? What an affluence of Earthly delights hath God caſt in upon ſome wicked Men? There is much wantonneſs, but no want in their dwellings; ſome that know not which way to turn themſelves in Hell, once knew not where to beſtow their Goods on Earth.

2. Feeding, grow wanton in their full Paſtures; there you ſhall ſeem them tumble and friſk, and kick up their Heels. The ſame effect hath the proſperity of the wicked, it makes them wanton; their Life is but a diverſion from one pleaſure to another, *Job* 21. 11, 12, 13. *They ſend forth their little ones like a flock, and their Children dance; they take the timbrel and harp, and rejoyce at the ſound of the Organ; they ſpend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the Grave.* The ſame Character doth the Prophet *Amos* give of them, *Amos* 6. 4, 5, 6. *They ſtretch themſelves upon Beds of Ivory, drink Wine in bowls, &c.* and no ſorrow goes to their Hearts. Theſe are they that live in Pleaſures upon Earth, as a Fiſh in the Water, *Jam.* 5. 5.

3. Theſe fat paſtures do but the ſooner haſten the death of theſe Cattel; the ſooner they are fatted, the ſooner they are ſlaughtered; and the proſperity of the wicked ſerves to the ſame end. The proſperity of Fools ſhall deſtroy them, (*i. e.*) it ſhall be the means and inſtrument of heating and heightning their Luſts, and thereby fitting them for Deſtruction; their Proſperity is Food and Feuel to their Corruptions. Many wicked Men had not been ſo ripe for Hell, had they not grown in the Sun-ſhine of Proſperity.

4. Fatted Beaſts do not in the leaſt underſtand the intent and meaning of the Husbandman, in allowing them ſuch large and fat Paſtures, which he

denies to his other Cattel; and as little as Beaſts, do wicked Men underſtand the ſcope and end of God's Providences, in caſting Proſperity and Wealth upon them; little do they think their Tables are a Snare, a Gin, and a Trap for their Souls, they only (like Beaſts) mind what is before them, but do not at all underſtand the tendency and end of theſe their ſenſual Delights.

5. Though the Husbandman keep his ſtore-Cattel in ſhort Commons, yet he intends to preſerve them: Theſe ſhall remain with him, when the others are driven to the ſlaughter.

Such a deſign of preſervation is carryed on in all thoſe outward ſtraits, wants and hardſhips which the Lord expoſes his people to. I confeſs, ſuch diſpenſations for preſent, are very ſtumbling and puzzling things, even to gracious and wiſe Perſons. To ſee wicked men, not only exempted from their Troubles, but even oppreſſed with Proſperity; to ſee a godly Man in wants and ſtraits, and a wicked Man have more than his Heart can wiſh, is a caſe that poſes the wiſeſt Chriſtian, till he conſider the deſigns and iſſues of both thoſe Providences, and then he acquieſces in the Wiſdom of God ſo ordering it, *Pſal.* 73. 5, 14, 18, 23.

### REFLECTIONS.

*A Reflection for a Voluptuous worldling.*

1. Doth my Proſperity fat me up for Hell, and prepare me for the day of ſlaughter? Little cauſe have I then to glory in it, and lift up my Heart upon theſe things. Indeed, God hath given, (I cannot ſay bleſſed be with) a fulneſs of Creature-enjoyments; upon theſe my carnal Heart ſeizeth greedily and ſecurely, not at all ſuſpecting a Snare lying in theſe things, for the ruin of my Soul. What are all theſe charming Pleaſures, but ſo many Rattles to quiet my Soul, whilſt its Damnation ſteals inſenſibly upon it? What are all my Buſineſſes and Imployments in the World, but ſo many diverſions from the Buſineſs of Life? There are but two differences betwixt me, and the pooreſt Slave the Devil hath on Earth, ſuch are whipt on to Hell by outward Miſeries, and I am coached to Hell in a little more Pomp and Honour; theſe will have a leſs, and I a greater account in the day of Reckoning. O that I had never known Proſperity! I am now tumbling in a green Paſture, and ſhortly ſhall be hanging up in the Shambles in Hell; if this be the beſt fruit of my Proſperity, if I were taken Captive by cruel *Canibals*, and fed with the richeſt fare, but withal underſtood, that the deſign of it were to fat me up like a Beaſt for them to feed upon; how little Stomach ſhould I have to their Dainties? O my Soul! it were much better for thee to have a ſanctified Poverty, which is the portion for many Saints, than an enſnaring Proſperity, ſet as a trap to ruin thee for ever.

*A Reflection for a poor Chriſtian.*

2. The Wiſdom of my God hath allotted me but ſhort commons here, his Providence feeds me but from hand to mouth; but I am (and well may be) contented with my preſent ſtate; that which ſweetens it, is, that I am one of the Lord's preſerved. How much better is a Morſel of Bread, and a Draught of Water here, with an expectancy of Glory hereafter, than a fat Paſture given in, and fitting for the Wrath to come? Well, ſince the caſe ſtands thus, bleſſed be God for my preſent Lot; though I have but little in hand, I have much in hope; my preſent Troubles will ſerve to ſweeten my future Joys; and the ſorrows of this Life will give a luſtre to the Glory of the next; that which is now hard to ſuffer, will then be ſweet to remember; my Songs will then be louder than my Groans now.

### The POEM.

*THoſe Beaſts which for the Shambles are deſign'd,*
*In fragrant flowery Meadows you ſhall find,*
*Where they abound with rich and plenteous fare,*
*Whilſt others graze in Commons thin and bare.*
*Thoſe live a ſhort and pleaſant Life, but theſe*
*Protract their lives in dry and ſhorter leas.*
*Thus lives the Wicked, thus they do abound*
*With earthly glory, and with honour crown'd.*
*Their lofty heads unto the Stars aſpire,*
*And radiant beams their ſhining brows attire.*
*The fatteſt portion's ſerv'd up in their Diſh;*
*Yea, they have more than their own hearts can wiſh.*
*Diſſolv'd in pleaſures, crown'd with buds of* May;
*They, for a time, in theſe fat Paſtures play,*
*Frisk, dance and leap, like full-fed Beaſts; and even*
*Turn up their wanton Heels againſt the Heaven.*
*Not underſtanding that this pleaſant Life,*
*Serves but to fit them for the Butcher's Knife.*
*In fragrant Meads they tumbling are to day,*
*To morrow to the Slaughter led away.*
*Their pleaſure's gone, and vaniſh'd like a Bubble,*
*Which makes their future Torments on them double.*
*Mean while God's little Flock is poor and lean,*
*Becauſe the Lord did ne're intend or mean*
*This for their portion; and beſides doth know*
*Their Souls prove beſt where ſhorteſt Graſs doth grow.*
*Chear up poor flock, although your Fare be thin,*
*Yet here is ſomething to take Comfort in:*
*You here ſecurely feed, and need not fear*
*Th' infernal Butcher can't approach you here.*
*'Tis ſomewhat that, but O, which far tranſcends,*
*Your glorious Shepherd's coming, who intends*
*To lead you hence unto that Fragrant Hill,*
*Where with green paſtures he his Flocks will fill.*
*On which he from Celeſtial Caſements pours*
*The ſweeteſt Dews, and conſtant gracious ſhowers.*
*Along whoſe Banks Rivers of pleaſures ſlide,*
*There his bleſs'd Flocks for ever ſhall abide.*
*O envy not the worldlings preſent Joys,*
*Which to your future Mercies are but Toys.*
*Their Paſture now is green, your's dry and burn'd,*
*But then the Scene is chang'd, the Tables turn'd.*

## CHAP. V.

### Upon the Husbandman's Care for Poſterity.

*Good Husbands labour for Poſterity,*
*To after-Ages Saints muſt have an Eye.*

### OBSERVATION.

PRovident and careful Husbandmen do not only labour to ſupply their own Neceſſitie while living, but lay up ſomething for their Poſterity when they are gone; they do not only leav to their Children what their Progenitors left them but they deſire to leave it improved and better' None but bad Husbands and Spend-thrifts are the Mind with that Heathen Emperor *Tiberiu* who having put all into ſuch Confuſions in the Empire, that it might be thought the World wou end with him; yet pleaſed himſelf with this a prehenſion, That he ſhould be out of the reach it; and would often ſay, when I am dead, let He ven and Earth mingle; if the World will but ho my time, let it break when I am gone: But pr vident Men look beyond their own time, and d very much concern themſelves in the good or ev of their Poſterity.

APPL

## APPLICATION.

WHat careful Husbands do, with reſpect to the proviſions they make for their Children, that all prudent Chriſtians are bound to do, with reſpect to the Truths committed to them, and by them, to be tranſmitted to ſucceeding Saints.

In the firſt Ages of the World, even till the Law was given, faithful men were in ſtead of Books and Records; they did by Oral Tradition convey the Truths of God to Poſterity; but ſince the Sacred Truth hath been conſigned to Writing, no ſuch Tradition (except full conſentient with that written word) is to be received as Authentick; but the Truths therein delivered to the Saints, are by verbal *Declarations*, open *Confeſſions*, and conſtant *Sufferings*, to be preſerved and delivered from Age to Age. This was the conſtant care of the whole Cloud of Witneſſes, both Ancient and Modern, who have kept the Word of God's Patience, and would not accept their own Lives, Liberties or Eſtates; no, nor the whole World in exchange, for that invaluable Treaſure of Truth; they have carefully practiſed *Solomon*'s Counſel, Prov. 23. 23. *Buy the Truth, but ſell it not*; they would not alienate that fair Inheritance for all the Inheritances on Earth. Upon the ſame reaſons that you refuſe to part with, or imbezzel your Eſtates, Chriſtians alſo refuſe to part with the Truths of God.

1. You will not waſte or alienate your Inheritance, becauſe it's precious, and of great value in your Eyes; but much more precious are God's Truths to his People. *Luther* profeſſed, he would not take the whole *World* for one Leaf of the *Bible*. Though ſome profane Perſons may ſay with *Pilate*, What is Truth? yet know, that any one Truth of the Goſpel is more worth than all the Inheritances upon Earth; they are the great things of God's Law, and he that ſells them for the greateſt things in this World, makes a Soul-undoing Bargain.

2. You will not waſte or part with your Inheritance, becauſe you know your Poſterity will be much wronged by it. They that baffle or drink away an Eſtate, drink the Tears of their ſad Widows, and the very Blood of their impoveriſhed Children. The People of God do alſo conſider, how much the Generations to come are concerned in the conſervation of the Truths of God for them: It cuts them to the Heart, but to think that their Children ſhould be brought up to worſhip Dumb Idols, and fall down before a Wooden and Breaden God. The very Birds and Beaſts will expoſe their own Bodies to apparent danger of Death to preſerve their young. Religion doth much more intender the hearts and bowels than Nature doth.

3. You reckon it a foul diſgrace to ſell your Eſtates, and become Bankrupts; 'tis a word that bears ill among you: And a Chriſtian accounts it the higheſt reproach in the World, to be a *Traitor* to, or an Apoſtate from the Truths of God. When the Primitive Saints were ſtrictly required to deliver up their Bibles, thoſe that did ſo, were juſtly branded, and huſht out of their Company, under the odious Title of *Traditores*, or Deliverers.

4. You are ſo loth to part with your Eſtates, becauſe you know its hard recovering an Eſtate again, when once you have loſt it. Chriſtians do alſo know, how difficult it will be for the People of God, in times to come, to recover the Light of the Goſpel again, if once it be extinguiſh'd. There is no Truth of God recovered out of Antichriſt's hands, without great wreſtlings, and much Blood. The Church may call every Point of Reformed Doctrine and Diſcipline ſo recovered, her *Naphthalies*; for with great wreſtlings ſhe hath wreſtled for them. *Earneſtly contending for the Faith once delivered to them*, Jude 3.

5. To conclude, rather than you will part with your Eſtates, you will chuſe to ſuffer many wants and hardſhips all your Lives; you will fare hard, and go bare to preſerve what you have for your Poſterity: But the People of God have put themſelves upon far greater hardſhips than theſe to preſerve truth; they have choſen to ſuffer Reproaches, Poverty, Priſons, Death, and the moſt cruel Torments, rather than the loſs of God's Truth. All the Martyrologies will inform you what their Sufferings have been, to keep the word of God's Patience; they have boldly told their Enemies, that they might pluck their hearts out of their bodies, but ſhould never pluck the truth out of their hearts.

## REFLECTIONS.

*A Reflection for cowardly and faint-hearted Profeſſors.*

1. Baſe unbelieving Heart! How have I flinched and ſhrunk from truth when it hath been in danger? I have rather choſen to leave it, than my Life, Liberty or Eſtate, as a prey to the Enemy. I have left truth, and juſt it is that the God of Truth ſhould leave me. Cowardly Soul, that durſt not make a ſtand for Truth! Yea, rather bold and daring Soul, that wouldſt rather venture to look a wrathful God, than an angry Man, in the Face. I would not own and preſerve the truth, and the God of truth will not own me, 2 *Tim.* 2. 12. *If we deny him, he will deny us.*

*A Reflection for ſuch as ſuffer for Truth.*

2. Lord! unto me haſt thou committed the precious Treaſure and Truſt of Truth; and as I received it, ſo do I deſire to deliver it to the Generations to come, that the people which are yet unborn may praiſe the Lord. God forbid I ſhould ever part with ſuch a fair Inheritance, and thereby beggar my own, and thouſands of Souls! Thou haſt given me thy Truth, and the World hates me; I well know that it is the ground of the quarrel; would I but throw Truth over the Walls, how ſoon would a Retreat be ſounded to all Perſecutors? But, Lord! thy Truth is invaluably precious; what a vile thing is my Blood, compared with the leaſt of all thy Truths? Thou haſt charged me not to ſell it, and in thy ſtrength I reſolve never to lift a Fine, and cut off that Golden Line, whereby thy Truths are entailed upon thy People, from Generation to Generation: My Friends may go, my Liberty go, my Blood may go, but as for thee, precious Truth, thou ſhalt never go.

*A Reflection for ſuch as are in quiet poſſeſſion of Truth.*

3 How dear hath this Inheritance of Truth coſt ſome Chriſtians? How little hath it coſt us? We are entred into their Labours; we reap in Peace, what they ſowed in Tears; yea, in Blood. O the grievous ſufferings that they choſe to endure! rather than to deprive us of ſuch an Inheritance, thoſe noble Souls, heated with the Love of Chriſt, and Care for our Souls, made many bold and brave Adventures for it; and yet at what a low rate do we value what coſt them ſo dear? Like young Heirs, that never knew the getting of an Eſtate, we ſpend it freely. Lord, help us thankfully and diligently to improve thy Truths, while we are in quiet poſſeſſion of them. Such Intervals of peace and reſt are uſually of no long continuance with thy People.

### The POEM.

*A Publick Spirit ſcorns to plant no Root,*
*But ſuch, from which himſelf may gather fruit.*
*For thus he reaſons, if I reap the gains*
*Of my laborious Predeceſſors pains,*
*How equal is it, that Poſterity*
*Should reap the fruits of preſent induſtry?*
*Should every Age but ſerve its turn, and take*
*No thought for future times? it ſoon would make*
*A Bankrupt World, and ſo entail a Curſe*
*From Age to Age, as it grows worſe and worſe.*
*Our Chriſtian Predeceſſors careful thus*
*Have been to leave an Heritage to us,*
*Chriſt's precious Truths conſerved in their Blood,*
*For no leſs price thoſe Truths our Fathers ſtood.*
*They have tranſmitted, would not alienate*
*From us their Children ſuch a fair Eſtate.*
*We eat what they did ſet, and ſhall truth fail*
*In our days? Shall we cut off th'entail?*
*Or end the Line of Honour? nay, What's worſe,*
*Give future Ages cauſe to hate, and curſe*
*Our memories? Like* Naboth, *may this Age*
*Part with their Blood ſooner than Heritage.*
*Let pity move us, let us think upon*
*Our Childrens Souls when we are dead and gone.*
*Shall they, poor Souls, in darkneſs grope, when we*
*Put out the light, by which they elſe might ſee*
*The way to glory? yea, what's worſe? Shall it*
*Be ſaid in time to come, Chriſt did commit*
*A precious Treaſure purchas'd by his Blood,*
*To us, for ours, and for our Childrens good?*
*But we, like Cowards, falſe, perfidious Men,*
*For carnal eaſe, loſt it, our ſelves, and them.*
*O let us leave, to carnal Ages, more*
*Than we receiv'd from all that went before.*
*That thoſe, to come, may bleſs the Lord, and keep*
*Our Names alive, when we in duſt ſhall ſleep.*

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## CHAP. VI.

## Upon the Husbandman's Care to prove and preſerve his Deeds.

*Deeds for your Lands you prove, and keep with care;*
*O that for Heaven you but as careful were.*

### OBSERVATION.

WE generally find Men are not more careful in trying Gold, or in keeping it, than they are in examining their Deeds, and preſerving them; theſe are virtually their whole Eſtate, and therefore it concerns them to be careful of them: If they ſuſpect a flaw in their Leaſe or Deed, they repair to the ableſt Counſel, ſubmit it to his Judgment, make the worſt of their cauſe, and query about all the ſuppoſeable dangers with him; if he tell them their caſe is ſuſpicious and hazardous, how much are they perplexed and troubled? they can neither eat, drink, or ſleep in peace, till they have a good Settlement; and willing they are to be at much coſt and pains to obtain it.

### APPLICATION.

THeſe cares and fears, with which you are perplexed in ſuch caſes, may give you a little glimpſe of thoſe troubles of Soul, with which the people of God are perplexed about their Eternal condition, which perhaps you have been hitherto unacquainted with, and therefore ſlighted them, as Fanſies and Whimſies. I ſay, your own fears and troubles, if ever you were engaged by a cunning and powerful Adverſary in a Law-ſuit for your Eſtate, may give you a little glimpſe of Spiritual Troubles; and indeed it is no more but a glimpſe of it: For, as the loſs of an earthly (though fair) Inheritance, is but a trifle to the loſs of God, and the Soul to Eternity; ſo you cannot but imagine, that the cares, fears, and ſolicitudes of Souls about theſe things, are much, very much beyond yours. Let us compare the Caſes, and ſee how they anſwer to each other.

1. You have Evidences for your Eſtates, and by them you hold what you have in the World. They alſo have Evidences for their Eſtate, in Chriſt, and Glory to come; they hold all *in capite*, by vertue of their Intermarriage with Jeſus Chriſt; they come to be enſtated in that glorious Inheritance, contained in the Covenant of Grace. You have their Tenure in that Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. *All is yours, for ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's.* Faith unites them to him, and after they believe, they are ſealed by the Spirit of Promiſe, *Eph.* 1. 13. They can lay claim to no Promiſe upon any other ground; this is their Title to all that they own as theirs.

2. It often falls out, that after the ſealing and executing of your Deeds or Leaſes, an Adverſary finds ſome dubious Clauſe in them, and thereupon commences a Suit of Law with you. Thus it frequently falls out with the People of God, who after their believing and ſealing time, have doubts and ſcruples raiſed in them about their Title. Nothing is more common, than for the Devil and their own Unbelief to ſtart Controverſies, and raiſe ſtrong Objections againſt their Intereſt in Chriſt, and the Covenant of Promiſes. Theſe are cunning and potent Adverſaries, and do maintain long debates with the gracious Soul, and reaſon ſo cunningly and ſophiſtically with it, that it can by no means extricate and ſatiſfie it ſelf; always alledging, that their Title is worth nothing, which they, poor Souls, are but too apt to ſuſpect.

3. All the while that a Suit in Law is depending about your Title, you have but little Comfort or Benefit from your Eſtate; you cannot look upon it as your own, nor lay out Moneys in Building or Dreſſing, for fear you ſhould loſe all at laſt. Juſt thus ſtands the caſe with doubting Chriſtians, they have little comfort from the moſt comfortable Promiſes, little benefit from the ſweeteſt Duties and Ordinances; they put off their own comforts, and ſay, If we were ſure that all this were ours, we could then rejoice in them; but alas! our Title is dubious, Chriſt is a precious Chriſt, the Promiſes are comfortable things, but what if they be none of ours? Ah! how little doth the doubting Chriſtian make of his large and rich Inheritance?

4. You dare not truſt your own Judgments in ſuch caſes, but ſtate your caſe to ſuch as are Learned in the Laws; and are willing to get the ableſt Counſel you can to adviſe you: So are poor doubting Chriſtians, they carry their caſes from Chriſtian to Chriſtian, and from Miniſter to Miniſter, with ſuch requeſts as theſe. Pray tell me, what do you think of my condition? deal plainly and faithfully with me; theſe be my grounds of doubting, and theſe my grounds of hope. O hide nothing from me! And if they all agree that their caſe is good, yet they cannot be ſatisfied till God ſay ſo too, and confirm

firm the word of his Servants; aud therefore they carry the caſe often before him in ſuch words as thoſe, *Pſal.* 139. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and ſee if there be any way of wickedneſs in me.*

5. You have little quiet in your Spirits, till the Caſe be reſolved, your Meat and Drink doth you little good; you cannot ſleep in the Night, becauſe theſe troubled thoughts are ever returning upon you, What if I ſhould be turn'd out of all at laſt? So it is with gracious Souls, their Eyes are held waking in the Night, by reaſon of the troubles of their hearts, *Pſal.* 77. 4. Such fears as theſe are frequently returning upon their Hearts, What if I ſhould be found a ſelf-deceiver at laſt? What if I do but hug a phantaſm inſtead of Chriſt? How can this, or that, conſiſt with Grace? Their Meat and Drink doth them little good; their Bodies are often macerated by the troubles of their Souls.

6. You will not make the beſt of your condition, when you ſtate your Caſe to a faithful Counſellor; neither will they, but oft-times (poor penſive Souls) they make it much worſe than indeed it is; charge themſelves with that which God never charged them with, though this be neither their Wiſdom, nor their Duty, but the fears of miſcarrying make them ſuſpect fraud in all they do or have.

7. Laſtly, When your Title is cleared, your Hearts are eaſed; yea, not only eaſed, but overjoyed; though not in that degree, nor with the ſame kind of joy that the Hearts of Chriſtians are overflowed, when the Lord ſpeaks peace to their Souls. O welcome the ſweet Morning light, after a tedious Night of darkneſs; now they can eat their Bread with comfort, and drink their Wine (yea, if it be but Water) with a merry Heart, *Eccleſ.* 9. 7.

## REFLECTIONS.

*The Careleſs Soul's Reflection.*

1. O how hath my Spirit been toſſed and hurried, when I have met with troubles and clamours about my Eſtate! But as for ſpiritual troubles, and thoſe Soul-perplexing caſes, that Chriſtians ſpeak of, I underſtand but little of them. I never called my Everlaſting ſtate in queſtion, nor brake an hour's ſleep upon any ſuch account. Ah, my ſupine and careleſs Soul! little haſt thou regarded how matters ſtand in reference to Eternity! I have ſtrongly conceited, but never throughly examined the validity of my Title to Chriſt and his Promiſes; nor am I able to tell, if my own Conſcience ſhould demand whereupon my claim is grounded!

O my Soul! why art thou ſo unwilling to examine how matters ſtand betwixt God and thee? Art thou afraid to look into thy condition, leſt by finding thine Hypocriſie, thou ſhouldſt loſe thy peace; or rather, thy ſecurity? To what purpoſe will it be to ſhut thine Eyes againſt the light of Conviction, unleſs thou couldſt alſo find out a way to prevent thy condemnation? Thou ſeeſt other Souls, how attentively they wait under the Word, for any thing that may ſpeak to their conditions. Doubtleſs thou haſt heard, how frequently and ſeriouſly they have ſtated their conditions, and opened their caſes to the Miniſters of Chriſt! But thou, O my Soul! haſt no ſuch caſes to put, no doubts to be reſolved; thou wilt leave all to the deciſion of the great day, and not trouble thy ſelf about it now. Well, God will decide it, but little to thy comfort.

*The Doubting Soul's Reflection.*

2. I have heard how ſome have been perplexed by litigious Adverſaries, but I believe none have been ſo toſſed with fears, and diſtracted with doubts, as I have been about the ſtate of my Soul. Lord, what ſhall I do? I have often carried my doubts and ſcruples to thine Ordinances, waiting for ſatisfaction to be ſpoken there. I have carried them to thoſe I have judged skilful and faithful, begging their reſolution and help, but nothing will ſtick. Still my fears are daily renewed. O my God, do thou decide my caſe! tell me how the ſtate ſtands betwixt thee and me; my days conſume in trouble, I can neither do or enjoy any good, whilſt things are thus with me; all my earthly Enjoyments are dry and uncomfortable things? yea, which is much worſe, all my Duties and thine Ordinances prove ſo too, by reaſon of the troubles of my Heart! I am no Ornament to my Profeſſion, nay, I am a diſcouragement and ſtumbling-block to others? I will hearken and hear what God the Lord will ſpeak; O that it might be peace! If thou do not ſpeak it, none can; and when thou doſt, keep thy Servant from returning again to folly, leſt I make freſh work for an accuſing Conſcience, and give new matter to the Adverſary of my Soul!

*The Aſſured Chriſtian's Reflection.*

3. But thou (my Soul) enjoyeſt a double Mercy from thy bountiful God, who hath not only given thee a ſound Title, but alſo the clear evidence and knowledge thereof. I am gathering, and daily feeding upon the full-ripe fruits of aſſurance, which grow upon the top Boughs of Faith, whilſt many of my poor Brethren drink their own Tears, and have their Teeth broken with Gravel-ſtones. Lord, thou haſt ſet my Soul upon her high places but let me not exalt my ſelf, becauſe thou haſt exalted me; nor grow wanton, becauſe I walk at liberty, leſt for the abuſe of ſuch precious liberty, thou clap my old chains upon me, and ſhut up my Soul again in Priſon.

## The POEM.

*MEN can't be quiet till they be aſſur'd*
*That their Eſtate is good, and well ſecur'd.*
*To able Counſel they their Deeds ſubmit,*
*Intreating them with care t'examine it.*
*Fearing ſome Clauſe an Enemy may wreſt,*
*Or find a flaw, whereby he may deveſt*
*Them, and their Children. O who can but ſee*
*How wiſe men in their Generation be!*
*But do they equal cares and fears expreſs*
*About their Everlaſting Happineſs?*
*In Spiritual things 'twould grieve one's heart to ſee*
*What careleſs Fools theſe careful Men can be.*
*They act like Men of common ſenſe bereaven,*
*Secure their Lands, and they'll truſt God for Heaven.*
*How many Caſes have you to ſubmit*
*To Lawyers judgments? Miniſters may ſit*
*From Week to Week, and yet not ſee the Face*
*Of one that brings a Soul-concerning Caſe.*
*Yea, which is worſe; how ſeldom do you cry*
*To God for counſel? or beg him to try*
*Your hearts? and ſtricteſt inquiſition make*
*into your ſtate, diſcover your miſtake.*
*O ſtupid Souls! clouded with ignorance,*
*Is Chriſt and Heaven no fair Inheritance,*
*Compar'd with yours? or is Eternity*
*A ſhorter term than yours? that you ſhould ply*
*The one ſo cloſe, and totally neglect*
*The other, as not worth your leaſt reſpect.*
*Perhaps the Devil, whoſe plot from you's conceal'd,*
*Perſwades your Title's good, and firmly ſeal'd*
*By God's own Spirit; though you never found*
*One act of ſaving Grace to lay a ground*
*For that perſwaſion. Soul, he hath thee faſt,*
*Though he'll not let thee know it till the laſt.*

*Lord, waken Sinners, make them underſtand*
*'Twixt thee and them how rawly matters ſtand.*
*Give them no quiet reſt until they ſee*
*Their Souls ſecur'd better than Lands can be.*

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## Occaſional Meditations upon Birds, Beaſts, Trees, Flowers, Rivers, and other Objects.

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## MEDITATIONS on Birds.

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### MEDIT. I.

### *Upon the ſinging of a Nightingal.*

WHO that hears ſuch various, raviſhing and exquiſite Melody, would imagine the Bird that makes it to be of ſo ſmall and contemptible a Body and Feather? Her charming voice ingaged not only mine attentive Ear, but my Feet alſo, to make a nearer approach to that ſhady Buſh, in which that excellent Muſician ſat vailed; and the nearer I came, the ſweeter the Melody ſtill ſeemed to be; but when I had deſcribed the Bird her ſelf, and found her to be little bigger, and no better Feather'd than a Sparrow, it gave my Thoughts the occaſion of this following Application.

This Bird ſeems to me the Lively Emblem of the formal Hypocrite, (1.) In that ſhe is more in ſound than ſubſtance, a loud and excellent voice, but a little deſpicable Body; and it recall'd to my Thoughts the Story of *Plutarch*, who hearing a Nightingal, deſired to have one killed to feed upon, not queſtioning but ſhe would pleaſe the Palate as well as the Ear; but when the Nightingal was brought him, and he ſaw what a poor little Creature it was, Truly, ſaid he, thou art *vox & preterea nihil*, a meer voice and nothing elſe: So is the Hypocrite; did a Man hear him ſometimes in more publick Duties and Diſcourſes, O, thinks he, what an excellent Man is this! What a choice and rare Spirit is he of? But follow him home, obſerve him in his private Converſation and Retirements, and then you will Judge *Plutarch*'s Note as applicable to him as the Nightingal. (2.) This Bird is obſerved to Charm moſt ſweetly, and ſet her Spirits all on work, when ſhe perceives ſhe hath ingaged attention; ſo doth the Hypocrite, who lives and feeds upon the applauſe and commendation of his Admirers, and cares little for any of thoſe Duties which bring in no returns of praiſe from Men; he is little pleaſed with a ſilent Melody and private Pleaſure betwixt God and his own Soul.

*Scire tuum nihil eſt niſi te ſcire hoc ſciat alter.*

*Alas! his knowledge is not worth a Pin,*
*If he proclaim not what he hath within.*

He is more for the Theatre than the Cloſet; and of ſuch Chriſt ſaith, *Verily they have their Reward.* (3.) Naturaliſts obſerve the Nightingal to be an ambitious Bird, that cannot endure to be outvied by any; ſhe will rather chuſe to die than be excell'd; a notable inſtance whereof we have in the following pleaſant Poem, tranſlated out of *Strada*, concerning the Nightingal and a Lutaniſt.

*Now the declining Sun did downward bend*
*From higher Heavens, and from his Looks did ſend*
*A milder flame, when near to* Tyber's *flow,*
*A Lutaniſt allayed his careful woe,*
*With ſounding Charms, and in a greeny ſeat*
*Of ſhady Oak, took ſhelter from the heat;*
*A Nightingal o'reheard him that did uſe*
*To ſojourn in the neighbour Groves, the Muſe*
*That fill'd the place, the Syrene of the Wood*
*(Poor harmleſs Syrene) ſtealing near, ſhe ſtood*
*Cloſe lurking in the leaves, attentively*
*Recording that unwonted melody.*
*She con'd it to her ſelf, and every ſtrain*
*His Fingers play'd, her Throat return'd again.*
*The Lutaniſt perceiv'd an anſwer ſent*
*From th' imitating Bird, and was content*
*To ſhew her play more fully, then in haſte*
*He tries his Lute, and giving her a taſte*
*Of the enſuing quarrel, nimbly beats*
*On all his ſtrings, as nimbly ſhe repeats,*
*And wildly ranging o're a Thouſand keys,*
*Sounds a ſhrill warning of her after-lays:*
*With rowling hand the Lutaniſt then plies*
*The trembling threads, ſometimes in ſcornful wiſe*
*He bruſhes down the ſtrings, and ſtrikes them all*
*With one even ſtroke, then takes them ſeveral*
*And culls them o're again, his ſparkling Joints*
*With buſie diſcant mincing on the points,*
*Reach back again with nimble touch, then ſtays,*
*The Bird replies, and Art with Art repays.*
*Sometimes as one unexpert, and in doubt*
*How ſhe might wield her voice, ſhe draweth out*
*Her tone at large, and doth at firſt prepare*
*A ſolemn ſtrain, nor wear'd with winding air,*
*But with an equal pitch, and conſtant Throat,*
*Makes clear the paſſage for her gliding note;*
*Then croſs-diviſion diverſly ſhe plays,*
*And loudly chanting out her quickeſt lays,*
*Poyſes the ſound, and with a quivering voice*
*Falls back again; he wondring how ſo choice,*
*So various harmony could iſſue out*
*From ſuch a little Throat, doth go about*
*Some harder Leſſons, and with wondrous Art*
*Changing the ſtrings, doth up the Treble dart,*
*And downward ſmite the Baſe, with painful ſtroke*
*He beats; and as the Trumpet doth provoke*
*Sluggards to fight, even ſo his wanton skill*
*With mingled diſcord joins the hoarſe and ſhrill,*
*The Bird this alſo tunes, and whilſt ſhe cuts*
*Sharp notes with melting voice, and mingled puts*
*Meaſures of middle ſound, then ſuddenly*
*She thunders deep, and jugs it inwardly*
*With gentle murmur, clear and dull ſhe ſings*
*By courſe, as when the Martial warning rings;*
*Believe't the Minſtrel bluſht, with angry mood;*
*Inflam'd, (quoth he) thou Chantreſs of the VVood,*
*Either from thee I'll bear the prize away,*
*Or vanquiſht, break my Lute without delay.*
*Unimitable accents then he ſtrains,*
*His hand flies on the ſtrings, in one he chains*
*Far different numbers, chaſing here and there,*
*And all the ſtrings he labours every where;*
*Both flat and ſharp he ſtrikes, and ſtately grows*
*To prouder ſtrains, and backward as he goes*
*Doubly divides, and cloſing up his Lays*
*Like a full Quire, a ſhivering Conſort plays;*
*Then pauſing ſtood in expectation*
*Of his corrival, nor durſt anſwer on.*
*But ſhe, when practice long her Throat had whet,*
*Enduring not to yeild, at once doth ſet*
*Her Spirits all to work, and all in vain;*
*For whilſt ſhe labours to expreſs again,*
*With natures ſimple voice ſuch divers Keys,*
*VVith ſlender Pipes ſuch lofty Notes as theſe,*
*O're-matcht with high deſigns, o're-matcht with woe,*
*Juſt at the laſt encounter of her Foe*
*She faints, ſhe dies, falls on his Inſtrument*
*That conquer'd her, a fitting Monument.*
*So far even little Souls are driven on,*
*Struck with a vertuous emulation.*

And even as far are Hypocrites driven on by their Ambition and Pride, which is the Spur that provokes them in their Religious Duties.

MEDIT.

## MEDIT. II.

*Upon the ſight of many ſmall Birds chirping about a dead Hawk.*

HEaring a whole Quire of Birds chirping and twinking together, it engaged my Curioſity a little to enquire into the occaſion of that Convocation, which mine Eye quickly inform'd me of; for I perceived a dead Hawk in the Buſh, about which they made ſuch a noiſe, ſeeming to triumph at the death of their Enemy; and I could not blame them to ſing his Knell, who like a *Cannibal* was wont to feed upon their living Bodies; tearing them limb from limb, and ſcaring them with his frightful appearance. This Bird which living was ſo formidable, being dead the pooreſt Wren or Titmouſe fears not to chirp or hop over. This brings to my thoughts the baſe and ignoble ends of the greateſt Tyrants and greedy Ingroſſers of the World, of whom (whilſt living) Men were more afraid than Birds of a Hawk, but dead became objects of contempt and ſcorn. The death of ſuch Tyrants is both inglorious and unlamented; *When the wicked periſh, there is ſhouting*, Prov. 11. 10. which was exemplified to the Life at the Death of *Nero*, of whom the Poet thus ſings,

*Cum mors crudelem rapuiſſet ſæva Neronem*
*Credibile eſt multos Romam agitaſſe jocos.*

*When cruel* Nero *died, th' Hiſtorian tells,*
*How* Rome *did mourn with Boneſires, Plays and Bells.*

Remarkable for contempt and ſhame have the ends of many Bloody Tyrants been; ſo *Pompey* the Great, of whom *Claudian* the Poet ſings.

*Nudus paſcit aves jacet en qui poſſidet orbem*
*Exiguæ telluris inops*——————

*Birds eat his Fleſh; lo, now he cannot have,*
*Who rul'd the world, a ſpace to make a Grave.*

The like is ſtoried of *Alexander* the Great, who lay unburied thirty days, and *William* the Conqueror, with many other ſuch Birds of prey; whilſt a beneficial and holy life is uſually cloſed up in an honourable and much lamented death.

For mine own part, I wiſh I may ſo order my Converſation in the World, that I may live when I am dead in the Affections of the beſt, and leave an honourable Teſtimony in the Conſciences of the worſt; that I may oppreſs none, do good to all, and ſay when I die, as good *Ambroſe* did, I am neither aſhamed to live, nor afraid to die.

## MEDIT. III.

*Upon the ſight of a Black-bird taking Sanctuary in a Buſh from a purſuing Hawk.*

WHen I ſaw how hardly the poor Bird was put to it to ſave her ſelf from her Enemy, who hover'd juſt over the Buſh in which ſhe was fluttering and ſqueeking, I could not but haſten to relieve her, (pity and ſuccour being a due debt to the diſtreſſed) which when I had done, the Bird would not depart from the Buſh, though her Enemy were gone; this act of kindneſs was abundantly repaid by this Meditation, with which I returned to my walk. My Soul, like this Bird, was once diſtreſſed, purſued, yea, ſeized by Satan, who had certainly made a prey of it, had not Jeſus Chriſt been a Sanctuary to it in that hour of danger. How ready did I find him to receive my poor Soul into his protection? Then did he make good that ſweet Promiſe to my experience, Thoſe that come unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt out. It call'd to mind that pretty and pertinent Story of the Philoſopher, who walking in the Fields, a Bird purſued by a Hawk flew into his Boſom; he took her out, and ſaid, *Poor Bird, I will neither wrong thee, nor expoſe thee to thine Enemy, ſince thou cameſt to me for refuge.* So tender, and more than ſo, is the Lord Jeſus to diſtreſſed Souls, that come unto him. Bleſſed Jeſus! How ſhould I love and praiſe thee, glorifie and admire thee, for that great Salvation thou haſt wrought for me? If this Bird had fallen into the Claws of her Enemy, ſhe had been torn to pieces indeed and devoured, but then a few minutes had diſpatcht her, and ended all her pain and miſery; but had my Soul fallen into the hand of Satan, there had been no end of its miſery.

Would not this ſcared Bird be fluſht out of the Buſh that ſecured her, though I had chaſed away her Enemy? And wilt thou (my Soul) ever be inticed or ſcared from Chriſt thy refuge? O let this for ever ingage thee to keep cloſe to Chriſt, and make me ſay with *Ezra*, and now, O Lord! Since thou haſt given me ſuch a deliverance as this, ſhould I again break thy Commandments?

## MEDIT. IV.

*Upon the ſight of divers Lennets intermingling with a Flock of Sparrows.*

MEthinks theſe Birds do fitly reſemble the Gaudy Courtiers, and the Plain Peaſants; how ſpruce and richly adorned with ſhining and various coloured Feathers, (like Scarlet, richly laid with Gold and Silver Lace) are thoſe? How plainly clad, in a home-ſpun Countrey Ruſſet are theſe? *Fine Feathers* (ſaith our Proverb) *make proud Birds*; and yet the Feathers of the Sparrow are as uſeful and beneficial, both for warmth and flight, though not ſo gay and ornamental as the others; and if both were ſtript out of their Feathers, the Sparrow would prove the better Bird of the two; by which I ſee, that the greateſt worth doth not always lye under the fineſt Cloaths. And beſides, God can make mean and homely Garments as uſeful and beneficial to poor deſpiſed Chriſtians, as the ruffling and ſhining Garments of wanton Gallants are to them; and when God ſhall ſtrip Men out of all external Excellencies, theſe will be found to excel their glittering Neighbours in true worth and excellency.

Little would a Man think ſuch rich Treaſures of Grace, Wiſdom, Humility, *&c.* lay under ſome Ruſſet Coats.

*Sæpe ſub attrita latitat ſapientia veſte.*

*Under poor Garments more true worth may be*
*Than under Silks that whiſtle, Who but he?*

Whilſt on the other ſide, the Heart of the wicked (as *Solomon* hath obſerved) is little worth, how much ſoever his Cloaths be worth. Alas! It falls out too frequently among us, as it doth with Men in the *Indies*, who walk over the rich Veins of Gold and Silver Oar, which lyes hid under a ragged and barren ſurface, and know it not. For my own part, I deſire not to value any Man by what is extrinſical and worldly, but by that true internal excellency of Grace, which makes the Face to ſhine in the Eyes of God and good Men: I would contemn a vile Perſon, tho' never ſo glorious in the Eye of the World; but honour ſuch as fear the Lord, how ſordid and deſpicable ſoever to appearance.

## MEDIT. V.

*Upon the ſight of a Robin-red-breaſt picking up a Worm from a Mole-hill, then Raiſing.*

OBſerving the Mole working induſtriouſly beneath, and the Bird watching ſo intently above, I made a ſtand to obſerve the iſſue. When in a little time the Bird deſcends and ſeizes upon a Worm, which I perceived was crawling apace from the Enemy below that hunted her, but fell to the ſhare of another which from above waited for her. My thoughts preſently ſuggeſted theſe *Meditations* from that occaſion; methought this poor Worm ſeem'd to be the Emblem of my poor Soul which is more endangered by its own Luſts of Pride and Covetouſneſs, than this Worm was by the Mole and Bird; my Pride, like the aſpiring Bird, watches for it above; my Covetouſneſs, like this ſubterranean Mole, digging for it beneath. Poor Soul! What a ſad *Dilemma* art thou brought to? If thou go down into the *Caverns* of this Earth, there thou art a prey to thy Covetouſneſs that hunts thee; and if thou aſpire, or but creep upward, there thy Pride waits to enſnare thee. Diſtreſſed Soul! Whither wilt thou go? Aſcend thou mayeſt, not by a vain elation, but by a heavenly converſation, beſide which there is no way for thy preſervation the way of Life is above to the Wiſe, *&c.*

Again, I could not but obſerve the accidental benefit this poor harmleſs Bird obtain'd by the labour of the *Mole*, who hunting intentionally for her ſelf, unburroughed and ferrited out this Worm for the Bird, who poſſibly was hungry enough, and could not have been relieved for this time, but by the *Mole*, the fruit of whoſe labours ſhe now feeds upon. Even thus the Lord oft-times makes good his word to his People: *The wealth of the wicked is laid up for the juſt.* And again, *The earth ſhall help the Woman.* This was fully exemplified in *David*, to whom *Nabal*, that churliſh Muckworm, ſpeaks all in Poſſeſſives. *Shall I take my bread,* &c. *and give it to one I know not whom?* And yet *David* reaps the fruit of all the pains and toil of *Nabal* at laſt. Let it never incourage me to idleneſs, that God ſometimes gives his People the fruit of others ſweat; but if Providence reduce me to neceſſity, and diſable me from helping my ſelf, I doubt not then but it will provide Inſtruments to do it. The Bird was an hungry, and could not dig.

## MEDIT. VI.

*Upon the ſhooting of two Finches fighting in the Air.*

HOW ſoon hath death ended the quarrel betwixt theſe two little Combitants! Had they agreed better, they might have lived longer; 'twas their own contention that gave both the opportunity and provocation of their Death; and though living they could not, yet being dead they can lye quietly together in my hand.

Fooliſh Birds, was it not enough that Birds of Prey watched to devour them, but they muſt peck and ſcratch one another? Thus have I ſeen the Birds of Paradice (Saints I mean) tearing and wounding each other, like ſo many Birds of Prey, and by their unchriſtian Conteſts giving the occaſion of their common Ruin; yea, and that not only when at liberty, as theſe were, but when engaged alſo; and yet, as one well obſerves, if ever Chriſtians will agree, 'twill either be in a Priſon, or in Heaven; for in a Priſon their quarrelſome Luſts lye low, and in Heaven they ſhall be utterly done away.

But O! What pity is it, that thoſe who ſhall agree ſo perfectly in Heaven, ſhould bite and devour each other upon Earth? That it ſhould be ſaid of them, as one ingeniouſly obſerved, who ſaw their Carcaſes lye together, as if they had lovingly embraced each other, who fell together by a Duel, *Quanta amicitia ſe invicem amplectuntur; qui mutua & implacabili inimicitia per eerunt?*

*Imbracing one another, now they lye,*
*Who, by each others bloody Hands did die.*

Or as he said, who obſerved how quietly and peaceably the Duſt and Bones, even of Enemies, did lye together in the Grave; *Non tanta vivi pace conjuncti eſſetis*; you did not live together ſo peaceably. If Conſcience of Chriſt's Command will not, yet the Conſideration of common Safety ſhould powerfully perſwade to Unity and Amity.

## MEDIT. VII.

*Upon the ſinging of a blind* Finch *by Night.*

A Dear Friend, who was a great Obſerver of the Works of God in Nature, told me, That being entertain'd with a ſight of many Rarities at a Friend's Houſe in *London*; among other things, his Friends ſhewed him a *Finch*, whoſe Eyes being put out, would frequently ſing, even at midnight. This Bird, in my Opinion, is the lively Emblem of ſuch careleſs and unconcerned Perſons, as the Prophet deſcribes, *Amos* 6. 4, 5, 6. who chant to the Viol, when a diſmal night of trouble and affliction hath over-ſhadowed the Church. You would have thought it ſtrange to have heard this Bird ſing in the Night, when all others are in a deep ſilence; except the Owl, an unclean Bird, and the Nightingal, which before we made the Emblem of the Hypocrite. And as ſtrange it is, that any, except the Prophane and Hypocritical, ſhould ſo unſeaſonably expreſs their *Mirth* and *Jollity*; that any of *Sion's* Children ſhould live in Pleaſure, whilſt ſhe her ſelf lyes in Tears. The People of God, in *Pſal.* 137. tells us, in what poſtures of Sorrow they ſat; even like Birds, with their Heads under their Wings, during the night of their captivity. *How ſhall we ſing the Lord's Songs in a ſtrange Land?* 'Tis like enough, ſuch as can ſing and chant in the Night of the Church's Trouble, have well feathered their Neſts in the Days of her Proſperity; However, let them know, that God will turn their unſeaſonable mirth into a ſadder Note; and thoſe that now ſit ſad and ſilent, ſhall ſhortly ſing for Joy of Heart, when the Winter is paſt, the Rain over and gone, the Flowers appear again upon the Earth, and the time of the ſinging of Birds is come.

## MEDIT. VIII.

### *Upon the comparing of two Birds Neſts.*

'TIS pretty to obſerve the Structure and Commodiouſneſs of the Habitations of theſe little Architects, who, though they act not by reaſon and Counſel, but only by natural Inſtinct, yet Reaſon it ſelf could hardly have contrived a neater Building of ſuch ſimple Materials. How neatly hath the *Thruſh* ceiled or plaiſtered his Neſt, with admirable Art and Induſtry? How warmly hath the *Finch* matted his? And both well fenced againſt the Injury of the Weather.

How comfortably hath Nature provided convenient Habitations for theſe weak and tender young Ones, who have warm Lodging, and variety of Proviſions hourly brought them, without their Care or Pains? This trifling Object ſuggeſts to my Thoughts a more excellent and ſerious Contemplation, even the wonderful and unparallell'd Abaſement of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who for my ſake voluntarily ſubmitted himſelf to a more deſtitute and neglected State, than theſe Birds of the Air; for *Mat.* 8. 20. he ſaith, *The Foxes have holes, and the Birds of the Air have neſts; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head.*

*Vulpibus in ſaltu rupes exciſa latebras*
*Præbet, & aereis avibus dat ſilva quietem:*
*Aſt hominis Nato nullis ſuccedere tectis*
*Eſt licitum*———————

Heinſ. in loc.

*The craggy Rock to Foxes holes affords,*
*The pleaſant Woods a reſting place to Birds;*
*For Chriſt no fixed Habitation's found,*
*But what was borrowed, or the naked ground.*

O melting Conſideration! that the glorious Son of God, *Joh.* 1. 14. *The Lord of Glory*, Jam. 2. 1. *The brightneſs of his Father's Glory*, Heb. 1. 3. *Who was rich*, 2 Cor. 8. 9. *And thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. 2. 8. who from *all eternity* was infinitely and ineffably *delighting and rejoicing in the boſom of his Father*, Prov. 8. 30. That he, I ſay, ſhould manifeſt himſelf *in fleſh*, 2 Tim. 3. 16. Yea, *in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. That is, in fleſh that had the marks and effects of ſin upon it, as hunger, thirſt, pain, wearineſs and mortality, and not only ſo, but to chuſe ſuch a State of outward meanneſs and poverty, never being poſſeſſed of a Houſe in this World; but living as a Stranger in other Mens Houſes, and ſtooping in this reſpect to a lower Condition than the very Birds of the Air, and all this for Enemies. O let it work both admiration and thankfulneſs in my Soul! my Body is better accommodated than the Body of my Lord. Dear Jeſus! by how much the viler thou madeſt thy ſelf for me, by ſo much the dearer ſhalt thou be to me.

*Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi charior.* Bern.

## MEDIT. IX.

### *Upon the early ſinging of Birds.*

HOW am I reproved of Sluggiſhneſs by theſe watchful Birds! which cheerfully entertain the very dawning of the Morning, with their cheerful and delightful warblings! they ſet their little Spirits all a-work betimes, whilſt my nobler Spirits are bound with the Bonds of ſoft and downy Slumbers. For ſhame, my Soul! ſuffer not that Publican ſleep to ſeize ſo much of thy time, yea, thy beſt and freſheſt time; reprove and chide thy ſluggiſh Body, as a good Biſhop once did when upon the ſame occaſion he ſaid, *Surrexerunt paſſeres, & ſtertunt Pontifices.*

*The early chirping Sparrows may reprove*
*Such lazy Biſhops as their Beds do love.*

Of many Sluggards it may be ſaid, as *Tully* ſaid of *Verres*, the Deputy of *Sicily*, *Quod nunquam ſolem nec orientem, nec occidentem viderat*; that he never ſaw the Sun riſing, being in Bed after, nor ſetting, being in Bed before.

'Tis pity that Chriſtians, of all Men, ſhould ſuffer ſleep to cut ſuch large Thongs out of ſo narrow a Hide, as their time on Earth is. But, alas! It is not ſo much early riſing, as a wiſe improving thoſe freſh and free Hours with God, that will enrich the Soul; elſe, as our Proverb ſaith, *A Man may be early up, and never the near*; yea, far better it is to be found in Bed ſleeping, than to be up doing nothing, or that which is worſe than nothing. O my Soul! Learn to prepoſſeſs thy ſelf every morning with the Thoughts of God, and ſuffer not thoſe freſh and ſweet Operations of the Mind to be proſtituted to Earthly things; for that is experimentally true, which one in this Caſe hath pertinently obſerved; that if the World get the ſtart of Religion in the Morning, it will be hard for Religion to overtake it all the Day after.

*Mr. Caſe in Epiſt. to the Morn. Lect.*

## MEDIT. X.

### *Upon the haltering of Birds with a Grain of Hair.*

OBſerving in a ſnowy Seaſon, how the poor hungry Birds were haltered and drawn in by a Grain of Hair cunningly caſt over their Heads, whilſt poor Creatures they were buſily feeding, and ſuſpected no danger; and even whilſt their Companions were drawn away from them, one after another; all the interruption it gave the reſt, was only for a minute or two, whilſt they ſtood peeping into that hole through which their Companions were drawn, and then fell to their Meat again as buſily as before; I could not chuſe but ſay, *Even thus ſurprizingly doth Death ſteal upon the Children of Men, whilſt they are wholly intent upon the Cares and Pleaſures of this Life, not at all ſuſpecting its ſo near approach.* Theſe Birds ſaw not the Hand that enſnared them, nor do they ſee the Hand of Death plucking them one after another into the Grave.

*Omnibus obſcuras injecit illa manus.* Ovid.

*Death's ſteps as ſwift, and yet no noiſe it makes;*
*Its hand unſeen, but yet moſt ſurely takes.*

And even as the ſurviving Birds for a little time ſeemed to ſtand affrighted, peeping after their Companions, and then as buſie as ever to their Meat again: Juſt ſo it fares with the careleſs inconſiderate World, who ſee others daily dropping into Eternity round about them, and for the preſent are a little ſtartled, and will look into the Grave after their Neighbours, and then fall as buſily to their

Earthly Imployments and Pleaſures again as ever, till their own turn comes.

I know my God! That I muſt die as well as others; but, O let me not die as do others, let me ſee death before I feel it, and conquer it before it kill me; let it not come as an Enemy upon my back, but rather let me meet it as a Friend half way! Die I muſt, but let me lay up that good Treaſure before I go, *Mat.* 6. 19. Carry with me a good Conſcience when I go, 2 *Tim.* 4. 6, 7. And leave behind me a good Example when I am gone, and then let Death come and welcome!

## *Meditations upon* BEASTS.

### MEDIT. I.

*Upon the clogging a ſtraying Beaſt.*

HAD this *Bullock* contented himſelf, and remained quietly within his own bounds, his Owner had never put ſuch an heavy Clog upon his Neck; but I ſee the prudent Husbandman chuſes rather to keep him with this Clog, than loſe him for want of one. What this Clog is to him, that is Affliction and Trouble to me; had my Soul kept cloſe with God in Liberty and Proſperity, he would never thus have clogged me with Adverſity; yea, and happy were it for me, if I might ſtray from God no more, who hath thus clogged me with preventive Afflictions. If, with *David*, I might ſay, *Before I was afflicted I went aſtray, but now I have kept thy word*, Pſal. 119. 67. O my Soul! 'tis better for thee to have thy Pride clogged with Poverty, thy Ambition with Reproach, thy carnal Expectancies with conſtant Diſappointments, than to be at Liberty, to run from God and Duty.

'Tis true, I am ſometimes as weary of theſe Troubles, as this poor Beaſt is of the Clog he draws after him, and often wiſh my ſelf rid of them; but yet, if God ſhould take them off, for ought I know I might have cauſe to wiſh them on again, to prevent a greater Miſchief. 'Tis ſtoried of *Baſil*, that for many Years he was ſorely afflicted with an inveterate Head-ach, (that was his Clog) he often prayed for the removal of it, at laſt God removed it; but inſtead thereof he was ſorely exerciſed with the motions and temptations of Luſt, which when he perceived, he as earneſtly deſired his Head-ach again, to prevent a greater Evil. Lord! If my Corruptions may be prevented by my affliction, I refuſe not to be clogged with them; but my Soul rather deſires thou wouldſt haſten the time when I ſhall be for ever freed from them both.

### MEDIT. II.

*Upon the Love of a Dog to his Maſter.*

HOW many weary ſteps, through mire and dirt, hath this poor Dog followed my Horſe's heels to day, and all this for a very poor reward? For all he gets by it at night, is but Bones and Blows, yet will he not leave my Company, but is content upon ſuch hard Terms, to travel with me from day to day.

O my Soul! What conviction and ſhame may this leave upon thee, who art often-times even weary of following thy Maſter *Chriſt*, whoſe Rewards and Incouragements of Obedience are ſo incomparably ſweet and ſure? I cannot beat back this Dog from following me, but every inconſiderable trouble is enough to diſcourage me in the way of my Duty. Ready I am to reſolve as that Scribe did, *Mat.* 8. 19. *Maſter, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt*; but how doth my Heart faulter when I muſt encounter with the difficulties of the way? O! Let me make a whole Heart-choice of Chriſt for my Portion and Happineſs! And then I ſhall never leave him, nor turn back from following him, though the preſent Difficulties were much more, and the preſent Incouragements much leſs.

### MEDIT. III.

*Upon the fighting of two Rams.*

TAking notice how furiouſly theſe Sheep, which by nature are mild and gentle, did yet, like Bulls, puſh each other, taking their advantage by going back to meet with a greater Rage and Fury. Methought I ſaw in this a plain Emblem of the unchriſtian Conteſts and Animoſities which fall out amongſt them that call themſelves the People of God, who are in Scripture alſo ſtiled Sheep, for their meekneſs and innocency; and yet, through the remaining corruptions that are in them, thus do they puſh each other; (as one long ſince complained) *non ſecus ac*.

*Cum duo converſis inimica in prælia tauri,*
*Frontibus incurrunt*———

*Shall Chriſtians one another wound and puſh,*
*Like furious Bulls, when they together ruſh?*

The fighting of theſe Sheep doth in two reſpects notably comport with the ſinful Practices of contending Chriſtians, 1. That in this fight they engage with their Heads one againſt another: And what are they but thoſe Head-notions, or *Oppoſition of Sciences*, falſly ſo called, that have made ſo many Broils and Uproars in the Chriſtian World? O! What claſhings have theſe heady Opinions cauſed in the Churches? Firſt Heads, and then Hearts have claſhed. Chriſtians have not diſtinguiſhed betwixt *Adverſarius litis, & perſonæ*; an Adverſary to the *Opinion*, and to the *Perſon*; but dipt their Tongues and Pens in Vinegar and Gall, ſhamefully aſperſing and reproaching one another, becauſe their Underſtandings were not caſt into one Mould, and their Heads all of a bigneſs. But, 2. That which Country-men obſerve from the fighting of Sheep, *That it preſages foul and ſtormy Weather*, is much more certainly conſequent upon the fighting of Chriſt's Sheep. Do theſe claſh and puſh? Surely *it is an infallible Prognoſtick of an enſuing Storm*, Mal. 4. 6.

### MEDIT. IV.

*Upon the Catching of a Horſe in a fat Paſture.*

WHen this Horſe was kept in poor ſhor Leas, where he had much Scope, bu little Graſs, how gentle and tractable was he then He would not only ſtand quiet to be taken, but com to hand of his own accord, and follow me up an down the Field for a Cruſt of Bread, or Handf of Oats; but ſince I turned him into this fat Paſture he comes no more to me, nor will ſuffer me to come near him, but throws up his Heels wantonly againſt me, and flies from me, as if I were rather his *Enemy* than *Benefactor*. In this I behold the Carriage of my own Heart towards God, who the more he hath done for me, the ſeldomer doth he hear from me; in a low and afflicted State, how tractable is my Heart to Duty? Then it comes to the Foot of God voluntarily? But in an exalted Condition, how wildly doth my Heart run from God and Duty? With this ungrateful requital God faulted his own People, *Jer.* 3. 31. teachable and tractable in the *Wilderneſs*, but when fatted in that rich Paſture *Canaan*, Then, *we are Lords, we will come no more to thee*. How ſoon are all God's former Benefits forgotten? And how often is that ancient Obſervation verified, even in his own People?

Μετὰ τ̃ δόσιν τάχιστα γηράσκει χάρις.

*Poſt munera cito conſeneſcit gratia.*

*No ſooner do we Gifts on ſome beſtow,*
*But preſently our Gifts Gray-headed grow.*

But that's a bad Tenant, that will maintain a Suit at Law againſt his Landlord with his own Rent; and a bad Heart, that will fight againſt God with his own Mercies. I wiſh it may be with my Heart, as it is reported to be with the Waters in the Kingdom of *Congo*, that are never ſo ſweet to the Taſte, as when the Tide is at the higheſt.

## MEDIT. V.

### *Upon the Hunting of a* Deer.

THE full-mouthed cry of theſe Dogs, which from the morning have hunted this poor tired Deer, which is now no longer able to ſtand before them, but is compaſſed round with them, who thirſt for, and will preſently ſuck her Blood; brings to my Thoughts the Condition and State of *Jeſus Chriſt*, in the days of his Fleſh, who was thus hunted from place to place by blood-thirſty Enemies. Upon this very account, the 22d *Pſalm* which treats of his Death, is inſcribed with the Title of *Aljeleth Shahar*, which ſignifies the *Hind of the Morning*, and fully imports the ſame Notion which this occaſion preſented me with; for look, as the *Hind* or *Deer*, which is intended to be run down that day, is rouzed by the Dogs early in the morning; ſo was Chriſt, in the very morning of his Infancy, by bloody *Herod*, and that cruel Pack confederated with him. Thus was he chaſed from place to place, till that was fulfilled which was prophetically written of him in *Verſ.* 16. of the forecited *Pſalm*; *For Dogs have compaſſed me about, the aſſembly of the wicked have incloſed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.*

And canſt thou expect, O my Soul! to fare better than he did, or eſcape the Rage of bloody men? Surely, if the Spirit of Chriſt dwell in thee, if his Holineſs have ſavoured thee, thoſe Dogs will wind it, and give thee chaſe too; they go upon the Scent of Holineſs ſtill, and would hunt to deſtruction every one, in whom there is *aliquid Chriſti*, any thing of Chriſt, if the gracious Providence of the Lord did not ſometimes rate them off: For it is no leſs a pleaſure which ſome wicked ones take in hunting the People of God, than what *Claudian* the Poet obſerves men uſe to take in hunting wild Beaſts.

*Venator defeſſa thoro quum membra reponit*
*Mens tamen ad Sylvas, & ſua luſtra redit.*

*Whilſt weary Huntſmen in the Night do ſleep,*
*Their Fancies in the Woods ſtill hunting keep.*

Lord! ſhould I with the Hypocrite decline the Profeſſion and Practice of Holineſs, to eſcape the Rage of perſecuting Enemies, at what time they ceaſe, my own Conſcience would begin to hunt me like a Blood-hound; let me rather chuſe to be chaſed by men than God, to flee before purſuing Enemies, than be dogged from day to day with a guilty Conſcience.

## *Meditations upon* TREES.

## MEDIT. I.

### *Upon the fall of Bloſſoms, nipt by a froſty Morning.*

BEholding in an early Spring, Fruit-trees emboſſed with beautiful Bloſſoms of various Colours, which breathed forth their delicious Odours into the circumambient Air, and adorned the Branches on which they grew, like ſo many rich Jewels, or glittering Pendents; and further obſerving, how theſe perfumed Bloſſoms dropt off, being bitten with the Froſt, and diſcoloured all the Ground, as if a ſhower of Snow had fallen; I ſaid within my ſelf, theſe ſweet and early Bloſſoms are not unlike my ſweet and early Affections to the Lord, in the days of my firſt acquaintance with him. O What fervent Love, panting Deſires, and heavenly Delights beautified my Soul in thoſe days! the odoriferous Scent of the ſweeteſt Bloſſoms, the morning Breath of the moſt fragrant Flowers, hath not half that ſweetneſs with which thoſe my firſt Affections were enriched. O! happy time, thrice pleaſant Spring! My Soul hath it ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled within me; for theſe alſo were but Bloſſoms which now are nipt and faded, that firſt flouriſh is gone; my Heart is like the Winter's Earth, becauſe thy Face, Lord! is to me like a Winter Sun. *Awake, O North Wind! and come South Wind, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out, then let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleaſant Fruit!*

## MEDIT. II.

### *Upon the Knitting or Setting of Fruit.*

I Have often obſerved, that when the Bloſſoms of a Tree ſet and knit, though the flouriſh thereof be gone, and nothing but the bare Rudiment of the expected Fruit be left; yet then the Fruit is much better ſecured from the danger of Froſts and Winds, than whilſt it remained in the Flower or Bloſſom; for now it hath paſt one of thoſe *Critical Periods*, in which ſo many Trees miſcarry and loſe their Fruit. And methought this *Natural Obſervation* fairly led me to this *Theological Propoſition*; *That good*

*good Motions and holy Purpoſes in the Soul, are never ſecured, and paſt their moſt dangerous* Criſis, *till they be turned into fixed Reſolutions, and anſwerable Executions, which is as the knitting and ſetting of them.*

Upon this Propoſition my melting thoughts thus dilated, happy had it been for thee, my Soul! had all the bleſſed Motions of the Spirit been thus knit and fixed in thee. Oh, how have mine Affections blown and budded under the warm Beams of the Goſpel! But a chill blaſt from the Cares, Troubles and Delights of the World without, and the Vanity and Deadneſs of the Heart within, have blaſted all; my Goodneſs hath been but as a Morning Dew, or early Cloud that vaniſheth away. And even of Divine Ordinances, I may ſay what is ſaid of Humane Ordinances, *They have periſhed in the uſing.* A Bloſſom is but *fructus imperfectus, & ordinabilis*, an imperfect thing in it ſelf, and ſomething in order to Fruit; a good Motion and holy Purpoſe is but *opus Imperfectum, & ordinabile*, an imperfect Work, in order to a compleat Work of the Spirit; when that *primus impetus*, thoſe firſt Motions were ſtrong upon my Heart, had I then purſued them in the force and vigour of them, how many Difficulties might I have overcome? Revive thy Work, O Lord! And give not to my Soul a miſcarrying Womb, or dry Breaſts.

## MEDIT. III.

### *Upon the ſight of a fair ſpreading Oak.*

WHat a lofty flouriſhing Tree is here? It ſeems rather to be a little Wood, than a ſingle Tree; every Limb thereof having the Dimenſions and Branches of a Tree in it; and yet as great as it is, it was once but a little ſlip, which one might pull up with two Fingers; this vaſt Body was contained vertually and potentially in a ſmall Acorn. Well then, I will never deſpiſe the day of ſmall Things, nor deſpair of arriving to an Eminency of Grace, though at preſent it be but as a bruiſed Reed, and the things that are in me be ready to die. As things in Nature, ſo the things of the Spirit grow up to their fulneſs and perfection by ſlow and inſenſible degrees. The famous and heroical Acts of of the moſt renowned Believers were ſuch as themſelves could not once perform, or it may be think they ever ſhould. Great things, both in Nature and Grace, come from ſmall and contemptible Beginnings.

## MEDIT. IV.

### *Upon the ſight of many Sticks lodged in the Branches of a choice Fruit-Tree.*

HOW is this Tree batter'd with Stones and loaded with Sticks that have been thrown at it, whilſt thoſe that grow about it, being barren, or bearing harſher Fruit, eſcape untouched! Surely, if its Fruit had not been ſo good, its uſage had not been ſo bad. And yet it is affirmed, That ſome Trees, as the Walnut, *&c.* bear the better for being thus bruiſed and batter'd.

Even thus it fares in both reſpects with the beſt of Men; the more holy, the more envied and perſecuted; every one that paſſes by will have a fling at them. Methinks I ſee how Devils and wicked Men walk round about the People of God, whom he hath encloſed in his Arms of Power, like ſo many Boys about an Orchard, whoſe Lips water to have a fling at them. But God turns all the Stones of Reproach into precious Stones to his People; they bear the better for being thus batter'd. And, in them, is that ancient Obſervation verified.

*Creſcunt virtutum palmæ, creſcuntque Coronæ*  
*Mutantur mundi prælia, pace Dei.*

*The Palms and Crowns of Virtue thus encreaſe;*  
*Thus Perſecution's turned into Peace.*

Let me be but fruitful to God in Holineſs, and ever abounding in the Work of the Lord, and then whilſt Devils and Men are flinging at me, either by Hand or Tongue Perſecutions, I will ſing amidſt them all with the Divine Poet.

*What open Force, or hidden Charm,*  
*Can blaſt my Fruit, or bring me harm,*  
*While the Incloſure is this Arm?*

*Herb.* Poem. *p.* 125.

## MEDIT. V.

### *Upon the gathering of choice Fruit from a ſcrubbed unpromiſing Tree.*

WOuld any Man think to find ſuch rare delicious Fruit upon ſuch an unworthy Tree to appearance as this is? I ſhould rather have expected the moſt delicious Fruit from the moſt handſome and flouriſhing Trees; but I ſee I muſt neither judge the worth of Trees or Men by their external form and appearance. This is not the firſt time I have been deceived in judging by that Rule; under fair and promiſing out-ſides I have found nothing of worth; and in many deformed deſpicable Bodies, I have found precious and richly furniſhed Souls. The Sap and Juice of this ſcrubbed Tree is concocted into rare and excellent Fruits, whilſt the Juice and Sap of ſome other fair, but barren Trees, ſerves only to keep them from rotting, which is all the uſe that many Souls which dwell in beautiful Bodies ſerve for; they have (as one ſaith) *animam pro ſale*; their Souls are but Salt to their Bodies. Or thus,

*The only uſe to which their Souls do ſerve,*  
*Is but like Salt, their Bodies to preſerve.*

If God have given me a ſound Soul in a ſound Body, I have a double *Mercy* to bleſs him for; but whether my Body be vigorous and beautiful, or not, yet let my Soul be ſo: For as the eſteem of this Tree, ſo the eſteem and true honour of every Man riſes rather from his fruitfulneſs and uſefulneſs, than from his ſhape and form.

## MEDIT. VI.

### *Upon an excellent, but irregular Tree.*

SEeing a Tree grow ſomewhat irregular, in a very neat Orchard, I told the Owner it was pity that Tree ſhould ſtand there; and that if it were mine I would root it up, and thereby reduce the Orchard to an exact uniformity. It was replied to this purpoſe, *That he rather regarded the Fruit than the Form*; and that this ſlight inconveniency was abundantly preponderated by a more conſiderable advantage. This Tree, *ſaid he*, which you would root up, hath yielded me more Fruit than many of thoſe Trees which have nothing elſe to commend them, but their regular Scituation. I could not but yield to the Reaſon of this Anſwer; and could wiſh it had been ſpoken ſo loud, that all our Uniformity-Men had heard it, who will not ſtick to root up many hundred of the beſt Bearers in the Lord's Orchard, becauſe they ſtand not in an exact order with other more conformable, but leſs beneficial Trees, who do *perdere ſubſtantiam propter accidentia*, deſtroy the Fruit, to preſerve the Form.

*Not much unlike ſuch fooliſh Men are thoſe*
*That ſtrive for Shadows, and the Subſtance loſe.*

## *Meditations upon a* Garden.

### MEDIT. I.

### *Upon the new Modelling of a Garden.*

A Gentlewoman who had lately ſeen a neat and curious Garden, returns to her own with a greater diſlike of it than ever; reſolves to new model the whole Plat, and reduce it to a better Form; is now become ſo curious and neat, that not a Weed or Stone is ſuffered in it, but all muſt lye in exquiſite order; and whatever Ornament ſhe had obſerved in her Neighbours, ſhe is now reſtleſs till ſhe ſee it in her own.

Happy were it, thought I, if in an holy Emulation every one would thus endeavour to rectifie the Diſorders of their own Converſation, by the excellent Graces they behold in the more heavenly and regular Lives of others. Some Chriſtians there are (I wiſh their number were greater) whoſe Actions lye in ſuch a comely and beautiful order, that few of their Neighbours can look upon their Examples without ſelf-conviction and ſhame; but few are ſo happy to be provoked unto ſelf-reformation by ſuch rare Patterns. I ſee it is much eaſier to pull up many Weeds out of a Garden, than one Corruption out of the Heart; and to procure an hundred Flowers to adorn a Knot, than one Grace to beautifie the Soul. 'Tis more natural to corrupt Man to Envy, than to imitate the Spiritual Excellencies of others.

### MEDIT. II.

### *Upon the pulling up of a Leek.*

A White head and a green tail! How well doth this reſemble an old wanton Lover, whoſe green youthful Luſts are not extinguiſhed, though his white head declares that Nature is almoſt ſo! Gray Hairs ſhould be always match'd with grave Deportments; and the Sins of Youth ſhould rather be the Griefs than Pleaſures of old Age. 'Tis ſad when the Sins of the Soul, like the Diſeaſes of the Body, grow ſtronger, as Nature grows weaker: And it recals to my mind that ancient Obſervation of *Menanber.*

Γέρων ἐραστὴς ἐσχάτη κακὴ τύχη.

*Sene amore captus, ultimum malum.*

*It is the worſt of Evils, to behold*
*Strong youthful Luſts to rage in one that's old.*

'Tis a thouſand pities, that thoſe who have one Foot in the Grave, would live as if the other were in Hell! that their Luſts ſhould be ſo lively, when their Bodies are three parts dead! Such Sinful Practices bring upon them more contempt and ſhame than their hoary Heads and reverend Faces can procure them Honour.

*Magna fuit capitis quondam reverentia cani,*
*Inque ſuo pretio ruga ſenilis erat.*
Ovid. 5. Faſt.

*Gray Hairs, and aged Wrinkles, did of old*
*Procure more reverence than Bags of Gold.*

But alas! How little reſpect or reverence can the hoary Head obtain amongſt wiſe Men, except it be found in the way of Righteouſneſs? I think the loweſt eſteem is too much for an old Servant of the Devil; and the higheſt honour little enough for an ancient and faithful Servant of Chriſt.

### MEDIT. III.

### *Upon a heedleſs Tread in a curious Garden.*

PAſſing through the ſmall Diviſions of a curious Knot, which was richly adorned with rare Tulips, and other beautiful Flowers, I was very careful to ſhun thoſe Flowers, which indeed had no other worth to commend them, but their exquiſite Colours, and unadviſedly trod upon and ſpoiled an excellent choice Herb, which though it grew obſcurely, yet had rare Phyſical Virtues in it.

When I was made ſenſible of the involuntary Treſpaſs I had committed, I thought I could ſcarcely make the Owner a better Compenſation, than by telling him, that herein (though againſt my will) I did but tread in the Footſteps of the greateſt part of the World, who are very careful (as I was) to keep their due diſtance from ſplendid, though worthleſs Gallants; mean while trampling upon, and cruſhing under foot, the obſcure, but moſt precious Servants of God in the World. As little do they heed theſe moſt excellent Perſons as I did this precious Herb.

*Summa ingenia in occulto ſæpe latent,*
ſaith *Plautus.*

*Rare Wits and Herbs ſometimes do ſculk and ſhrink*
*In ſuch blind holes, as one would little think.*

For my own part, I deſire to tread upon no man with the Foot of Contempt and Pride, much leſs upon any good man; and that I may not, it concerns me to look before I ſtep; I mean, to conſider before I cenſure: had I done ſo by this rare Herb, I had never hurt it.

### MEDIT. IV.

### *Upon a withered Poſie taken up in the way.*

FInding, in my walk, a Poſie of once ſweet and fragrant, but now dry and withered Flowers, which I ſuppoſe to be thrown away by one that had formerly worn it: Thus, ſaid I, doth the unfaithful World uſe its Friends, when Providence hath blaſted and withered them; whilſt they are rich and honourable, they will put them into their Boſoms, as the Owner of this Poſie did, whilſt it was freſh and fragrant, and as eaſily throw them away, as uſeleſs and worthleſs things, when thus they come to be withered. Such uſage as this *Petronius* long ſince complained of.

*Cum fortuna manet vultum ſervatis amici,*
*Cum cecedit turpi vertitis ora fuga.* (i. e.)

*Are they in Honour? Then we ſmile like Friends;*
*And with their Fortunes all our Friendſhip ends.*

But this looſe and deceitful Friendſhip ſtinks ſo odiouſly in the very Noſtrils of Nature, that a *Heathen Poet* ſeverely taxes and condemns it as moſt unworthy of a Man.

*Turpe ſequi caſum, & fortunæ cedere, amicum*
*Et niſi ſit fælix eſſe negare ſuum.* (i. e.)

*'Tis baſe to change with Fortune, and deny*
*A faithful Friend, becauſe in poverty.*

And is this indeed the Friendſhip of the World? Doth it thus uſe them whom once it honoured? Then, Lord! let me never ſeek its Friendſhip. O, let me eſteem the Smiles and Honours of Men leſs, and thy Love and Favour more! Thy Love is indeed unchangeable, being pure, free, and built upon nothing that is mutable; thou never ſerveſt thy Friends as the World doth its Darlings.

### MEDIT. V.

*Upon the ſudden withering of a Roſe.*

BEing with my Friend in a Garden, we gathered each of us a Roſe; he handled his tenderly, ſmell'd to it but ſeldom and ſparingly; I always kept it to my Noſe, or ſqueezed it in my Hand, whereby in a very ſhort time it loſt both colour and ſweetneſs, but his ſtill remained as ſweet and fragrant as if it had been growing upon its own root. Theſe Roſes, ſaid I, are the true Emblems of the beſt and ſweeteſt Creature-enjoyments in the World; which being moderately and cautiouſly uſed and enjoyed, may for a long time yield ſweetneſs to the poſſeſſor of them; but if once the Affections ſeize too greedily upon them, and ſqueeze them too hard, they quickly wither in our Hands and we loſe the comfort of them; and that either through the Soul's ſurfeiting upon them, or the Lord's righteous and juſt removal of them, becauſe of the exceſs of our Affections to them; Earthly comforts like Pictures, ſhew beſt at a due diſtance. It was therefore a good Saying of *Homer*, 'Ανδρὶ ξεινοδόκῳ, &c.

*Mihi nunquam is placet hoſpes*
*Qui valde preterque modum odit vel amat.*

*I like him not, who at the rate*
*Of all his might doth love or hate.*

'Tis a point of excellent Wiſdom to keep the golden Bridle of Moderation upon all the Affections we exerciſe upon Earthly things, and never to ſlip thoſe Reins, unleſs when they move towards God, in whoſe Love there is no danger of exceſs.

### MEDIT. VI.

*Upon the ſudden withering of beautiful Flowers.*

HOW freſh and orient did theſe Flowers lately appear, when being daſh'd over with the Morning Dew, they ſtood in all their Pride and Glory, breathing out their delicious Odours, which perfumed the Air round about them, but now are daver'd and ſhrivelled up, and have neither any deſirable Beauty or Savour in them.

So vain a thing is the admired Beauty of Creatures, which ſo captivates the Hearts, and exerciſes a pleaſing Tyranny over the Affections of vain man, yet is as ſuddenly blaſted as the Beauty of a Flower.

*Forma bonum fragile eſt quantumque accedit ad annos,*
*Fit minor & ſpacio carpitur ipſa ſuo.*
*Nec ſemper violæ, nec ſemper lilia florent*
*Et riget amiſſa ſpina relicta roſa.*
*Tempus erit quo vos ſpeculum vidiſſe pigebit,*
*Jam veniunt rugæ quæ tibi torpus arent*, &c.

*Ovid.* de art.

*How frail is Beauty! In how ſhort a time*
*It fades! like Roſes, which have paſt their prime.*
*So wrinkled Age the faireſt Face will plow,*
*And caſt deep furrows on the ſmootheſt Brow.*
*Then where's that lovely tempting Face? Alas!*
*Your ſelves would bluſh to view in a Glaſs.*

If then thou delighteſt in Beauty (O my Soul) chuſe that which is laſting. There is a Beauty that never fades, even the Beauty of Holineſs upon the inner Man; this abides freſh and orient for ever, and ſparkles glorioſly when thy face (the Seat of natural Beauty) is become an abhorrent and loathſome Spectacle. Holineſs enamels and ſprinkles over the face of the Soul with a Beauty, upon which Chriſt himſelf is enamour'd; even Imperfect Holineſs on Earth is a Roſe that breathes ſweetly in the bud; in Heaven it will be full-blown, and abide in its prime to all Eternity.

### MEDIT. VII.

*Upon the tenderneſs of ſome choice Flowers.*

HOw much care is neceſſary to preſerve the Life of ſome Flowers? They muſt be boxed up in the Winter, others muſt be covered with Glaſſes in their ſpringing up, the fineſt and richeſt mould much be ſifted about the Roots, and aſſiduouſly watered, and all this little enough, and ſometimes too little to preſerve them, whilſt other common and worthleſs Flowers grow without any help of ours; yea, we have no leſs to do to rid our Gardens of them, than we have to make the former grow there.

Thus ſtands the Caſe with our Hearts, in reference to the motions of Grace and Sin. Holy thoughts of God muſt be aſſiduouſly watered by Prayer, earthed up by Meditation, and defended by Watchfulneſs; and yet all this is ſometimes too little to preſerve them alive in our Souls. Alas! the Heart is a Soil that agrees not with them, they are tender things, and a ſmall mat will nip and kill them. To this purpoſe is the Complaint of the Divine Poet.

*Who would have thought a Joy*
*ſo coy?*
*To be offended ſo,*
*and go*
*So ſuddenly away.*
*Hereafter I had need*
*take heed.*
*Joys among other things*
*have wings,*
*And watch their opportunities of flight,*
*Converting, in a moment, day to night.*

Herbert.

But vain Thoughts, and unholy Suggeſtions, theſe ſpread themſelves, and root deep in the Heart; they naturally agree with the Soil; ſo that it is almoſt impoſſible at any time to be rid of them. 'Tis hard to forget what is our Sin to remember.

### MEDIT. VIII.

*Upon the ſtrange means of preſerving the Life of Vegetables.*

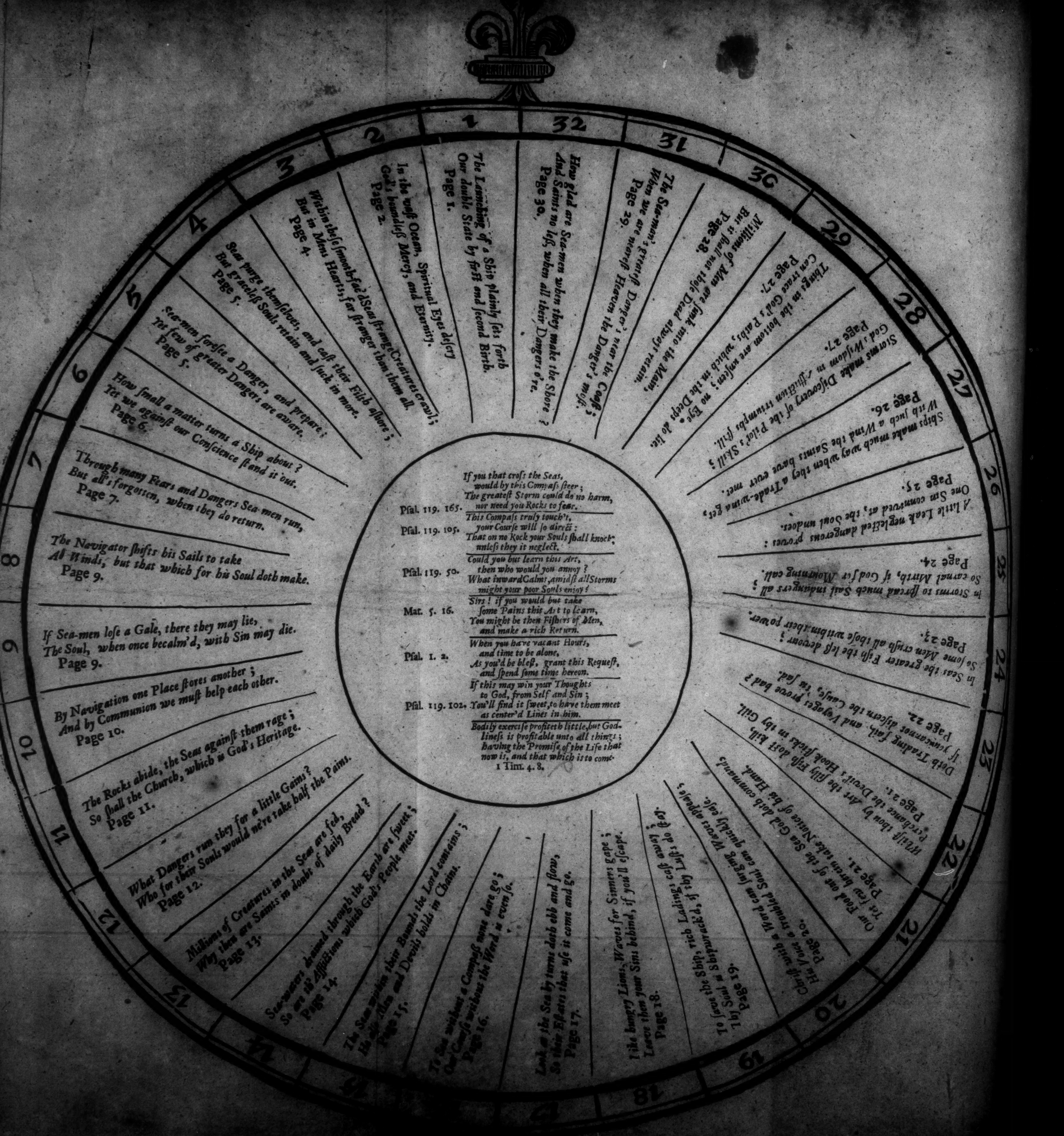
I Obſerve that Plants and Herbs are ſometimes killed by Froſts, and yet without Froſts they would neither live nor thrive; they are ſometimes drowned by Water, and yet without Water they cannot ſubſiſt; they are refreſhed and cheered by the heat of the Sun, and yet that heat ſometimes kills and ſcorches them up. Thus lives my Soul, Troubles and Afflictions ſeem to kill all its Comforts; and yet without theſe its Comforts could not live. The Sun-blaſts of Proſperity ſometimes refreſh me, and yet thoſe Sun-blaſts are the likelieſt way to wither me: By what ſeeming Contradictions is the Life of my Spirit preſerved? What a Myſtery, what a Paradox is the Life of a Chriſtian?

*Welcome my Health, this Sickneſs makes me well.*
*Med'cines adieu.*
*When with Diſeaſes I have liſt to dwell,*
*I'll wiſh for you.*
*Welcome my Strength, this Weakneſs makes me able.*
*Powers adieu.*
*When I am weary grown of ſtanding ſtable,*
*I'll wiſh for you.*
*Welcome my Wealth, this loſs hath gain'd me more.*
*Riches adieu.*
*When I again grow greedy to be poor,*
*I'll wiſh for you.*
*Welcome my Credit, this Diſgrace is Glory.*
*Honours adieu.*
*When for Renown and Fame I ſhall be ſorry,*
*I'll wiſh for you.*
*Welcome Content, this Sorrow is my Joy.*
*Pleaſures adieu.*
*When I deſire ſuch Griefs as may annoy,*
*I'll wiſh for you.*
*Health, Strength, and Riches, Credit and Content,*
*Are ſpared beſt ſometimes, when they are ſpent.*
*Sickneſs, and Weakneſs, Loſs, Diſgrace, and Sorrow,*
*Lend moſt ſometimes, when moſt they ſeem to borrow.*

And if by theſe contrary and improbable ways, the Lord preſerves our Souls in Life, no marvel then we find ſuch ſtrange and ſeemingly contradictory motions of our Hearts, under the various dealings of God with us, and are ſtill reſtleſs in wha Condition ſoever he puts us; which reſtleſs Frame was excellently expreſſed in that Pious Epigram of Reverend *Gataker*, made a little before his Death.

*I Thirſt for Thirſtineſs, I weep for Tears,*
*Well pleas'd I am to be diſpleaſed thus:*
*The only thing I fear, is want of fears,*
*Suſpecting I am not ſuſpicious.*
*I cannot chuſe but live, becauſe I die;*
*And when I am not dead, How glad am I*
*Yet when I am thus glad for ſence of Pain,*
*And careful am leſt I ſhould careleſs be,*
*Then do I grieve for being glad again,*
*And fear, leſt careleſneſs take care for me.*
*Amidſt theſe reſtleſs thoughts this reſt I fi*
*For thoſe that reſt not here, there's reſt be*

Jam tetigi portum valete.



1 The Launching of a Ship plainly ſets forth
Our double State by firſt and ſecond Birth.
Page 1.

2 In the vaſt Ocean, Spiritual Eyes deſcry
God's boundleſs Mercy, and Eternity.
Page 2.

3 Within theſe ſmooth-fac'd Seas ſtrange Creatures crawl;
But in Mens Hearts, far ſtranger then them all.
Page 4.

4 Seas purge themſelves, and caſt their Filth aſhore;
But graceleſs Souls retain and ſuck in more.
Page 5.

5 Sea-men foreſee a Danger, and prepare;
Yet few of greater Dangers are aware.
Page 5.

6 How ſmall a matter turns a Ship about?
Yet we againſt our Conſcience ſtand it out.
Page 6.

7 Through many Fears and Dangers Sea-men run,
But all's forgotten, when they do return.
Page 7.

8 The Navigator ſhifts his Sails to take
All Winds, but that which for his Soul doth make.
Page 9.

9 If Sea-men loſe a Gale, there they may lie,
The Soul, when once becalm'd, with Sin may die.
Page 9.

10 By Navigation one Place ſtores another;
And by Communion we muſt help each other.
Page 10.

11 The Rocks abide, the Seas againſt them rage;
So ſhall the Church, which is God's Heritage.
Page 11.

12 What Dangers run they for a little Gains?
Who for their Souls would ne're take half the Pains.
Page 12.

13 Millions of Creatures in the Seas are fed,
Why then are Saints in doubt of daily Bread?
Page 13.

14 Sea-waters drained through the Earth are ſweet;
So are all Afflictions which God's People meet.
Page 14.

15 The Sea within their Bounds the Lord contains;
He alſo Men and Devils holds in Chains.
Page 15.

16 To Sea without a Compaſs none dare go;
Our Courſe without the Word is even ſo.
Page 16.

17 Look on the Sea by turns doth ebb and flow,
So their Eſtates that uſe it come and go.
Page 17.

18 Like hungry Lions, Waves for Sinners gape;
Leave then your Sins behind, if you'll eſcape.
Page 18.

19 To ſave the Ship, rich Ladings caſt away;
Thy Soul is Shipwrack'd, if thy Luſts do ſtay.
Page 19.

20 Chriſt with a Word can ſurging Waves appeaſe;
His Voice a troubled Soul can quickly eaſe.
Page 20.

21 Our Food out of the Sea God doth command,
Yet few herein take Notice of his Hand.
Page 21.

22 Whilſt thou by Art the ſilly Fiſh doſt kill,
Perchance the Devil's Hook ſticks in thy Gill.
Page 21.

23 Doth Trading fail, and Voyages prove bad?
If you cannot diſcern the Cauſe, 'tis ſad.
Page 22.

24 In Seas the greater Fiſh the leſs devour;
So ſome Men cruſh all thoſe within their power.
Page 23.

25 In Storms to ſpread much Sail indangers all;
So carnal Mirth, if God for Mourning call.
Page 24.

26 A little Leak neglected dangerous proves:
One Sin connived at, the Soul undoes.
Page 25.

27 Ships make much way when they a Trade-wind get;
With ſuch a Wind the Saints have ever met.
Page 26.

28 Storms make Diſcovery of the Pilot's Skill;
God's Wiſdom in Affliction triumphs ſtill.
Page 27.

29 Things in the bottom are unſeen; no Eye
Can trace God's Paths, which in the Deeps do lie.
Page 27.

30 Millions of Men are ſunk into the Main,
But it ſhall not thoſe Dead always retain.
Page 28.

31 The Sea-man's greateſt Danger's near the Coaſt;
When we are neareſt Heaven the Danger's moſt.
Page 29.

32 How glad are Sea-men when they make the Shore?
And Saints no leſs, when all their Dangers o're.
Page 30.

*If you that croſs the Seas,*
*would by this Compaſs ſteer;*
*The greateſt Storm could do no harm,*
Pſal. 119. 165. *nor need you Rocks to fear.*

*This Compaſs truly touch't,*
Pſal. 119. 105. *your Courſe will ſo direct:*
*That on no Rock your Souls ſhall knock:*
*unleſs they it neglect.*

*Could you but learn this Art,*
Pſal. 119. 50. *then who would you annoy?*
*What inward Calms, amidſt all Storms*
*might your poor Souls enjoy?*

*Sirs! if you would but take*
Mat. 5. 16. *ſome Pains this Art to learn,*
*You might be then Fiſhers of Men,*
*and make a rich Return.*

*When you have vacant Hours,*
Pſal. 1. 2. *and time to be alone,*
*As you'd be bleſt, grant this Requeſt,*
*and ſpend ſome time hereon.*

*If this may win your Thoughts*
*to God, from Self and Sin;*
Pſal. 119. 102. *You'll find it ſweet, to have them meet*
*as center'd Lines in him.*

*Bodily exerciſe profiteth little, but Godlineſs is profitable unto all things; having the Promiſe of the Life that now is, and that which is to come.*
1 Tim. 4. 8.

# Navigation Spiritualiz'd:

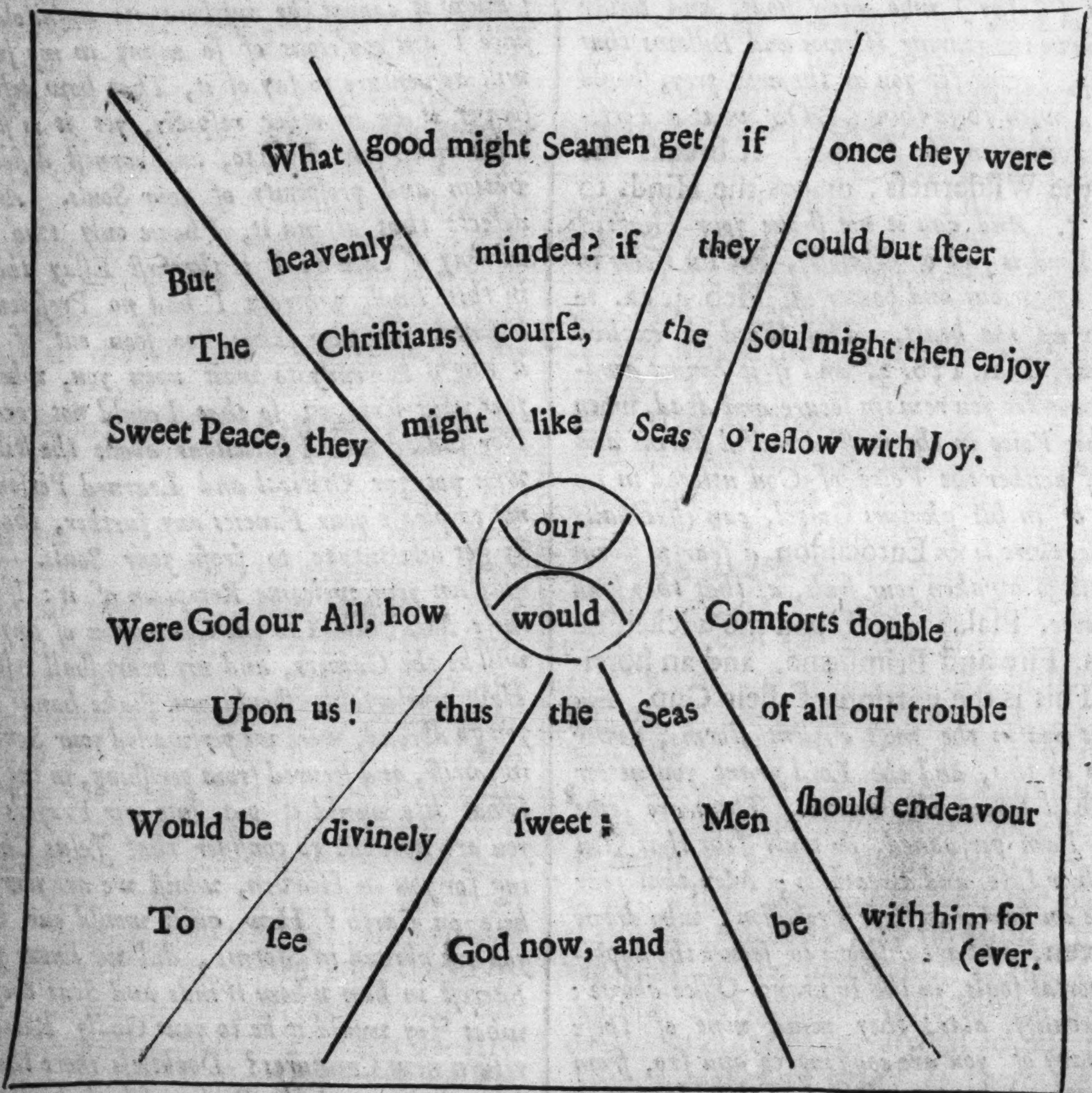
OR,

## A NEW COMPASS for *SEAMEN*;

Conſiſting of XXXII POINTS;

Of { Pleaſant *OBSERVATIONS*,
Profitable *APPLICATIONS*, and
Serious *REFLECTIONS*:

All concluded with ſo many Spiritual POEMS.



What good might Seamen get if once they were
But heavenly minded? if they could but ſteer
The Chriſtians courſe, the Soul might then enjoy
Sweet Peace, they might like Seas o'reflow with Joy.
Were God our All, how would our Comforts double
Upon us! thus the Seas of all our trouble
Would be divinely ſweet; Men ſhould endeavour
To ſee God now, and be with him for (ever.

o all *Maſters*, *Mariners* and *Seamen*: Eſpecially ſuch as belong to the Borough of *Clifton*, *Dartmouth* and *Hardnes*, in the County of *Devon*.

IRS,

*Find it Story'd of* Anacharſis, *that when one Ask'd him, Whether the Living or the Dead were more? He returned this Anſwer*, You muſt firſt tell me *(ſaith he)* in which Number I muſt place Sea- n: *Intimating thereby, that Sea-men are, as it were, a d ſort of Perſons, to be Number'd neither with the Li- g nor the Dead; their Lives hanging continually in ſuſ- e before them. And it was anciently accounted the moſt rate Imployment, and they little better than loſt Men ut'd the Seas.* Through all my Life *(ſaith* Ari e) Three things do eſpecially repent me: Firſt, That ever I reveal'd a Secret to a Woman. Secondly, That ever I remain'd one day without a Will. Thirdly, That ever I went to any place by Sea, whither I might have gone by Land. Nothing *(ſaith another)* is more miſerable, than to ſee a Virtuous and Worthy Perſon upon the Sea. *And although Cuſtom, and the great Improvement of the Art of Navigation, have made it leſs formidable now, yet are you no further from death than you are from the waters, which is but a remove of two or three Inches. Now you that border ſo nigh upon the Confines of Death and Eternity every moment, may well be ſuppoſed to be Men of ſingular Piety and Seriouſneſs: For nothing more compoſes the Heart to ſuch a frame, than the lively apprehenſions of Eternity do: and none have greater external advantages for that, than you have. But alas! for the generality, What ſort of Men are more ungodly, and ſtupidly inſenſible of eternal concernments? Living, for the moſt part, as if they had made a Covenant with Death, and with Hell were at agre-*

*ment. It was an ancient ſaying,* Qui neſcit orare, diſcat navigare, *He that knows not how to Pray, let him go to Sea. But we may ſay now, (alas, that we may ſay ſo in times of greater light) He that would learn to be prophane, to drink and ſwear, and diſhonour God, let him go to Sea. As for Prayer, it is a rare thing among Seamen, they count that a needleſs buſineſs: they ſee the prophane and vile deliver'd as well as others; and therefore, What profit is there if they Pray unto him?* Mal. 3. 4. *As I remember, I have read of a prophane Souldier, who was heard Swearing, though he ſtood in a place of great danger; and when one that ſtood by him warned him, ſaying,* Fellow-ſouldier, do not Swear, the Bullets fly; *he anſwer'd,* They that ſwear come off as well as they that pray. *Soon after a Shot hit him, and down he fell.* Plato *diligently admoniſh'd all Men to avoid the Sea;* For *(ſaith he)* it is the School-maſter of all Vice and Diſhoneſty. *Sirs! it is a very ſad conſideration to me, that you who float upon the great Deeps, in whoſe bottom ſo many Thouſand poor miſerable Creatures lie, whoſe ſins have ſunk them down, not only into the bottom of the Sea, but of Hell alſo, whither divine Vengeance hath purſu'd them: That you (I ſay) who daily float, and hover over them, and have the roaring Waves and Billows that ſwallow'd them up, gaping for you as the next prey, ſhould be no more affected with theſe things. Oh what a Terrible Voice doth God utter in the Storms!* It breaks the Cedars, ſhakes the Wilderneſs, makes the Hinds to Calve, *Pſal.* 29. 5. *And can it not ſhake your Hearts? This Voice of the Lord is full of Majeſty, but his Voice in the Word is more efficacious and powerful,* Heb. 4. 12. *to convince and rip up the heart. This Word is exalted above all his Name,* Pſal. 138. 3. *and if it cannot awaken you, it is no wonder you remain ſecure and dead, when the Lord utters his Voice in the moſt dreadful ſtorms and tempeſts. But if neither the Voice of God uttered in his dreadful Works, or in his glorious Goſpel, can effectually awaken and rouze, there is an* Euroclidon, *a fearful ſtorm coming, which will ſo awaken your ſouls, as that they ſhall never ſleep any more,* Pſal. 11. 6. Upon the wicked he ſhall rain Snares, Fire and Brimſtone, and an horrible Tempeſt: This is the portion of their Cup. *You that have been at Sea in the moſt Violent ſtorms, never felt ſuch a ſtorm as this, and the Lord grant you never may; no Calm ſhall follow this Storm. There are ſome among you, that, I am perſuaded, do truly fear that God in whoſe hand their Life and Breath is; Men that fear an Oath, and are an honour to their Profeſſion; who drive a Tade for* Heaven, *and are diligent to ſecure the happineſs of their Immortal ſouls, in the Inſurance-Office above: but for the generality, alas! they mind none of theſe things. How many of you are coaſting to and fro, from one Country to another? but never think of that* Heavenly *Country above, nor how you may get the Merchandize thereof, which is better than the Gold of* Ophir. *How oft do you tremble to ſee the foaming Waves dance about you, and waſh over you? yet conſider not how terrible it will be to have all the waves and billows of God's wrath to go over your ſouls, and that for ever. How glad are you after you have been long toſs'd upon the Ocean, to deſcry Land? And how yare and eagerly do you look out for it? who yet never had your hearts warmed with the conſideration of that Joy which ſhall be among the* Saints, *when they arrive at the* Heavenly Strand, *and ſet foot upon the ſhore of Glory.*

*O Sirs! I beg of you, if you have any regard to thoſe precious immortal Souls of yours, which are alſo imbarqued for* Eternity, *whither all winds blow them, and will quickly be at their Port of Heaven or Hell, that you will ſeriouſly mind theſe things, and learn to ſteer your courſe to Heaven, and improve all Winds (I mean opportunities and means) to waft you thither.*

*Here you venture life and liberty, run through many Difficulties and Dangers, and all to compaſs a periſhing Treaſure; yet how often do you return diſappointed in your Deſigns? or if not, yet it is but a fading ſhort-liv'd Inheritance, which like the flowing Tide, for a little while, covers the ſhore, and then returns, and leaves it naked and dry again: And are not Everlaſting Treaſures worth venturing for? Good Souls, be wiſe for Eternity: I here preſent you with the Fruit of a few ſpare Hours, redeemed for your ſakes, from my other Studies and Imployments, which I have put into a new Dreſs and Mode. I have endeavoured to cloathe Spiritual Matters in your own Dialect and Phraſes, that they might be the more intelligible to you; and added ſome pious Poems, with which the ſeveral Chapters are concluded, trying by all means to aſſault your ſeveral Affections, and as the Apoſtle ſpeaks,* to catch you with guile. *I can ſay nothing of it; I know it cannot be without its manifold imperfections, ſince I am conſcious of ſo many in my ſelf: Only this I will adventure to ſay of it, That how defective or empty ſoever it be in other reſpects, yet it is ſtuffed and filled with much true love to, and earneſt deſires after the ſalvation and proſperity of your Souls. And for the other defects that attend it, I have only two things to offer, in way of excuſe: It is the firſt Eſſay that I ever made in this kind, wherein I had no Preſident: And it was haſtned, for your ſakes, too ſoon out of my hands, that it might be ready to wait upon you, when you undertake your next Voyage; ſo that I could not reviſe and poliſh it. Nor indeed was I ſollicitous about the ſtile; I conſider, I writ not for Critical and Learned Perſons: my deſign is not to pleaſe your Fancies any further, than I might thereby get advantage to profit your Souls. I will not once queſtion your welcome Reception of it: If God ſhall bleſs theſe Meditations to the Converſion of any among you, you will be the Gainers, and my heart ſhall rejoyce, even mine. How comfortably ſhould we ſhake hands with you, when you go abroad, were we perſwaded your Souls were intereſted in Chriſt, and ſecured from periſhing, in the New Covenant? What life would it put into our Prayers for you, when you are abroad, to conſider that Jeſus Chriſt is intercedeing for you in Heaven, whilſt we are your Remembrancers here on Earth? How quiet would our hearts be, when you are abroad in Storms, did we know you had a ſpecial Intereſt in him whom Winds and Seas obey? To conclude, what Joy would it be to your Godly Relations, to ſee you return new Creatures? Doubtleſs more than if you came home laden with the Riches of both* Indies.

*Come, Sirs! ſet the heavenly* Jeruſalem *upon the Point of your* New Compaſs; *make all the Sail you can for it; and the Lord give you a proſperous Gale, and a ſafe Arrival in that Land of Reſt.*

So prays

Your moſt Affectionate Friend to ſerve
you in Soul-Concernments.

*JOHN FLAVEL*

To

# *To every* Seaman *Sailing Heavenward.*

*Ingenious Seaman,*

THE Art of Navigation, by which Iſlands eſpecially are enriched, and preſerved in ſafety from Forenſical Invaſions; and the wonderful Works of God in the great Deep, and Foreign Nations are moſt delightfully and fully beheld, *&c.* is an Art of exquiſite excellency, ingenuity, rarity, and mirability: But the *Art of Spiritual Navigation* is the Art of Arts. It is a gallant thing to be able to carry a Ship richly laden round the World: but it is much more gallant to carry a Soul (that rich loading, a Pearl of more worth than all the Merchandiſe of the world) in a body (that is liable to leaks and bruiſes as any Ship is) through the Sea of this World (which is as unſtable as water, and hath the ſame briniſh taſte and ſalt guſt which the waters of the Sea have) ſafe to Heaven (the beſt Haven) ſo as to avoid ſplitting upon any Soul-ſinking Rocks, or ſtriking upon any Soul-drowning Sands. The Art of Natural Navigation is a very great myſtery; but the Art of Spiritual Navigation is by much a greater myſtery. Humane wiſdom may teach us to carry a Ship to the *Indies*; but the Wiſdom only that is from above can teach us to ſteer our courſe aright to the *Haven* of *Happineſs*. This Art is purely of *Divine Revelation.* The truth is, *Divinity* (the Doctrine of living to God) is nothing elſe, but the *Art of Soul-Navigation*, revealed from Heaven. A meer man can carry a Ship to any deſired *Port* in all the World, but no meer man can carry a Soul to Heaven. He muſt be a Saint, he muſt be a Divine (ſo all Saints are) that can be a *Pilot* to carry a Soul to the *fair Haven in Emanuel's land.* The Art of Natural Navigation is wonderfully improved ſince the coming of *Chriſt*, before which time (if there be truth in *Hiſtory*) the uſe of the *Loadſtone* was never known in the world; and before the vertue of that was revealed unto the *Mariner*, it is unſpeakable with what uncertain wandrings Sea-men *floated* here and there, rather than *ſailed* the right and direct way. Sure I am, the Art of Spiritual Navigation is wonderfully improved ſince the coming of Chriſt: it oweth its cleareſt and fulleſt diſcovery to the coming of Chriſt. This Art of Arts is now perfectly revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament; but the Rules thereof are diſpers'd up and down therein. The collecting and methodizing of the ſame, cannot but be a work very uſeful unto Souls: Though when all is done, there is an abſolute neceſſity of the teachings of the Spirit, and of the anointing that is from above, to make Souls *Artiſts* in ſailing Heavenward. The *Ingenious Author* of the *Chriſtian*'s *Compaſs*, or the *Mariner*'s *Companion*, makes three Parts of this Art (as the School-men of Divinity,) viz. *Speculative*, *Practical*, and *Affectionate.* The principal things neceſſary to be known by a Spiritual *Sea-man*, in order to the ſteering rightly and ſafely to the *Port* of Happineſs, he reduceth to four Heads, anſwerable to the four general Points of the Compaſs; making *God* our *North*; *Chriſt* our *Eaſt*; *Holineſs* our *South*; and *Death* our *Weſt* Points. Concerning God, we muſt know, 1. That he is, *Heb.* 11. 6. and that there is but one God, 1 *Cor.* 8. 5, 6. 2. That this God is that Supreme Good, in the enjoyment of whom all true happineſs lies, *Pſal.* 4. 6, 7. *Mat.* 5. 8.—18. 20. 3. That (Life eternal lying in God, and he being incomprehenſible and unconceivable in Eſſence, as being a Spirit) our beſt way to eye him is in his Attributes, *Exod.* 34. 5, 6, 7. and works, *Rom.* 1. 20. and eſpecially in his Son, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. 4. That as God is a Spirit, ſo our chiefeſt, yea only way of knowing, enjoying, ſerving, and walking with him, is in the Spirit likewiſe, *Job* 4. 24. Concerning Chriſt, we muſt know, 1. That he is the true Sun which ariſeth upon the World, by which all are enlightned, *John* 1. 9. *Mal.* 3. 2. *Luke* 1. 78, 79. 2. That God alone is in him, reconciling himſelf to the World, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *John* 14. 6. 3. That Jeſus Chriſt is only made ours by the union and in-dwelling of himſelf in us through the ſpirit, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10. and 6. 17. *John* 16. 8, 9. 1 *Cor.* 12. 3, 13. 4. That the way of the Spirit's uniting us to Chriſt, is by an act of Power on his part, and by an act of Faith on our parts, *Joh.* 3. 16. laſt; 5. 29. *Eph.* 3. 17. Concerning Holineſs, we muſt know, 1. That whoever is in Chriſt is a new creature, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. 2. Holineſs is the Souls higheſt luſtre, *Exod.* 15. 11. when we come to perfection in Holineſs, then is our Sun at the height in us. 3. Holineſs, is Chriſt filling the Soul; Chriſt our Sun is at higheſt in our hearts, when they are moſt holy. 4. This Holineſs is that which is directly oppoſite to ſin: ſin eclipſes holineſs, and holineſs ſcatters ſin, *Heb.* 7. 26. *Phil.* 2. 15. 2 *Pet.* 3. 11. Concerning Death, we muſt know, 1. Death is certain: the Sun of our Life will ſet in Death: when our days come about to this Weſtern-point, it will be night, *Heb.* 9. 27. *Pſal.* 49. 7, 9. 2. If we die in our ſins out of Chriſt, we are undone for ever, *Job* 8. 24. *Phil.* 1. 21. 3. It is our benighting to die, but it's not our annihilating, 1 *Cor.* 15. *Rev.* 20. 12. 4. After Death comes Judgment; all that die ſhall ariſe to be judged, either for life or death the ſecond time, *Heb.* 9. 27. *Mat.* 25. *Heb.* 6. 2. Theſe four heads, and the particulars under them are as neceſſary to be known in Spiritual Navigation, as the four Points of the Compaſs are in Natural Navigation. The things which we ought to do, in order to our arrival to our Happineſs, our Author makes as many as there be Points in the Compaſs. And for an help to memory, we may begin every particular with initial known Letters on the Points of the Compaſs. 1. N. Never ſtir or ſteer any courſe, but by Light from God, *Pſal.* 119. 105. *Iſa.* 8. 10. 2. N. and by E. Never Enter upon any Deſign, but ſuch as tends towards Chriſt, *Acts* 10. 43. 3. N. N. E. Note Nothing Enviouſly, which thrives without God, *Pſal.* 73. 12, 13. 4. N. E. and by N. Never Enterprize Not-warrantable courſes, to procure any the moſt prized or conceited advantages, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9, 10. 5. N. N. E. Now Entertain the ſacred Commands of God, if hereafter thou expect the ſoveraign conſolations of God, *Pſ.* 119. 48. 6. N. E. and by E. Never Eſteem *Egypt*'s Treaſures ſo much, as for them to forſake the People of God, *Heb.* 11. 26. 7. E. N. E. Err Not, Eſpecially in ſoul affairs, *Jam.* 1. 16. 1 *Tim.* 1. 19, 20. 2 *Tim.* 2. 18. 8. E. and by N. Eſchew Nothing but ſin, 1 *Pet.* 3. 11. *Job* 1. 7, 8.—31. 34. 9. E. Eſtabliſh thy heart with grace, *Heb.* 13. 9. 10. E. and by

S Eye Sanctity in every action, 1 *Pet.* 1.15. *Zech.* 14.29. 11. E. S. E. Ever Strive Earneſtly to live under, and to improve the means of Grace. 12. S. E. and by E. Suffer Every Evil of puniſhment of ſorrow, rather than leave the ways of Chriſt and Grace. 13. S. E. Sigh Earneſtly for more enjoyments of Chriſt. 14. S. E. and by S. Seek Evermore ſome Evidences of Chriſt in you the hope of glory. 15. S. S. E. Still Set Eternity before you, in regard of enjoying Jeſus Chriſt, *Joh.* 17.24. 16. S. and by E. Settle't Ever in your ſoul, as a principle which you will never depart from, That holineſs and true happineſs are in Chriſt and by Chriſt. 17. S. Set thy ſelf always as before the Lord, *Pſal.* 16. 8. *Acts* 2.25. 18. S. and by W. See Weakneſs haſtning thee to death, even when thou art at the higheſt pitch or point. 19. S. S. W. See Sin Which is the ſting of Death, as taken away by Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55, 56. 20. S. W. and by S. Store up Wiſely Some proviſions every day for your dying day. 21. S. W. Set Worldly things under your feet, before death come to look you in the face. 22. S. W. and by W. Still Weigh and Watch with loins girded and lamps trimmed, *Luk.* 12. 35, 36, 37. 23. W. S. W. Weigh Soul-Works, and all in the ballance of the Sanctuary. 24. W. and by S. Walk in Sweet communion with Chriſt here, and ſo thou maiſt die in peace, *Luk.* 2. 29. 25. W. Whatſoever thy condition be in this world, eye God as the diſpoſer of it, and therein be contented, *Phil.* 4. 11. 26. W. and by N. Walk not according to the courſe of the moſt, but after the example of the beſt. 27. W. N. W. Weigh Not What men ſpeak or think of thee, ſo God approve thee, 2 *Chro.* 10. 18. *Rom.* 2. 28, 29. 28. N. W. and by W. Never Wink at, but Watch againſt ſmall ſins, nor neglect little duties, *Eph.* 5.15. 29. N. W. Never Wiſh raſhly for death, nor love life too inordinately, *Job* 3. 4. 30. N. W. and by N. Now Work Nimbly ere night come, *Job* 12. 35, 36. *Ecclеſ.* 9. 10. 31. N. N. W. Name Nothing When thou pleadeſt with God for thy Soul, but Chriſt and Free-grace, *Dan.* 9. 17. 32. N. and by W. Now Welcome Chriſt, if at death thou wilt be welcomed by Chriſt. A tender, quick, enlivened, and enlightned Conſcience, is the only Point upon which we muſt erect theſe Practical Rules of our Chriſtian Compaſs, *Heb.* 13. 1. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. Our Memory, that is the *Box* in which this Compaſs muſt be kept, in which theſe Rules muſt be treaſured, that we may be as ready and expert in them, as the *Mariner* is in his Sea-compaſs. So much for the ſpeculative and practical parts of the Art of Soul-Spiritual-Navigation. The Affectionate part doth principally lie in the ſecret motions or movings of the Soul towards God, in the Affections which are raiſed and warmed, and eſpecially appear active in Meditation: Meditation being as it were the Limbeck or Still in which the Affections heat and melt, and as it were drop ſweet ſpiritual Waters. The affectionate Author of the Chriſtian's Compaſs doth indeed, in the third and laſt part of his Undertaking, hint at ſeveral Meditations which the ſpiritual Seaman is to be acquainted with, unto which thou haſt an excellent Supplement in this *New Compaſs for Seamen.* This Collection is prefixt, that at once thou mayeſt view all the Compaſſes (both the Speculative, Practical, and Affectionate) by which thou muſt ſteer Heaven-ward. What further ſhall be added by way of Preface, is not to commend this New Compaſs, which indeed (2 *Cor.* 3. 1.) needs no *συστατικῶν ἐπιστολῶν*, *Letters of Commendation*, or any Panegyrick to uſher it into any honeſt heart: but to ſtir up all, eſpecially Seamen, to make conſcience of uſing ſuch choice helps for the promoting the ſanctification and ſalvation of their Souls, for the making of them as dexterous in the Art of Spiritual Navigation, as any of them are in the Art of Natural Navigation. Conſider therefore,

1. What rich Merchandize thy Soul is. Chriſt aſſures us, one Soul is more worth than all the world. The Lord *Jeſus* doth as it were put the whole world in one ſcale, and one ſoul in the other, and the world is found too light, *Mat.* 16.26. Shouldſt thou by skill in Natural Navigation carry ſafe all the treaſures of the *Indies* into thne own Port, yea, gain the whole world, and for want of skill in ſpiritual Navigation loſe thy ſoul, thou wouldſt be the greateſt loſer in the world. So far wilt thou be from profiting by any of thy Sea-voyages. There is a plain *μείωσις* in thoſe words of Chriſt, *What is a man profited if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* More is meant, than is ſpoken.

2. What a leaking Veſſel thy body is in which this unſpeakable inconceivable rich Treaſure, thy ſoul, is imbarked! O the many diſeaſes and diſtempers in the humors and paſſions, that thy body is ſubject to! It is above 2000 years ago, that there have been reckoned up 300 Names of Diſeaſes; and there be many under one name, and many nameleſs, which poſe the Phyſicians not only how to cure them, but how to call them. And for the affections and paſſions of the Mind, the diſtempers of them are no leſs deadly to ſome, than the diſeaſes of the body. But beſides theſe internal cauſes, there are many external cauſes of Leaks in this Veſſel, as * poiſonous malignities, wrathful hoſtilities, and caſual miſhaps; very ſmall matters may be of great moment to the ſinking of this Veſſel. The leaſt Gnat in the Air may choak one, as it did *Adrian*, a Pope of *Rome*; a little hair in Milk may ſtrangle one, as it did a Counſellor in *Rome*; a little ſtone of a Raiſin may ſtop ones breath, as it did the Poetical Poet *Anacreon.* Thus you ſee what a leaking Veſſel you ſail in. Now the more leaky any ſhip is, the more need there is of skill to ſteer wiſely.

*Eraſmi Chiliad.* p. 299.

The ſmalleſt Pore is a Leak wide enough to let in Death, and ſink thy Veſſel.

3. Conſider what a dangerous Sea the World is, in which thy Soul is to ſail in the leaking ſhip of thy body. As there are not more changes in the Sea, than are in the World, the World being only conſtant in inconſtancy, *The faſhion of this world paſſeth away*, 1 Cor. 7. 31. ſo there are not more dangers in the Sea for ſhips, than there are in the world for ſouls. In this world Souls meet with Rocks and Sands, *Syrens* and Pyrates. Worldly Temptations, worldly Luſts, and worldly Company cauſe many to *drown themſelves in perdition*, 1 Tim. 6. 9. The very things of this world endanger our Souls. By Worldly Objects we ſoon grow worldly. It is hard to touch Pitch, and not be defiled. The luſts of this world ſtain our glory, and the men of this world pollute all they converſe with. A man that keeps company with the men of this world, is like him that walketh in the Sun, tanned inſenſibly. Thus you have hinted the dangerouſneſs of the Sea wherein you are to ſail. Now, the more dangerous the Sea is, the more requiſite it is the Sailer be an Artiſt.

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* *In Nubia, quæ eſt Æthiopia, venenum eſt cujus grani unias decima pars hominem, vel unum granum decem homines*, Dan. Senert. *Hypom. Phyſ.* Cap. 2. *P.* 47.

4. Conſider, what if through want of skill in the heavenly Art of ſpiritual Navigation, thou ſhouldſt not ſteer thy Courſe aright! I will inſtance only in two conſequents thereof. 1. Thou wilt never arrive at the Haven of Happineſs. 2. Thou ſhalt be drowned in the Ocean of God's wrath. As true as the Word of God is true; as ſure as the Heavens are over thy head, and the Earth under thy feet; as ſure as thou yet liveſt and breatheſt in this Air: ſo true and certain it is, thou ſhalt never enter into Heaven, but ſink into the depth of the bottomleſs pit. Am I not herein a Meſſenger of the ſaddeſt Tidings that ever yet thy Ears did hear? Poſſibly now thou makeſt a light matter of theſe things, becauſe thou doſt not know what it is to miſs of Heaven, what it is for ever to lie under the wrath of God: but hereafter thou wilt know fully, what it is to have thy Soul loſt eternally, ſo loſt, as that God's mercies, and all the good there is in Chriſt, ſhall never ſave it; and as God hath ſet and ordered things, can never ſave it. Hereafter thou wilt be perfectly ſenſible of the good that thou mighteſt have had, and of the evil that ſhall be upon thee (this is God's peculiar Prerogative, to make a Creature as ſenſible of Miſery as he pleaſeth) then thou wilt have other thoughts of theſe things than now thou haſt. Then the thoughts of thy mind ſhall be buſied about thy loſt Condition, both as to the pain of loſs, and the pain of ſenſe; ſo that thou ſhalt not be able to take any eaſe any moment: then, that thy torments may be increaſed, they acknowledge, the truth of thy apprehenſions, yea the ſtrength of them, ſhall be encreaſed; thou ſhalt have true and deep apprehenſions of the greatneſs of that good that thou ſhalt miſs of, and of that evil which thou ſhalt procure unto thy ſelf; and then thou ſhalt not be able to chooſe, but to apply all thy loſs, all thy miſery to thy ſelf, which will force thee to roar out, O my loſs! O my miſery! O my unconceivable unrecoverable loſs and miſery! Yea, for the increaſing of thy torments, thy Affections and Memory ſhall be enlarg'd. O that, to prevent that loſs and miſery, theſe things may now be known and laid to heart! O that a blind Underſtanding, a ſtupid Judgment, a bribed Conſcience, a hard Heart, a bad Memory, may no longer make Heaven and Hell to ſeem but trifles to thee! Thou wilt then eaſily be perſwaded to make it thy main buſineſs here, to become an Artiſt in *Spiritual Navigation*. But to ſhut up this Preface, I ſhall briefly acquaint *Seamen*, why they ſhould, of all others, be Men of ſingular Piety and Heavenlineſs, and therefore more than ordinarily ſtudy the heavenly Art of *Spiritual Navigation*. O that *Seamen* would therefore conſider,

*Ignis Gehenne lucebit miſeris, ut videant unde doleant.* Inſid. de ſum. bon. l. 1.

1. How nigh they border upon the Confines of Death and Eternity every moment. There is but a ſtep, but an inch or two between them and their Graves continually. The next Guſt may over-ſet them; the next Wave may ſwallow them up. In one place lies lurking dangerous Rocks, in another perilous Sands, and every-where ſtormy Winds, ready to deſtroy them. Well may the *Seamen* cry out, *Ego craſtinum non habui*: I have not had a Morrow in my hands theſe many Years. Should not they then be extraordinary ſerious and heavenly continually? Certainly (as the Reverend *Author* of this *New Compaſs* well obſerves) nothing more compoſeth the heart to ſuch a frame, than the lively apprehenſions of Eternity do; and none have greater external advantages for that, than *Seamen* have.

*Terror ubique tremor, timor undeq; & undiq; terrari.* Ovi.

2. Conſider (*Seamen*) what extraordinary help you have by the Book of the Creatures; the whole Creation is God's Voice, it is God's excellent Hand-writing, or the Sacred Scriptures of the Moſt High, to teach as much of God, and what reaſons we have to bewail our Rebellion againſt God, and to make conſcience of obeying God only, naturally and continually. The Heavens, the Earth, the Waters, are the three great Leaves of this Book of God, and all the Creatures are ſo many Lines in thoſe Leaves. All that learn not to fear and ſerve God by the help of this Book, will be left inexcuſable, *Rom.* 1. 20. How inexcuſable then will ignorant and ungodly *Seamen* be? *Seamen* ſhould, in this reſpect, be the beſt Scholars in the Lord's School, ſeeing they do more, than others, ſee the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the great Deep, *Pſal.* 107. 24.

*Mundi creatio eſt Scriptura Dei*, Clemens. *Univerſus mundus eſt Deus explicatus.*

3. Conſider how often you are nearer Heaven than any People in the World. *They mount up to heaven*, Pſal. 107. 26. It has been ſaid of an ungodly Miniſter, that contradicted his Preaching in his Life and Converſation, That it was pity he ſhould e're come out of the Pulpit, becauſe he was there as near Heaven as ever he would be. Shall it be ſaid of you, upon the ſame account, That 'tis pity you ſhould come down from the high-tow'ring Waves of the Sea? Should not *Seamen*, that in ſtormy Weather have their feet (as it were) upon the Battlements of Heaven, look down upon all earthly Happineſs in this World but as baſe, wateriſh, and worthleſs? The great Cities of *Campania* ſeem but ſmall Cottages to them that ſtand on the *Alpes*. Should not *Seamen*, that ſo oft mount up to Heaven, make it their main buſineſs here, once at laſt to get into Heaven? What (*Seamen*) ſhall you only go to Heaven againſt your Wills? When *Seamen* mount up to Heaven in a ſtorm, the *Pſalmiſt* tells us, That *their ſouls are melted becauſe of trouble.* O that you were continually as unwilling to go to Hell, as you are in a ſtorm to go to Heaven!

4. And laſtly, Conſider what engagements lie upon you to be ſingularly holy, from your ſingular deliverances and ſalvations. They that go down to the Sea in Ships, are ſometimes in the Valley of the ſhadow of Death, by reaſon of the ſpringing of perilous Leaks; and yet miraculouſly delivered, either by ſome wonderful ſtopping of the Leak, or by God's ſending ſome Ship within their ſight, when they have been far out of ſight of any Land; or by his bringing their near-periſhing Ship ſafe to ſhore. Sometimes they have been in very great danger of being taken by Pirates, yet wonderfully preſerved, either by God's calming of the Winds in that part of the Sea where the Pirates have ſail'd, or by giving the poor purſued Ship a ſtrong gale of Wind to run away from their Purſuers; or by ſinking the Pirates, *&c.* Sometimes their Ships have been caſt away, and yet they themſelves wonderfully got ſafe to ſhore upon Planks, Yards, Maſts, *&c.* I might be endleſs in enumerating their Deliverances from Drowning, from Burning, from Slavery, *&c.* (Sure *Seamen*) your extraordinary Salvations lay more than ordinary engagement upon you, to praiſe, love, fear, obey, and truſt in your Saviour and Deliverer. I have read, that the enthralled *Greeks* were ſo affected with their Liberty, procured by *Flaminius* the *Roman* General, that

that their ſhrill Acclamations of Σωτὴρ, Σωτὴρ, *A Saviour, a Saviour*, made the very Birds fall down from the Heavens aſtoniſhed. O how ſhould *Seamen* be affected with their *Sea-Deliverances!* Many that have been deliver'd from *Turkiſh Slavery*, have vowed to be Servants to their *Redeemers* all the days of their Lives. Ah, Sirs, will not you be more than ordinarily God's Servants all the days of your Lives, ſeeing you have been ſo oft, ſo wonderfully redeemed from Death it ſelf by him? Verily, do what you can, you will die in God's Debt. *As for me, God forbid, that I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord, in ceaſing to pray for you*, 1 Sam. 12. 23, 24. That by the peruſal of this ſhort and ſweet Treatiſe, wherein the judicious and ingenious Author hath well mixed *utile dulci*, profit and pleaſure, you may learn the good and right way, even to fear the Lord, and ſerve him in truth with all your hearts, conſidering how great things he hath done for you: This is the hearty Prayer of

*Your Cordial Friend, earneſtly deſirous of a proſperous Voyage for your precious and immortal Souls*, T.M.

## The AUTHOR to the READER.

*When Dewy-cheek'd* Aurora *doth diſplay*
*Her Curtains, to let in the New-born Day,*
*Her heavenly Face looks Red, as if it were*
*Dy'd with a modeſt Bluſh, 'twixt Shame and Fear.*
Sol *makes her bluſh, ſuſpecting that he will*
*Scorch ſome too much, and others leave to chill.*
*With ſuch a Bluſh, my little New-born Book*
*Goes out of hand, ſuſpecting ſome may look*
*Upon it with Contempt, while others raiſe*
*So mean a Piece too high, by flattering Praiſe.*
*Its Beauty cannot make its Father dote;*
*'Tis a poor Babe, clad in a Sea-green Coat.*
*It's gone from me too young, and now is run*
*To Sea, among the Tribe of* Zebulun.
*Go, Little Book, thou many Friends wilt find*
*Among that Tribe, who will be very kind;*
*And many of them Care of Thee will take,*
*Both for thy own, and for thy Father's ſake.*
*Heav'n ſave it from the dangerous Storms and Guſts*
*That will be rais'd againſt it by Mens Luſts.*
*Guilt makes Men angry, Anger is a Storm;*
*But Sacred Truth's thy ſhelter, fear no harm.*
*On Times, or Perſons, no Reflection's found!*
*Though with Reflections few Books more abound.*
*Go, Little Book, I have much more to ſay,*
*But Seamen call for thee, thou muſt away.*
*Yet e're you have it, grant me One Requeſt;*
*Pray do not keep it Priſoner in your Cheſt.*

# A New Compaſs for Seamen:

## OR,

## NAVIGATION Spiritualiz'd.

### CHAP. I.

*The Launching of a Ship plainly ſets forth*
*Our double State, by Firſt and Second Birth.*

*OBSERVATION.*

NO ſooner is a Ship built, launched, rigged, victualled, and manned, but ſhe is preſently ſent out into the boiſterous Ocean, were ſhe is never at reſt, but continually fluctuating, toſſing and labouring, until ſhe be either overwhelmed and wrecked in the *Sea*, or through Age, knocks and bruiſes, grows leaky and unſerviceable; and ſo is haled up, and ript abroad.

*APPLICATION.*

No ſooner come we into the World as Men, or as Chriſtians, by a natural, or ſupernatural Birth; but thus we are toſs'd upon a Sea of Troubles, *Job* 5. 7. *Yet Man is born to trouble, as the ſparks fly upwards.* The ſpark no ſooner comes out of the fire, but it flies up naturally; it needs not any external force, help, or guidance, but aſcends from a principle in it ſelf: So naturally, ſo eaſily, doth Trouble riſe out of Sin. There is *radically* all the miſery, anguiſh, and trouble in the World, in our corrupt Natures. As the ſpark lies cloſe hid in the coals, ſo doth miſery in ſin: Every ſin draws a rod after it. And theſe ſorrows and troubles fall not only on the Body, in thoſe breaches, flaws, deformities, pains, aches, diſeaſes to which it is ſubject, which are but the groans of dying Nature, and its crumbling, by degrees, into duſt again; but on all our Imployments and Callings alſo, *Gen.* 3. 17, 18, 19. Theſe are full of pain, trouble, and diſappointment. *Hag.* 1. 6. We earn Wages, and put it into a Bag with holes, and diſquiet our ſelves in vain; all our Relations full of trouble. The Apoſtle ſpeaking to thoſe that Marry, ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 7. 28. *Such shall have trouble in the fleſh.* Upon which words one gloſſeth thus: Fleſh and Trouble are Marry'd together, whether we Marry or no: But they that are Marry'd, Marry with, and Match into new Troubles: All Relations have their burdens, as well as their comforts. It were endleſs to enumerate the ſorrows of this kind; and yet the troubles of the Body, are but the body of our troubles: The Spirit of the Curſe falls upon the ſpiritual and nobleſt part of Man The Soul and Body, like to *Ezekiel*'s Roll, are written full with ſorrows, both within and without. So that we make the ſame report of our lives, when we come to die, that old *Jacob* made before *Pharaoh*, Gen. 47. 9. *Few and evil have the days of the years of our lives been. For what hath Man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the Sun? For all his days are ſorrows, and his travel grief, yea, his heart taketh no reſt in the night: This is alſo vanity*, Eccleſ. 2. 22, 23.

ee Mr. *Whate-*
's Care-Cloth.

Neither doth our New Birth free us from troubles, though then they be ſanctifi'd, ſweetned, and turned into Bleſſings to us. We put not off the Humane, when we put on the Divine Nature; nor are we then freed from the ſenſe, though we be deliver'd from the ſting and curſe of them. Grace doth not preſently pluck out all thoſe Arrows that ſin hath ſhot into the ſides of Nature, 2 Cor. 7. 5. *When we were come into Macedonia, our Fleſh had no reſt, but we were troubled on every ſide: without were fightings, and within were fears.* Rev. 7. 14. *Theſe are they that come out of great tribulations.* The firſt Cry of the New-born Chriſtian (ſays one) gives Hell an alarm, and awakens the rage both of Devils and Men againſt him. Hence *Paul* and *Barnabas* acquainted thoſe new Converts, Act. 14. 22. *That through much tribulation they muſt enter into the Kingdom of God*: And we find the ſtate of the Church, in this World, ſet out (*Iſa.* 54. 11.) by the ſimilitude of a diſtreſſed Ship at Sea: *O thou afflicted* [*and toſſed*] *with Tempeſts, and not comforted.* [Toſſed] as *Jonas*'s Ship was; for the ſame word is there uſed, *Jonas* 1. 11, 13. as a Veſſel at Sea, ſtormed, and violently driven without *Rudder, Maſt, Sail*, or *Tacklings*. Nor are we to expect freedom from thoſe Troubles, until harboured in Heaven; ſee 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 7. O what large Catalogues of Experiences do the Saints carry to Heaven with them, of their various Exerciſes, Dangers, Trials, and marvellous Preſervations and Deliverances out of all! And yet all theſe Troubles without, are nothing to thoſe within them; from Temptations, Corruptions, Deſertions, by Paſſion and Compaſſion: Beſides their own, there comes daily upon them the Troubles of others; many Rivulets fall into this Channel and Brim, yea often overflow the Banks, Pſal. 34. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous.*

*REFLECTION.*

Hence ſhould the graceleſs heart thus reflect upon it ſelf. O my Soul! into what a Sea of Troubles art thou launched forth! And what a ſad caſe thou art in! Full of Trouble, and full of Sin; and theſe do mutually produce each other. And that which is the moſt dreadful Conſideration of all, is, That I cannot ſee the end of them. As for the Saints, they ſuffer in the World as well as I; but it is but for *a while*, 1 Pet. 5. 10. and then they ſhall ſuffer no more, 2 Theſ. 1. 7. But *all tears ſhall be wiped away from their* *eyes*, Rev. 7. 17. But my Troubles look with a long Viſage: Ah! they are but the beginning of ſorrows, but a parboiling before I be roaſted in the flames of God's eternal wrath. If I continue as I am, I ſhall but deceive my ſelf, if I conclude I ſhall be happy in the other World, becauſe I have met with ſo much ſorrow in this: For I read, *Jude* 7. that the Inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, though conſumed to Aſhes, with all their Eſtates and Relations, (a ſorer Temporal Judgment than ever yet beſel me) do, notwithſtanding that, continue ſtill in *everlaſting Chains, under Darkneſs, in which they are reſerved unto the Judgment of the Great Day.* The Troubles of the Saints are ſanctified to them, but mine are fruits of the Curſe. They have ſpiritual Conſolations to ballance them, which flow into their Souls in the ſame height and degree, as Troubles do upon their Bodies, 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. But I am a ſtranger to their Comforts, and *intermeddle not with their Joys*, Prov. 14. 10. If their hearts be ſurcharged with Trouble, they have a God to go to; and when they have open'd their Cauſe before him, they are eaſed, return with comfort, and their *Countenance is no more ſad*, 1 Sam. 1. 18. When their Belly is as Bottles full of new Wine, they can give it vent by pouring out of their Souls into their Father's Boſom: But I have no intereſt in, nor acquaintance with this God; nor can I pray unto him in the Spirit. My griefs are ſhut up like fire in my boſom, which preys upon my ſpirit. This is my ſorrow, and I alone muſt bear it. O my Soul, look round about thee! What a miſerable caſe art thou in? Reſt no longer ſatisfied in it, but look out for a Chriſt alſo. What though I be a vile, unworthy wretch? yet he promiſeth to *love freely*, Hoſ. 14. 4. and invites ſuch as are heavy-laden to him, *Mat.* 11. 28.

Hence alſo ſhould the gracious Soul reflect ſweetly upon it ſelf after this manner: And is the World ſo full of trouble? O my Soul, what cauſe haſt thou to ſtand admiring at the indulgence and goodneſs of God to thee! Thou haſt hitherto had a ſmooth paſſage comparatively to what others have had. How hath Divine Wiſdom ordered my Condition, and caſt my Lot? Have I been chaſtiſed with Whips? others with Scorpions: Have I had no peace without? Some have neither had peace without nor within, but Terrors round about: Or have I felt trouble in my fleſh and ſpirit at once? Yet have they not been extream, either for time or meaſure. And hath the World been a *Sodom*, an *Ægypt* to thee? Why then doſt thou thus linger in it, and hanker after it? Why do I not long to be gone, and ſigh more heartily for Deliverance? Why are the thoughts of my Lord's coming no ſweeter to me, and the day of my full deliverance no more panted for? And why am I no more careful to maintain peace within, ſince there is ſo much trouble without? Is not this it that puts weight into all outward troubles, and makes them ſinking, that they fall upon me when my ſpirit is dark or wounded?

### THE POEM.

*My Soul, art thou beſieged*
*with troubles round about?*
*If thou be wiſe, take this Advice,*
*to keep theſe troubles out.*
*Wiſe Men will* keep *their Conſcience as their Eyes;*
*For in their* Conſcience *their beſt Treaſure lies.*
*See you be* tender *of your inward peace;*
*That ſhipwrackt,* then *your Mirth and Joy muſt ceaſe.*
*If God from* you *your outward Comforts rend,*
*You'll find what* need *you have of ſuch a Friend.*
*If this be* not *by ſin deſtroy'd and loſt,*
*You need not* fear, *your Peace will quit your coſt.*
*If you'ld know* How *to ſweeten any grief,*
*Though ne're ſo great, or to procure relief*
*Againſt* th' afflictions, *which like deadly Darts*
*Moſt fatal* are *to Men of carnal hearts;*
*Reject not* that *which Conſcience bids you chuſe;*
*And chuſe not* you, *what Conſcience ſaith, Refuſe.*
*If ſin you* muſt, *or Miſery under lie,*
*Reſolve to* bear, *and chuſe the Miſery.*

## CHAP. II.

*In the vaſt Ocean Spiritual Eyes deſcry*
*God's boundleſs Mercy, and Eternity.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THE Ocean is of a vaſt extent and depth, though ſuppoſedly meaſurable, yet not to be ſounded by Man. It compaſſeth about the whole Earth, which in the account of Geographers, is Twenty one thouſand and ſix hundred Miles in compaſs; yet the Ocean invirons it on every ſide, *Pſal.* 104. 25. and *Job* 11. 9. Suitable to which is that of the Poet.

*Tum freta diffudit, rapidiſque tumeſcere ventis*
*Juſſit & ambitæ circumdare littora terræ.* Ovid.

*He ſpread the Seas, which then he did command,*
*To ſwell with Winds, and compaſs round the Land.*

And for its Depth, who can diſcover it? The Sea in Scripture is called, *The Deep*, Job 38. 30. The *Great Deep*, Gen. 7. 11. The gathering together of the *Waters* into one place, *Gen.* 1. 9. If the vaſteſt Mountain were caſt into it, it would appear no more than the head of a Pin in a Tun of Water.

### *APPLICATION.*

This in a lively manner ſhadows forth the infinite and incomprehenſible Mercy of our God; whoſe Mercy is ſaid to be over all his Works, *Pſal.* 145. 9. In how many ſweet Notions is the Mercy of God repreſented to us in the Scripture? He is ſaid to be *Plenteous*, Pſal. 4. 5. *Abundant*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. *Rich*, Eph. 2. 4. *in Mercy*; then, that his Mercies are *unſearchable*, Epheſ. 3. 8. *High as the Heaven above the Earth*, Pſal. 10. 4. Which are ſo high and vaſt, that the whole Earth is but a ſmall point to them: yea, they are not only compared to the Heavens, but to come home to the *Metaphor*, to the Depths of the Sea, *Mic.* 7. 19. which can ſwallow up Mountains as well as Mole-hills; and in this Sea God hath drowned ſins of a dreadful height and aggravation, even *Scarlet*, *Crimſon*, (*i. e.*) deep-dyed with many intenſive aggravations, *Iſa.* 1. 18. In this Sea was the ſin of *Manaſſeh* drowned; and of what magnitude that was, may be ſeen, 2 *Chron.* 33. 3. Yea, in this Ocean of Mercy, did the Lord drown and cover the ſins of *Paul*, though a Blaſphemer, a Perſecutor, Injurious, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. *None*, ſaith *Auguſtine*; *more fierce than* Paul *among the Perſecutors; and therefore none greater among ſinners*: To which himſelf willingly ſubſcribes, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *yet pardoned.* How hath Mercy rode in triumph, and been glorified upon the vileſt of Men! How hath it ſtopt the ſlanderous mouth of Men and Devils! It hath yearned upon *Fornicators*, *Idolaters*, *Adulterers*, *Thieves*, *Covetous*, *Drunkards*, *Revilers*, *Extortioners*; to ſuch hath the Scepter of Mercy been ſtretched forth, upon their unfeigned repentance and ſubmiſſion, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. What doth the Spirit of God aim at, in ſuch a large accumulation of Names of Mercy? But to convince poor ſinners of the abundant fulneſs and riches of it, if they will but ſubmit to the terms on which it is tender'd to them.

In the vaſtneſs of the Ocean, we have alſo a lively Emblem of Eternity. Who can comprehend or meaſure the Ocean, but God? And who can comprehend Eternity, but he that is ſaid *to inhabit it?* Iſa. 57. 15. Though ſhallow Rivers may be drained and dried up, yet the Ocean cannot. And though theſe tranſitory Days, Months and Years will at laſt expire and determine; yet Eternity ſhall not. O! it is a long World! and amazing Matter! what is Eternity, but a conſtant permanency of Perſons and Things, in one and the ſame State and Condition for ever; putting them beyond all poſſibility of change? The Heathens were wont to ſhadow it by a Circle, or a Snake twiſted round. It will be to all of us, either a perpetual Day or Night, which will not be meaſured by Watches, Hours, Minutes. And as it cannot be meaſured, ſo neither can it ever be diminiſhed. When thouſands of years are gone, there is not a minute leſs to come. *Gerhard* and *Drexelius* do both illuſtrate it by this known ſimilitude: Suppoſe a Bird were to come once in a thouſand years; to ſome vaſt Mountain of Sand, and carry away in her Bill one Sand in a thouſand years; O what a vaſt time would it be, e're that immortal Bird, after that rate, had recovered the Mountain! nd yet in time this might be done. For there ould be ſtill ſome diminution; but in Eternity here can be none. There be three things in Time, hich are not competent to Eternity: In Time there s a *Succeſſion*, one Generation, Year, and Day paſſeth, and another comes; but Eternity is a fixed [*now.*] In Time there is a *Diminution* and waſting; he more is paſt, the leſs to come: But it is not ſo n Eternity. In Time there is an *Alteration* of condition and ſtates: A Man may be poor to day, and ich to morrow; ſickly and diſeaſed this week, nd well the next; now in contempt, and anon in onour: But no change paſſes upon us in Eternity. s the Tree falls at Death and Judgment, ſo it lies r ever. If in Heaven, there thou art a Pillar, and halt go forth no more, *Rev.* 3. 12. If in Hell, no edemption thence, but the ſmoak of their Torments ſcendeth for ever and ever, *Rev.* 19. 3.

## *REFLECTION.*

And is the Mercy of God like the great Deeps, n Ocean, that none can fathom? What unſpeakable omfort is this to me? may the pardoned Soul ſay. id *Iſrael* ſing a Song, when the Lord had overhelm'd their corporal Enemies in the Seas? And all not I break forth into his Praiſes, who hath rowned all my ſins in the depth of Mercy? O my oul, bleſs thou the Lord, and let his high Praiſes er be in thy mouth. Mayſt not thou ſay, that he ath gone to as high an extent and degree of Mercy, pardoning thee, as ever he did in any? Oh my od, who is like unto thee! that pardoneſt Iniquity, ranſgreſſion and Sin. What Mercy, but the Mery of a God, could cover ſuch Abominations as ine!

But O! what terrible Reflections will Conſcience ake from hence, upon all the Deſpiſers of Mercy, hen the ſinner's eyes come to be opened too late r Mercy, to do them good! We have heard ineed, that the King of Heaven was a merciful King, ut we would make no addreſs to Him, whilſt that Scepter was ſtretched out. We heard of Balm in *Gilead*, and a Phyſician there, that was able and willing to cure all our wounds, but would not commit our ſelves to him. We read that the Arms of Chriſt were open to embrace and receive us, but we would not. O unparallell'd folly! O Soul-deſtroying madneſs! Now the Womb of Mercy is ſhut up, and ſhall bring forth no more Mercies to me for ever. Now the Gates of Grace are ſhut, and no Cries can open them.

Mercy acted its part, and is gone off the Stage; and now Juſtice enters the Scene, and will be glorified for ever upon me. How often did I hear the Bowels of Compaſſion ſounding in the Goſpel for me? But my hard and impenitent heart could not relent; and now, if it could, it is too late. I am now paſt out of the Ocean of Mercy, into the Ocean of Eternity, where I am fixed in the midſt of endleſs Miſery, and ſhall never hear the Voice of Mercy more.

O dreadful Eternity! Oh Soul confounding Word! An Ocean indeed, to which this Ocean is but as a drop; for in thee no Soul ſhall ſee either Bank or Bottom. If I lie but one Night under ſtrong pains of body, how tedious doth that Night ſeem! And how do I tell the Clock, and wiſh for day! In the World I might have had Life, and would not; And now, how fain would I have Death, but cannot? How quick were my ſins in execution? And how long is their puniſhment in duration? O, how ſhall I dwell with everlaſting Burnings? Oh that God would but vouchſafe one treaty more with me! But alas, all tenders and treaties are now at an end with me. On Earth peace, *Luke* 2. 13. but none in Hell. O my Soul! conſider theſe things: come, let us debate this matter ſeriouſly, before we launch out into this Ocean.

## THE POEM.

*Who from ſome high-rais'd Tower views the ground,*
*His heart doth tremble, and his head doth round:*
*Even ſo my Soul, whilſt it doth view and think*
*On this Eternity, upon whoſe brink*
*It borders, ſtands amazed, and doth cry,*
*O boundleſs! bottomleſs Eternity!*
*The Scourge of Hell, whoſe very Laſh doth rend*
*The damned Souls in twain: What! never end?*
*The more thereon they ponder, think and pore,*
*The more poor wretches, ſtill they howl and roar.*
*Ah! though more years in torments we ſhould lie,*
*Than Sands are on the Shore, or in the Sky*
*Are twinkling Stars: yet this gives ſome relief,*
*The hope of ending. Ah! but here's the grief!*
*A thouſand Years in Torments paſt and gone,*
*Ten Thouſand more afreſh are coming on;*
*And when theſe Thouſands all their courſe have run,*
*The end's no more than when it firſt begun.*
*Come then, my Soul, let us diſcourſe together*
*This weighty Point, and tell me plainly whether*
*You for theſe ſhort-liv'd Joys, that come and go,*
*Will plunge your ſelf and me in endleſs woe.*
*Reſolve the Queſtion quickly, do not dream*
*More Time away. Lo, in an haſty ſtream*
*We ſwiftly paſs, and ſhortly we ſhall be*
*Ingulphed both in this Eternity.*

## CHAP. III.

*Within theſe ſmooth-fac'd Seas ſtrange Creatures crawl;*
*But in Man's Heart, far ſtranger than them all.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

IT was an unadviſed ſaying of *Plato*, *Mare nil memorabile producit:* The Sea produceth nothing memorable. But ſurely there is much of the Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs of God manifeſted in thoſe Inhabitants of the Watery Region: Notwithſtanding the Seas azure and ſmiling face, ſtrange Creatures are bred in its Womb. *O Lord* (ſaith *David) how manifold are thy works? In wiſdom haſt thou made them all; the Earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide Sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both ſmall and great Beaſts*, Pſalm 104. 24, 25. And we read, Lam. 4. 3. of *Sea-Monſters, which draw out their Breaſts to their young. Pliny* and *Purchas* tell incredible Stories about them. About the Tropick of *Capricorn*, our Seamen meet with flying Fiſhes, that have Wings like a *Rere-mouſe*, but of a Silver-colour; they fly in flocks like *Stares*. There are Creatures of very ſtrange Forms and Properties; ſome reſembling a Cow, called by the *Spaniards*, *Manates*, by ſome ſuppoſed to be the Sea-monſter ſpoken of by *Jeremy*. In the Rivers of *Guina*, *Purchas* ſaith, there are Fiſhes that have four Eyes, bearing two above and two beneath the Water when they ſwim: Some reſembling a Toad, and very poiſonous. How ſtrange both in ſhape and property is the *Sword-fiſh* and *Thraſher*, that fight with the *Whale*? Even our own Seas produce Creatures of ſtrange ſhapes, but the commonneſs takes off the wonder.

### *APPLICATION.*

Thus doth the heart of Man naturally ſwarm and abound with ſtrange and monſtrous luſts and abominations, *Rom.* 1. 29, 30, 31. *Being filled with all unrighteouſneſs, fornication, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whiſperers, backbiters, haters of God, deſpiteful, proud, boaſters, inventors of evil things, diſobedient to Parents, without underſtanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.* O what a ſwarm is here! and yet there are multitudes more, in the depths of the heart! And it is no wonder, conſidering that with this Nature, we received the ſpawn of the blackeſt and vileſt abominations. This original luſt is productive to them all, *Jam.* 1. 14, 15. Which luſt, though it be in every man *numerically*, different from that of others, yet it is one and the ſame *ſpecifically*, for ſort and kind, in all the Children of *Adam:* even as the reaſonable Soul, though every Man hath his own Soul, *viz.* a Soul individually diſtinct from another Man's, yet is it the ſame for kind in all men. So that whatever abominations are in the hearts and lives of the vileſt *Sodomites*, and moſt profligate Wretches under Heaven; there is the ſame matter in thy heart out of which they were ſhaped and formed. In the depths of the heart they are conceived, and thence they crawl out of the eyes, hands, lips, and all the members, Mat. 15. 18, 19. *Thoſe things* (ſaith Chriſt) *which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe-witneſs, blaſphemies:* Even ſuch Monſters, as would make a gracious heart tremble to behold. *What are my Luſts*, (ſaith one) *but ſo many Toads ſpitting of Venom, and ſpawning of Poiſon; croaking in my Judgment, creeping in my Will, and crawling into my Affections?* The Apoſtle in 1 *Cor.* 5. 1. tells us of a ſin, *Not to be named;* ſo monſtrous, that Nature it ſelf ſtartles at it: Even ſuch Monſters are generated in the depths of the heart. Whence come evils? was a Queſtion that much puzled the Philoſophers of old. Now here you may ſee whence they come, and where they are begotten.

*Fuller's* Meditations, *p.* 11.

### *REFLECTION.*

And are there ſuch ſtrange abominations in the heart of Man? Then how is he degenerated from his primitive Perfection and Glory! His ſtreams were once as clear as Cryſtal, and the Fountain of them pure, there was no unclean Creature moving in them. What a ſtately Fabrick was the Soul at firſt! And what holy Inhabitants poſſeſſed the ſeveral rooms thereof! But now (as God ſpeaks of *Idumæa*) Iſa. 34. 11. *The line of confuſion is ſtretched out upon it, and the ſtones of emptineſs. The Cormorant and Bittern poſſeſs it; the Owl and the Raven dwell in it.* Yea, as *Iſa.* 13. 21, 22. *The wild beaſts of the deſart lie there; it is full of doleful creatures, the Satyrs dance in it, and Dragons cry in thoſe ſometimes pleaſant places.* O ſad change! how ſadly may we look back towards our firſt ſtate! and take up the words of *Job*, *O that I were as in months paſt, as in the days of my youth; when the Almighty was yet with me, when I put on righteouſneſs, and it cloathed me, when my glory was freſh in me*, Job 29. 2, 4, 5.

Again, think, O my Soul, what a miſerable condition the Unregenerate abide in! Thus ſwarmed and over-run with helliſh Luſts, under the dominion and vaſſalage of divers Luſts, *Tit.* 3. 3. What a tumultuous Sea is ſuch a Soul: How do theſe Luſts rage within them! how do they conteſt and ſcuffle for the Throne! and uſually take it by turns: For as all Diſeaſes are contrary to health, yet ſome contrary to each other, ſo are Luſts. Hence poor Creatures are hurried on to different kinds of ſervitude, according to the Nature of that imperious Luſt that is in the Throne; and like the Lunatick, *Mat.* 17. are ſometimes caſt into the *Water*, and ſometimes into the *Fire*. Well might the Prophet ſay, *The wicked is like a troubled Sea that cannot reſt*, Iſa. 57. 20. They have no peace now in the ſervice of ſin, and leſs they ſhall have hereafter, when they receive the wages of ſin. *There is no peace to the wicked, ſaith my God.* They indeed cry *Peace, peace;* but my God doth not ſay ſo. The laſt iſſue and reſult of this is Eternal Death; no ſooner it is delivered of its deceitful pleaſures, but preſently it falls in travel again, and brings forth death, *Jam.* 1. 15.

Once more: And is the Heart ſuch a Sea, abounding with monſtrous abominations? then ſtand aſtoniſhed, O my Soul, at that Free-grace which hath delivered thee from ſo ſad a Condition: O fall down, and kiſs the feet of Mercy that moved ſo freely and ſeaſonably to thy reſcue! Let my heart be enlarged abundantly here. Lord, what am I, that I ſhould be taken, and others left? Reflect, O my Soul, upon th Conceptions and Births of Luſts, in the days of Vanity, which thou now bluſheſt to own. O what blac imaginations, helliſh deſires, vile affections, are lodged there! Who made me to differ? Or, how came I to be thus wonderfully ſeparated? Surely, it is by thy Free-grace, and nothing elſe, that I am what I am: And by that Grace I have eſcaped (to mine own aſtoniſhment) the corruption that is in the Worl through Luſt. O that ever the holy God ſhould ſe his eyes on ſuch an one; or caſt a look of love towards me, in whom were Legions of unclean Luſt and Abominations!

### THE POEM.

*My Soul's the Sea, wherein from day to day,*
*Sins like* Leviathans *do ſport and play.*
*Great Maſter-Luſts, with all the leſſer fry,*
*Therein increaſe, and ſtrangely multiply.*
*Yet ſtrange it is not, ſin ſo faſt ſhould breed,*
*Since with this Nature I receiv'd the Seed*
*And Spawn of every Species, which was ſhed*
*Into its Caverns firſt, then nouriſhed*
*By its own native warmth; which like the Sun,*
*Hath quickned them, and now abroad they come,*
*And like the Frogs of* Egypt *creep and crawl*
*Into the cloſeſt Rooms within my Soul.*
*My Fancy ſwarms, for there they friſk and play,*
*In Dreams by Night, and fooliſh Toys by day.*
*My Judgment's clouded by them, and my Will*
*Perverted, every corner they do fill.*
*As Locuſts ſeize on all that's freſh and green,*
*Uncloath the beauteous Spring, and make it ſeem*
*Like drooping Autumn; ſo my Soul, that firſt*
*As* Eden *ſeem'd, now's like a Ground that's curſt.*
*Lord purge my Streams, and kill thoſe Luſts that lie*
*Within them; if they do not, I muſt die.*

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## CHAP. IV.

*Seas purge themſelves, and caſt their filth aſhore*
*But Graceleſs Souls retain, and ſuck in more.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

Seas are in a continual motion and agitation; they have their Flux and Reflux, by which they are kept from putrefaction: like a Fountain it cleanſes it ſelf, *Iſa.* 57. 20. *It cannot reſt, but caſt up mire and dirt*; whereas Lakes and Ponds, whoſe Waters are ſtanding, and dead, corrupt and ſtink. And it is obſerv'd by Seamen that in the Southern parts of the World, where the Sea is more calm and ſetled, it is more corrupt and unfit for uſe; ſo is the Sea of *Sodom* called, *The Dead Sea.*

### *APPLICATION.*

Thus do regenerate Souls purify themſelves, and work out corruption that defiles them, they cannot ſuffer it to ſettle there, 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. *He purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure. Keepeth himſelf, that the wicked one toucheth him not*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 18. ſcil. *Tacta qualitativo*, with a Qualitative Touch, as the Loadſtone toucheth Iron, leaving an Impreſſion of its Nature behind it. They are Doves delighting in cleanneſs, *Iſa.* 33. 15. *He deſpiſeth the gain of oppreſſion, he ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes, ſtoppeth his ears from hearing blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil.* See how all Senſes and Members are guarded againſt ſin: But it is quite contrary with the wicked; there is no principle of Holineſs in them, to oppoſe or expel corruption. It lies in their hearts as Mud in a Lake or Well, which ſettles and corrupts more and more. Hence *Ezek* 47. 11. their Hearts are compared to myry or mariſh places, which cannot be healed, but are given to Salt: The meaning is, that the pureſt ſtreams of the Goſpel, which cleanſe others, make them worſe than before, as abundance of Rain will a myry place. The reaſon is, becauſe it meets with an obſtacle in their Souls; ſo that it cannot run through them and be glorified, as it doth in gracious Souls. All the means and endeavours uſed to cleanſe them, are in vain; all the grace of God they receive in vain: *They hold faſt deceit, they refuſe to let it go*, Jer. 8. 5. Sin is not in them as floating Weeds upon the Sea, which it ſtrives to expel and purge out, but as *Spots* in the *Leopard's* Skin, *Jer.* 13. 21. or Letters faſhioned and engraven in the very ſubſtance of *Marble* or *Braſs*, with a pen of Iron, and point of a Diamond, *Jer.* 17. 1. Or as Ivy in an old Wall, that hath gotten rooting into its very intrails. *Wickedneſs is ſweet in their mouths, they roul it under their tongues*, Job 20. 12. No threats nor promiſes can divorce them from it.

### *REFLECTION.*

Lord! this is the very frame of my heart, may the graceleſs Soul ſay: My corruptions quietly ſettle in me, my heart labours not againſt it: I am a ſtranger to that conflict which is daily maintained in all the Faculties of the regenerate Soul. Glorified Souls have no ſuch conflict, becauſe Grace in them ſtands alone, and is perfectly triumphant over all its oppoſites; and graceleſs Souls can have no ſuch conflict, becauſe in them corruption ſtands alone, and hath no other principle to make oppoſition to it. And this is my caſe, O Lord: I am full of vain hopes indeed, but had I a living and well-grounded hope to dwell for ever with ſo holy a God, I could not but be daily purifying my ſelf. But O! what will the end of this be? I have cauſe to tremble at that laſt and dreadfulleſt Curſe in the Book of God, *Rev.* 22. 11. *Let him that is filthy be filthy ſtill.* Is it not as much as if God ſhould ſay, Let them alone, I will ſpend no more rods upon them, no more means ſhall be uſed about them; but I will reckon with them for all together in another World; O my Soul! what a diſmal reckoning will that be! Ponder with thy ſelf in the mean while, thoſe terrible and awaking Texts, that if poſſible, this fatal iſſue may be prevented. See *Iſa.* 1. 5. *Hoſ.* 4. 14. *Jer.* 6. 29, 30. *Heb.* 6. 8.

### THE POEM.

*My Heart's no Fountain, but a ſtanding Lake*
*Of putrid Waters; if therein I rake,*
*By ſerious ſearch, O! what a noyſome ſmell,*
*Like Exhalations riſing out of Hell;*
*The ſtinking Waters pump'd up from the Hole,*
*Are as perfumes to Seamen: but my Soul*
*Upon the ſame account that they are glad,*
*(Its long continuance there) is therefore ſad.*
*The Scripture ſaith,* No Soul God's face ſhall ſee,
*Till from ſuch filthy Luſts it cleanſed be.*
*Yet though unclean, it may that way be rid,*
*As* Hercules *the* Augean *Stable did.*
*Lord turn into my Soul that cleanſing Bloud,*
*Which from my Saviour's ſide flow'd us a Flood.*
*Flow, ſacred, brim my Banks; and flow*
*Till you have made my Soul as white as Snow.*

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## CHAP. V.

*Seamen foreſee a Danger, and prepare:*
*Yet few of greater Dangers are aware.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

HOW watchful and quick-ſighted are Seamen, to prevent Dangers; If the Wind die away, and then freſh up Southerly; or if they ſee the Sky hezy, they provide for a Storm: If by the Proſpective-Glaſs they ken a *Pirate* at the greateſt diſtance, they clear the Gun-room, prepare for fight, and bear up, if able to deal with him; if not, they keep cloſe by the Wind, make all the Sail they can, and bear away. If they ſuppoſe themſelves by their reckoning near Land, how often do they ſound? And if upon a Coaſt with which they are unacquainted, how careful are they to get a *Pilot* that knows and is acquainted with it?

### APPLICATION.

Thus watchful and ſuſpicious ought we to be in Spiritual Concernments. We ſhould ſtudy, and be acquainted with Satan's Wiles and Policy: The Apoſtle takes it for granted, that Chriſtians are not ignorant of his devices, 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. *The Serpent's eye* (as one ſaith) *would do well in the Dove's head:* The Devil is a cunning Pirate, he puts out falſe Colours, and ordinarily comes up to the Chriſtian in the diſguiſe of a friend.

O the manifold depths and ſtratagems of Satan, to deſtroy Souls! Though he have no Wiſdom to do himſelf good, yet policy enough to do us miſchief. He lies in ambuſh behind our lawful comforts and imployments: Yet for the moſt of men, how ſupine and careleſs are they, ſuſpecting no danger; Their Souls, like *Laiſh*, dwell careleſly; their Senſes unguarded. O what an eaſie prize and conqueſt doth the Devil make of them!

Indeed, if it were with us, as with *Adam* in innocency, or as it was with Chriſt in the days of his fleſh (who by reaſon of that overflowing fulneſs of Grace that dwelt in him, the purity of his Perſon, and the *Hypoſtatical* Union, was ſecured from the danger of all temptations) the caſe then were otherwiſe; but we have a *Traytor* within, *Jam.* 1. 14, 15. as well as a *Temter* without, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. *Our adverſary the Devil goes about as a roaring Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour.* And like the Beaſts of the Foreſt, poor Souls lie down before him, and become his prey. All the ſagacity, wit, policy and foreſight of ſome Men, is ſummoned in to ſerve their Bodies, and ſecure their fleſhly enjoyments.

### REFLECTION.

Lord! how doth the care, wiſdom, and vigilancy of Men in temporal and external things, condemn my careleſneſs in the deep and dear concernments of my precious Soul! What care and labour is there to ſecure a periſhing life, liberty, or treaſure! When was I thus ſollicitous for my Soul, though its value be ineſtimable, and its dangers far greater? Self-preſervation is one of the deepeſt Principles in Nature. There is not the pooreſt Worm or Flie, but will ſhun danger if it can: Yet I am ſo far from ſhunning thoſe dangers to which my Soul lies continually expoſed, that I often run it upon temptations, and voluntarily expoſe it to its enemies. I ſee, Lord, how watchful, jealous and laborious thy People are, what Prayers, Tears, and Groans, ſearching of Heart, Mortification of Luſts, guarding of Senſes: and all accounted too little by them. Have not I a Soul to ſave or loſe eternally, as well as they? Yet I cannot deny one fleſhly luſt, nor withſtand one temptation. O, how am I convinced, and condemned; not only by others care and vigilancy, but my own too, in leſſer and lower matters?

### THE POEM.

*I am the Ship, whoſe Bills of Lading come*
*To more than Man's or Angels art can ſum.*
*Rich fraught with Mercies, on the Ocean, now*
*I float, the dangerous Ocean I do plow.*
*Storms riſe, Rocks threaten, and in every Creek*
*Pirates and Pickeroons their Prizes ſeek.*
*My Soul ſhould watch, look out, and uſe its Glaſs,*
*Prevent Surprizals timely; but alas!*
*Temptations give it chaſe, it's grappled ſure,*
*And boarded whilſt it thinks it ſelf ſecure,*
*It ſleeps like* Jonah, *in the dreadful'ſt ſtorm,*
*Although its caſe be dangerous and forlorn.*
*Lord, rouze my drowſie Soul, leſt it ſhould knock*
*And ſplit it ſelf upon ſome dangerous Rock.*
*If it of Faith and Conſcience ſhipwrack make,*
*I am undone for ever: Soul, awake!*
*Till thou arrive in Heaven, watch and fear;*
*Thou mayſt not ſay till then, the Coaſt is clear.*

## CHAP. VI.

*How ſmall a matter turns a Ship about?*
*Yet we againſt our Conſcience ſtand it out.*

### OBSERVATION.

It is juſt matter of admiration, to ſee ſo great a body as a Ship is, and when under Sail too, before a freſh and ſtrong Wind, by which it is carried, as the Clouds, with marvellous force and ſpeed, yet to be commanded with eaſe, by ſo ſmall a thing as the *Helm* is. The Scripture takes notice of it as a matter worthy our conſideration, *Jam.* 3. 4. *Behold alſo the ſhips, which though they be great, and driven of fierce winds; yet they are turned about with a ſmall Helm, whitherſoever the Governor liſteth.* Yea, *Ariſtotle* himſelf, that Eagle-ey'd Philoſopher, could not give a reaſon of it, but looked upon it as a very marvellous and wonderful thing.

Ariſtot. *Secunda.* Μηχανικῶν, c. 5.

### APPLICATION.

To the ſame uſe and office has God deſign'd Conſcience in man, which being rectified and regulated by the Word and Spirit of God, is to ſteer and order his whole Converſation. Conſcience is as the Oracle of God, the Judge and Determiner of our Actions, whether they be good or evil? and it lays the ſtrongeſt obligations upon the creature to obey its dictates, that is imaginable: For it binds under the reaſon and conſideration of the moſt Abſolute and Soveraign Will of the great God. So that as often as Conſcience from the Word convinceth us of any ſin or duty, it lays ſuch a bond upon us to obey it, as no power under Heaven can relax, or diſpenſe with. Angels cannot do it, ~~much leſs~~ Man; for that would be to exalt them~~ſelves above~~ God. Now therefore it is an high and dreadful way of ſinning, to oppoſe and rebel againſt Conſcience, when it convinces of ſin or duty. Conſcience ſometimes reaſons it out with Men, and ſhews them the neceſſity of changing their way and courſe; arguing it from the cleareſt and moſt allowed Maxims of right Reaſon, as well as from the indiſputable Soveraignty of God.

As for inſtance: It convinceth their very Reaſon, that things of Eternal Duration, are infinitely to be preferred to all momentary and periſhing things, *Rom.* 8. 18. *Heb.* 11. 26. And it is our duty to chuſe them, and make all ſecular and temporary concernments to ſtand aſide, and give place to them. Yet though Men be convinced of this, their ſtubborn Will ſtands out, and will not yield up it ſelf to the conviction.

Further, It argues from this acknowledged truth, That all the delights and pleaſures in this World, are but a miſerable portion, and that it is the higheſt folly to adventure an immortal ſoul for them, *Luke* 9. 25. Alas, what remembrance is there of them in Hell? They are as the waters that paſs away. What have they left of all their mirth and jollity, but a tormenting ſting? It convinceth them clearly alſo that in matters of deep concernment, it is an high point of wiſdom, to apprehend and improve the right ſeaſons and opportunities of them, Prov. 10. 5. *He that gathers in ſummer is a wiſe Son.* Eccleſ. 8. 5. *A wiſe man's heart diſcerns both time and judgment. There is a ſeaſon to every purpoſe,* Eccleſ. 3. 1. *viz.* A nick of time, an happy juncture; when if a Man ſtrikes in, he doth his work effectually, and with much facility. Such Seaſons Conſcience convinceth the Soul of, and often whiſpers thus in its ear: Now, Soul, ſtrike in cloſe with this motion of the Spirit, and be happy for ever; thou maiſt never have ſuch a gale for Heaven any more. Now, though theſe be allowed Maxims of Reaſon, and Conſcience inforce them ſtrongly on the ſoul, yet cannot it prevail; the proud ſtubborn Will rebels, and will not be guided by it. See *Epheſ.* 2. 3. *Job* 34. 37. *Iſa.* 46. 12. *Ezek.* 2. 4. *Jer.* 44. 16.

### *REFLECTION.*

Ah Lord, ſuch an heart have I had before thee; thus obſtinate, thus rebellious, ſo uncontrolable by Conſcience. Many a time hath Conſcience thus whiſpered in mine ear; many a time hath it ſtood in my way, as the Angel did in *Balaam's*, or the *Cherubims* that kept the way of the Tree of Life, with flaming ſwords turning every way. Thus hath it ſtood to oppoſe me in the way of my Luſts. How often hath it calmly debated the Caſe with me alone? And how ſweetly hath it expoſtulated with me? How clearly hath it convinced of ſin, danger, duty, with ſtrong demonſtration? How terrible hath it menaced my ſoul, and ſet the point of the threatning at my very breaſt? And yet my headſtrong affections will not be remanded by it. I have obeyed the voice of every luſt and temptation. *Tit.* 3. 3. But Conſcience hath loſt its Authority with me. Ah Lord! what a ſad condition am I in, both in reſpect of ſin and miſery? My ſin receives dreadful aggravations; for rebellion and preſumption are hereby added to it. I have violated the ſtrongeſt bonds that ever were laid upon a Creature. If my Conſcience had not thus convinced and warned, the ſin had not been ſo great and crimſon-coloured, *Jam.* 4. 17. Ah! this is to ſin with an high hand, *Numb.* 15. 30. to come near to the great and unpardonable tranſgreſſion, *Pſal.* 19. 13. O how dreadful a way of ſinning is this, with opened eyes! And as my ſin is thus out of meaſure ſinful, ſo my puniſhment will be out of meaſure dreadful, if I perſiſt in this rebellion. Lord, thou haſt ſaid, Such ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes, *Luke* 12. 48. Yea, Lord, and if ever my Conſcience, which by rebellion is now grown ſilent, ſhould be in judgment awakened in this life, Oh what an Hell ſhould I have within me! how would it thunder and roar upon me and ſurround me with terrors!

Thy word aſſures me, that no length of time can wear out of its memory what I have done, *Gen.* 42. 21. No violence or force can ſuppreſs it, *Mat.* 27. 4. No greatneſs of power can ſtifle it; it will take the mightieſt Monarch by the throat, *Exod.* 10. 16. *Dan.* 5. 6. No muſick, pleaſures, or delights, can charm it, *Job* 20. 22. O Conſcience! thou art the ſweeteſt friend, or the dreadfulleſt enemy in the World; Thy Conſolations are incomparably ſweet, and thy terrors inſupportable. Ah let me ſtand it out no longer againſt Conſcience; the very Ship in which I ſail, is a confutation of my madneſs, that ruſh greedily into ſin againſt both Reaſon and Conſcience, and will not be commanded by it; Surely, O my Soul, this will be bitterneſs in the end.

### THE POEM.

*A Ship of greateſt burden will obey*
*The Rudder; he that ſits at Helm may ſway*
*And guide its motion: If the Pilot pleaſe,*
*The Ship bears up againſt both Wind and Seas.*
*My Soul's the Ship, Affections are its Sails,*
*Conſcience the Rudder. Ah! but Lord what ails*
*My naughty heart, to ſhuffle in and out,*
*When its convictions bid it tack about?*
*Temptations blow a counter-blaſt, and drive*
*The Veſſel where they pleaſe, though Conſcience ſtrive.*
*And by its ſtrong perſwaſions, it would force*
*My ſtubborn Will to ſteer another courſe.*
*Lord, if I run this courſe, thy Word doth tell*
*How quickly I muſt needs arrive at Hell.*
*Then rectifie my Conſcience, change my Will;*
*Fan in thy pleaſant Gales, my God, and fill*
*All my affections, and let nothing carry*
*My Soul from its due courſe or make it vary;*
*Then if the Pilot's work thou wouldſt perform,*
*I ſhould bear bravely up againſt a ſtorm.*

## CHAP. VII.

*Through many fears and dangers Seamen run,*
*But all's forgotten when they do return.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

WE have an elegant and lively deſcription of their fears and dangers, *Pſal.* 107. 25, 26, 27. *He commandeth and raiſeth the ſtormy Winds, which lifteth up the Waves thereof: They mount up to Heaven, they go down again to the depths; their ſoul is melted becauſe of trouble: they reel to and fro, they ſtagger like a drunken man; they are at their wits end.* Or, as it is in the *Hebrew, All Wiſdom is ſwallowed up.* Suitable to which is that of the Poet.

*Rector in incerto eſt, nec quid fugiative petotive*
*Invenit, ambiguis ars ſtupet ipſa malis.* Ovid.

*The Pilot knows not what to chuſe or flee;*
*Art ſtands amaz'd in ambiguity.*

O what ſtrange and miraculous Deliverances have many Seamen had? How often have they yielded themſelves for dead Men, and verily thought the next Sea would have ſwallowed them up? How earneſtly then do they cry for Mercy? And like the *Cymbrians*, can pray in a ſtorm, though they regarded it not at other times, *Pſal.* 107. 28. *Jonah* 1. 5, 6.

### *APPLICATION.*

Theſe dreadful ſtorms do at once diſcover to us the mighty Power of God in raiſing them, and the abundant Goodneſs of God in preſerving poor Creatures in them.

1. The Power of God is graciouſly manifeſted in raiſing them: The Wind is one of the Lord's Wonders, *Pſal.* 107. 24, 25. *They that go down to the Sea, ſee the works of the Lord, and his* [*wonders*] *in the deep;*

*for he commandeth and raiſeth the ſtormy winds.* Yea, *Verſe* 18. God appropriates it as a peculiar work of his; *He cauſeth* [*His wind to blow.*] Hence, He is ſaid in Scripture, *to bring them forth of his treaſury*, Pſal. 137. 7. There they are locked up and reſerved, not a guſt can break forth, till he command and call for it to go and execute his pleaſure: Yea, He is ſaid to *hold them in his fiſt*, Prov. 30. 4. What is more uncapable of holding than the Wind? yet God holds it. Although it be a ſtrong and terrible creature, He controuls and rules it. Yea, the Scripture ſets forth God, *As riding upon the wings of the wind*, Pſal. 18. 10. It is a borrowed ſpeech from the manner of Men, who when they would ſhew their pomp and greatneſs, ride upon ſome ſtately Horſe or Chariot: ſo the Lord to manifeſt the greatneſs of his Power, rides upon the Wings of the Wind, and will be admired in ſo terrible a creature.

And no leſs of his glorious Power appears in remanding them, than in raiſing them. The Heathens aſcribe this power to their god *Æolus*; but we know this is the *Royalty* and ſole Prerogative of the true God, who made Heaven and Earth; it is He that *makes the ſtorm a calm*, Pſal. 107. 29. And it is He that ſhifts and changes them from Point to Point as He pleaſeth; for he hath appointed them their Circuits, Eccleſ. 1. 6. *The wind goeth towards the South, and turneth about unto the North*; *it whirleth about continually, and returneth again according to its Circuits.*

2. And as we ſhould adore his Power in the winds, ſo ought we to admire his Goodneſs in preſerving Men in the height of all their fury and violence. O what a marvellous work of God is here! That Men ſhould be kept in a poor weak Veſſel, upon the wild and ſtormy Ocean, where the Wind hath its full ſtroke upon them, and they are driven before it as a wreck upon the Seas, yet, I ſay, that God ſhould preſerve you there, is a work of infinite goodneſs and power. That thoſe Winds which do rend the very Earth, Mountains and Rocks, 1 Kings 29. 11. *Breaks the Cedars, yea, the Cedars of* Lebanon, *ſhakes the Wilderneſs and makes the Hinds to calve:* which Naturaliſts ſay, bring forth with greateſt difficulty, *Pſal.* 29. 5, 8, 9. Surely your preſervation in ſuch Tempeſts, is an aſtoniſhing work of Mercy. O how dreadful is this Creature, the Winds, ſometimes to you? And how doth it make your hearts ſhake within you? If but a Plank ſpring, or a Bolt give way, you are all loſt. Sometimes the Lord for the magnifying of the riches of his goodneſs upon you, drives you to ſuch exigencies, that, as *Paul* ſpeaks in a like caſe, Acts 17. 20. *All hopes of being ſaved is taken away:* Nothing but Death before your eyes. The Lord commands a Wind out of his Treaſury, bids it go and lift up the terrible Waves; lock you in upon the ſhore, and drive you upon the Rocks, ſo that no Art can ſave you; and then ſends you a piece of Wreck, or ſome other means to land you ſafe: And all this to give you an experiment of his goodneſs and pity, that you may learn to fear that God, in whoſe hand your Soul and Breath is.

And it may be for the preſent, your hearts are much affected: Conſcience works ſtrongly, it ſmites you for ſins formerly committed, ſuch and ſuch counſels of Miniſters or Relations ſlighted. Now, ſaith Conſcience, God is come in this ſtorm to reckon with thee for theſe things, But alas, all this is but a morning-dew; no ſooner is that ſtorm without allayed, but all is quiet within too. How little of the goodneſs of God abides kindly and effectually upon the heart?

## *REFLECTION.*

How often hath this glorious power and goodneſs of God paſſed before me in dreadful ſtorms and tempeſts at Sea? He hath uttered his Voice in thoſe ſtormy Winds, and ſpoken in a terrible manner by them; yet how little have I been affected with it? *The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the ſtorm*, Nah. 1. 3. To ſome he hath walked in ways of Judgment and Wrath, ſending them down in a moment to Hell; but to me in a way of forbearance and mercy. Ah, how often have I been upon the very brink of Eternity? Had not God ſhifted or allayed the Wind, in a moment, I had gone down into Hell. What workings of Conſcience were at preſent upon me? And what terrible apprehenſions had I then of my eternal condition? What Vows did I make in that diſtreſs? and how earneſtly did I then beg for Mercy? But Lord, though thy Vows are upon me, yet have I been the ſame; yea, added to, and filled up the meaſure of my ſins. Neither the bonds of Mercy thou haſt laid upon me, nor the ſacred and ſolemn Vows I have laid upon my ſelf, could reſtrain me from thoſe ways of iniquity, which then appeared ſo dreadful to me.

Ah Lord, what an heart have I? What love, pity, and goodneſs have I ſinned againſt? If God had but reſpited Judgment ſo long, what a mercy were it! Sure I am, the damned would account it ſo; but to give me ſuch a ſpace to repent, Ah what an invaluable Mercy is this! And do I thus requite the Lord, *Deut.* 32. 6. and pervert and abuſe his goodneſs thus? Surely, O my Soul, if this be the fruit of all thy preſervations, they are rather reſervations to ſome further and ſorer judgment. How dreadfully will Juſtice at laſt avenge the Quarrel of abuſed Mercy? *Joſh.* 24. 20. How grievouſly did God take it from the *Iſraelites*, that they provoked him at the Sea, even at the Red Sea? *Pſal.* 106. 7. where God had wrought their deliverance in ſuch a miraculous way. Even thus have I ſinned after the ſimilitude of their tranſgreſſions: not only againſt the Laws of God, but againſt the Love of God. In the laſt ſtorm he ſhot off his *Warning-piece*; in the next, he may diſcharge his *Murdering-piece* againſt my Soul and Body. O my Soul! hath he given thee *ſuch deliverances as theſe, and dareſt thou again break his Commandments*; Ezra 9. 13, 14. O let me pay the Vows that my lips have uttered in my diſtreſs, leſt the Lord recover his glory from me in a way of Judgment.

## THE POEM.

*The Ship that now ſails trim before a Wind,*
*E're the deſired Port it gains, may find*
*A tedious paſſage: Gentle Gales a-while,*
*Do fill its Sails, the flattering Seas do ſmile,*
*The Face of Heaven is bright, on every ſide*
*The wanton* Porpice *tumbles on the Tide.*
*Into their Cabins now the Seamen go,*
*And then turn out again, with,* What chear ho?
*All on a ſudden darkned are the Skies,*
*The Lamp of Heaven obſcur'd, the Winds do riſe;*
*Waves ſwell like Mountains: Now their Courage flags,*
*The Maſts are crackt, the Canvas torn to rags.*
*The Veſſel works for life; anon one cries,*
The Main-maſt's gone by th' Board: *another plies*
*The Pump, until a third do ſtrike them blank*
*With,* Sirs, prepare for Death, w' have ſprung a Plank.
*Now to their Knees they go, and on this wiſe*
*They beg for Mercy with their loudeſt Cries:*
*Lord, ſave us but this once, and thou ſhalt ſee*
*What Perſons for the future we will be:*

On

*Our former Time's miſ-ſpent, but with a Vow*
*We will engage, if thou wilt ſave us now,*
*To mend what is amiſs. The gracious Lord,*
*Inclin'd to pity, takes them at their word;*
*The Winds into their Treaſures he doth call,*
*Rebukes the ſtormy Sea, and brings them all*
*To their deſired Haven: once aſhore,*
*And then their Vows are ne're remembred more.*
*Thus Souls are ſhipwrackt, tho the Bodies live,*
*Unleſs in time thou true Repentance give.*

## CHAP. VIII.

*The Navigator ſhifts his Sails, to take*
*All Winds, but that which for his Soul doth make.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE Mariner wants no Skill and Wiſdom to improve ſeveral Winds, and make them ſerviceable to his end; A bare ſide-wind, by his skill in ſhifting and managing the Sails, will ſerve his turn: He will not loſe the advantage of one breath or gale that may be uſeful to him, I have many times wonder'd to ſee two Ships ſailing in a direct countermotion, by one and the ſame wind. Their skill and wiſdom herein is admirable.

### APPLICATION.

Thus prudent and skilful are Men in ſecular and lower matters, and yet how ignorant and unskilful in the great and everlaſting affairs of their Souls! All their Invention, Judgment, Wit, and Memory ſeem to be preſt for the ſervice of the fleſh. They can learn an Art quickly, and arrive to a great deal of exactneſs in it; but in ſoul-matters, no knowledge at all. They can underſtand the *Equator*, *Meridian*, and *Horizon*: By the firſt they can tell the Latitude of any place, South or North, meaſuring it by the degrees in the *Meridian*; by the ſecond, they can tell you the Longitude of a place, Eaſt and Weſt, from the *Meridian*, meaſuring it by the degrees of the *Æquator*: And by the third, they can diſcern the divers riſings and ſettings of the Stars. And ſo in other Arts and Sciences, we find men endowed with rare abilities, and ſingular ſagacity. Some have piercing Apprehenſions, ſolid Judgments, ſtupendious Memories, rare Invention, and excellent Elocution: But put them upon any ſpiritual ſupernatual matter, and the weakeſt Chriſtian, even a babe in Chriſt, ſhall excel them therein, and give a far better account of Regeneration, the Work of Grace, the Life of Faith than theſe can. 1 Cor. 1. 26. *Not many wiſe men after the fleſh*, &c. *But God hath choſen the fooliſh things of this world*, &c.

### REFLECTION.

How inexcuſable then art thou, O my Soul! and how mute and confounded muſt thou needs ſtand before the bar of God, in that great day? Thou hadſt a *Talent* of natural parts committed to thee, but which way have they been improved? I had an Underſtanding indeed, but it was not ſanctified; a Memory, but it was like a Sieve, that let go the Corn, and retain'd nothing but Husks and Chaff; Wit and Invention, but alas none to do my ſelf good. Ah! how will theſe riſe in judgment againſt me, and ſtop my mouth? What account ſhall I give for them in that day?

Again: Are men (otherwiſe prudent and skilful) ſuch ſots and fools in ſpiritual things? Then let the poor weak Chriſtian, whoſe natural parts are blunt and dull, admire the riches of God's Free Grace to him. O what an aſtoniſhing conſideration is this! That God ſhould paſs by Men of the profoundeſt Natural parts, and chuſe me, even poor me, whoſe Natural Faculties and Endowments, compared with theirs, are but as Lead to Gold! Thus under the Law he paſt by the Lion and Eagle, and choſe the Lamb and Dove. O, how ſhould it make me to advance Grace, as Chriſt doth upon the ſame account, *Mat.* 11. 25. *I thank thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and revealed them to babes.* And let it ever be an humbling conſideration to me; For who made me to differ? Is not this one principal thing God aims at, in calling ſuch as I am; that boaſting may be excluded, and himſelf alone exalted?

### THE POEM.

*One thing doth very much affect my mind,*
*To ſee the Seaman husband every Wind;*
*With exc'llent Art he ſhifts the Sails and knows*
*How to improve the bareſt Wind that blows.*
*If a direct or foreright gale he want,*
*A ſide-wind ſerves his turn, tho' ne'r ſo ſcant.*
*And will not this one day in judgment riſe*
*Againſt your Soul? Ah! can you be ſo wiſe*
*In ſmaller matters; what, and yet not know*
*How to improve freſh gales of Grace that blow?*
*Faſt mor'd in ſin your wind-bound Souls can lie,*
*And let theſe precious gales riſe, blow, and die.*
*Sometimes on your Affections you may feel*
*Such gracious breathings: Ah, but hearts of ſteel,*
*They move you not, nor cauſe you to relent;*
*Though able, like* Elijah's *Wind, to rent*
*The Rocks aſunder: If you do not prize*
*Thoſe breathings, other Winds will ſhortly riſe,*
*And from another quarter; thoſe once gone,*
*Then next look out for an* Euroclydon.
*A dreadful ſtorm: how ſoon no Man can tell;*
*But when it comes, 'twill blow ſuch Souls to Hell,*

## CHAP. IX.

*If Seamen loſe a gale, there they may lie:*
*The Soul, when once becalm'd in ſin may die.*

### OBSERVATION.

SEamen are very watchful to take their opportunity of Wind and Tide; and it much concerns them ſo to be: The neglect of a few hours, ſometimes loſes them their paſſage, and proves a great detriment to them. They know the Wind is an uncertain variable thing; they muſt take it when they may; they are unwilling to loſe one flow, or breath, that may be ſerviceable to them. If a proſperous Gale offer, and they not ready, it repents them to loſe it, as much as it would repent us to ſee a Veſſel of good Wine or Beer tapt and run waſte.

### APPLICATION.

There are alſo ſeaſons and gales of Grace for our Souls; golden opportunities of Salvation afforded to men, the neglect of which proves the loſs and ruin of Souls. God hath given unto men a day of Viſitation, which he hath *limited*, *Heb.* 4. 7. and keeps an exact account of every *Year*, *Month*, and *Day*, that we have enjoyed it, *Luk.* 13. 7. *Jer.* 25. 3. *Luk.* 19. 42. The longeſt date of it can be but the time of this Life:

This is our day to work in, *Job* 9. 4. and upon this ſmall wyre, the weight of Eternity hangs. But ſometimes the ſeaſon of Grace is ended, before the night of Death comes; the *accepted time* is gone, men frequently out-live it, *Luk.* 19. 44. 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. Or, if the outward means of Salvation be continued, yet the Spirit many times withdraws from thoſe means, and ceaſes any more to ſtrive with Men; and then the Bleſſing, Power and Efficacy is gone from them, and inſtead thereof a Curſe ſeizeth the Soul, *Heb.* 6. 7, 8. and *Jer.* 6. 29.

Therefore it is a matter of high importance to our Souls, to apprehend theſe ſeaſons. How pathetically doth Chriſt bewail *Jeruſalem*, upon this account! Luk. 19. 42. *O that thou hadſt known, at leaſt in this thy day, the things of thy peace! bnt now they are hid from thine eves.* If a company of Seamen be ſet aſhore upon ſome remote, uninhabited Iſland, with this advice, to be aboard again exactly at ſuch an hour, elſe they muſt be left behind: How doth it concern them to be punctual in their time? The lives of thoſe men depend upon a quarter of an hour. Many a Soul hath periſhed eternally (the Goſpel leaving them behind in their ſins) becauſe they knew not the time of their Viſitation.

### *REFLECTION.*

What golden Seaſons for Salvation haſt thou enjoyed, O my Soul? What Halcyon-days of Goſpel-light and Grace haſt thou had? How have the precious Gales of Grace blown to no purpoſe upon thee! and the Spirit waited and ſtriven with thee in vain? *The Kingdom of Heaven* (being opened in the Goſpel-diſpenſations) *hath ſuffered violence.* Multitudes have been preſſing into it in my days, and I my ſelf have ſometimes been *almoſt perſuaded*, and not far from the Kingdom of God: I have gone as far as conviction of ſin and miſery; yea, I have been carried by the power of the Goſpel, to reſolve and purpoſe to turn to God, and become a new Creature; but ſin hath been too ſubtil and deceitful for me: I ſee, my reſolutions were but as an early Cloud, or Morning-Dew: and now my heart is cold and dead again, ſetled upon its Lees. Ah! I have cauſe to fear and tremble, leſt God hath left me under that Curſe, *Rev.* 20. 11. *Let him that is filthy, be filthy ſtill.* I fear I am become as that myrie place, *Ezek.* 47. 11. that ſhall not be healed by the ſtreams of the Goſpel, but *given to ſalt*, and curſed into perpetual barrenneſs. Ah Lord, wilt thou leave me ſo! and ſhall thy Spirit ſtrive no more with me? Then it had been good for me that I had never been born. Ah, if I have trifled out this Seaſon, and irrecoverably loſt it, then I may take up that lamentation, *Jer.* 8. 20. and ſay, *My Harveſt is paſt, my Summer is ended, and I am not ſaved.*

Every Creature knows its time, even the *Turtle*, *Crane*, and *Swallow*, know the time of their coming, *Jer.* 8. 7. How bruitiſh am I, that have not known the time of my Viſitation! O thou that art the Lord of Life and Time, command one gracious Seaſon more for me, and make it effectual to me, before I go hence, and be ſeen no more!

### THE POEM.

*A freſh and whisking Gale preſents to day,*
*But now the Ship's not ready; Winds muſt ſtay,*
*And wait the Seamens leiſure. Well, to morrow*
*They will put out; but then, unto their ſorrow,*
*That Wind is ſpent, and by that means they gain*
*Perchance a Month's Repentance, if not twain.*
*At laſt another offers, now they're gone;*
*But e're they gain their Port, the Market's done.*
*For every work and purpoſe under Heaven,*
*A proper time and ſeaſon God hath given.*
*The Fowls of Heaven, Swallow, Turtle, Crane,*
*Do apprehend it, and put us to ſhame.*
*Man hath his ſeaſon too: but that miſ-ſpent,*
*There's time enough his folly to repent.*
*Eternity's before him, but therein*
*No more ſuch golden hours as theſe have been.*
*When theſe are paſt away, then you ſhall find*
*That Proverb true,* Occaſion's bald behind.
*Delays are dangerous; ſee that you diſcern*
*Your proper ſeaſons. O that you would learn*
*This Wiſdom from thoſe Fools that come too late*
*With fruitneſs cries, when Chriſt has ſhut the gate.*

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## CHAP. X.

*By Navigation one place ſtores another;*
*And by Communion we muſt help each other.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THE moſt wiſe God hath ſo diſpenced his Bounty to the ſeveral Nations of the World, that one ſtanding in need of another's Commodities, there might be a ſociable Commerce and Traffick maintain'd amongſt them all, and all combining in a common League may, by the help of Navigation, exhibit mutual ſuccours to each other. The Staple-Commodities proper to each Country, I find thus expreſſed by the Poet, *Bart. Coll.*

*Hence come our Sugars from* Canary *Iſles;*
*From* Candy *Currans, Muskadels, and Oyls;*
*From the* Moluccoes, *Spices; Balſamum*
*From* Egypt; *Odours from* Arabia *come;*
*From* India *Gums, rich Drugs and Ivory;*
*From* Syria *Mummy; Black, Red Ebony*
*From burning* Chus; *from* Peru, *Pearl and Gold;*
*From* Ruſſia *Furs, to keep the Rich from Cold.*
*From* Florence *Silks; from* Spain *Fruit, Saffron, Sacks;*
*From* Denmark *Amber, Cordage, Firs, and Flax;*
*From* Holland *Hops; Horſe from the Banks of* Rhine:
*From* England *Wool; all Lands, as God diſtributes,*
*To the World's Treaſure pay their ſundry Tributes.*

### *APPLICATION.*

Thus hath God diſtributed the more rich and precious Gifts and Graces of his Spirit among his People: Some excelling in one Grace, ſome in another, though every Grace, in ſome degree, be in them all; even as in *Nature*, though there be all the Faculties in all, yet ſome Faculties are in ſome more lively and vigorous than in others; ſome have a more vigorous eye, others a more ready ear, others a more voluble tongue; ſo its in *Spirituals. Abraham* excell'd in *Faith*, *Job* in *Patience*, *John* in *Love.* Theſe were their peculiar excellencies. All the elect Veſſels are not of one quantity; yet even thoſe that excel others in ſome particular Grace, come ſhort in other reſpects of thoſe they ſo excelled in the former, and may be much improv'd by converſe with ſuch as in ſome reſpects are much below them. The ſolid, wiſe, and judicious Chriſtian may want that livelineſs of affections, and tenderneſs of heart, that appears in the weak; and one that excels in gifts and utterance, may learn Humility from the very Babes in Chriſt, And one principal Reaſon of this different diſtribution, is to maintain fellowſhip among them all, 1 Cor. 12. 21. *The Head cannot ſay to the Feet I have no need of you.* As in a Family, where there is much buſineſs to be done, even the little Children bear a part, according to their ſtrength, Jer. 7. 18. *The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, the women knead the dough.* So in the Family of Chriſt, the weakeſt Chriſtian is ſerviceable to the ſtrong.

There be precious Treaſures in theſe Earthen Veſſels, for which we ſhould trade by mutual communion. The preciouſneſs of the Treaſure, ſhould draw out our deſires and endeavours after it; and the conſideration of the brittleneſs of thoſe Veſſels in which they are kept, ſhould cauſe us to be the more expeditious in our trading with them, and make the quicker Returns: For when thoſe Veſſels (I mean the Bodies of the Saints) are broken by Death, there is no more to be gotten out of them. That Treaſure of Grace which made them ſuch profitable, pleaſant and deſirable companions on Earth, then Aſcends with them into Heaven, where every Grace receives its adoleſcence and perfection: And then, though they be Ten thouſand times more excellent and delightful than ever they were on Earth, yet we can have no more communion with them, till we come to Glory our ſelves. Now therefore it behoves us to be enriching our ſelves by communication of what God hath dropt into us, and improvement of them, as one well Notes. We ſhould do by Saints, as we uſe to do by ſome choice Book lent us for a few days, we ſhould fix in our Memories, or tranſcribe all the choice Notions we meet within it, that they may be our own when the Book is called for, and we can have it no longer by us.

Mr. *Gurnal.*

### *REFLECTION.*

Lord, How ſhort do I come of my Duty in communicating to, or receiving good by others! My Soul is either empty and barren, or if there be any Treaſure in it, yet it is but as a Treaſure locked p in ſome Cheſt, whoſe Key is loſt, when it ſhould e open'd for the uſe of others. Ah Lord! I have ſinned greatly, not only by vain words, but ſinful ilence. I have been of little uſe in the World.

How little alſo have I gotten by communion with thers? Some, it may be, that are of my own *ſize*, or *dgment*, or that I am otherwiſe obliged to, I can elight to converſe with: But O, where is that rgeneſs of heart, and general delight I ſhould have o, and in all thy People? How many of my old ear Acquaintance are now in Heaven, whoſe Tongues ere as *Choice ſilver*, while they were here, *Prov.* 10. o. And, bleſſed Souls! how communicative were ey of what thou gaveſt them? O what an improve-ent had I made of my Talent this way, had I been ligent! Lord pardon my neglect of thoſe ſweet and leſſed advantages. O let all my delight be in thy ints, who are the *excellent of the earth.* Let me ne-r go out of their company, without an heart more armed, quickned, and enlarged, than when I came mongſt them.

### THE POEM.

*To ſeveral Nations God doth ſo diſtribute*
*is bounty, that each one muſt pay a tribute*
*to each other.* Europe *cannot vaunt,*
*d ſay,* Of Africa *I have no want.*
merica *and* Aſia *need not ſtrive,*
*hich of it ſelf can beſt ſubſiſt and live.*
*Each Countrey's want, in ſomething, doth maintain*
*Commerce betwixt them all. Such is the aim*
*And end of God, who doth diſpenſe and give*
*More Grace to ſome, their Brethren to relieve.*
*This makes the* Sun *Ten thouſand times more bright,*
*Becauſe it is diffuſive of its Light,*
*Its Beams are gilded glorioully; but then*
*This property doth gild them o're agen.*
*Should Sun, Moon, Stars, impropriate all their light,*
*What diſmal darkneſs would the World benight?*
*On this account Men hate the Vermin brood,*
*Becauſe they take in much, but do no good.*
*What harm, if I at yours my Candle light?*
*Except thereby I make your Room more bright.*
*He that, by Pumping, ſucks and draws the Spring,*
*New ſtreams, and ſweeter, to that Well doth bring.*
*Grace is a Treaſure in an Earthen Pot;*
*When Death hath daſht it, no more can be got*
*Out of that Veſſel: Then while it is whole,*
*Get out the Treaſure to enrich your Soul.*

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## CHAP. XI.

*The Rocks abide, though Seas againſt them rage;*
*So ſhall the Church, which is God's Heritage.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THE Rocks, tho ſcituate in the boiſterous and tempeſtuous Ocean, yet abide firm and immovable from Age to Age: The impetuous Waves daſh againſt them with great violence, but cannot remove them out of their place. And although ſometimes they waſh over them, and make them to diſappear, yet there they remain fixt and impregnable.

### *APPLICATION.*

This is a lively Emblem of the condition of the Church, amidſt all dangers and oppoſitions wherewith it is encountred and aſſaulted in this World. Theſe *Metaphorical* Waves roar and beat with violence againſt it, but with as little ſucceſs as the Sea againſt the Rocks, Matth. 16. 18. *Upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the* [*gates*] *of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.* The Gates of Hell, are the power and policy of Hell; for it is conceived to be an alluſive ſpeech to the Gates of the *Jews* wherein their Ammunition for War was lodged, which alſo were the Seats of Judicature, there ſate the Judges: but yet, theſe Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail. Nay, this Rock is not only invincible in the midſt of their violence, but alſo breaks all that daſh againſt it, Zech. 12. 3. *In that day I will make* Jeruſalem *a burthenſome ſtone for all people: all that burden themſelves with it, ſhall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the Earth be gathered together againſt it.* An Alluſion to one that aſſays to roul ſome great ſtone againſt the Hill, which at laſt returns upon him, and cruſhes him to pieces.

And the reaſon why it is thus firm and impregnable, is not from it ſelf; for alas, ſo conſidered, it is weak, and obnoxious to ruin; but from the Almighty Power of God, which guards and preſerves it day and night, Pſal. 46. 5, 6. *God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved: God ſhall help her, and that right early.* Vatab. *Dum eſpicit mane.* When the morning appears. Which notes (ſaith *Calvin*) God's aſſiduous and conſtant help and ſuccour, which is extended in all dangers, as conſtantly as the Sun ariſes. And this aſſiduous ſuccour to his people, and their great ſecurity thereby, is ſet forth in the Scriptures by a

Pleaſant variety of Metaphors and Emblems, *Zech.* 2. 5. *I (ſaith the Lord) will be a Wall of Fire round about it.* Some think this phraſe alludes to the *Cherubims*, that kept the way of the Tree of Life with flaming ſwords: Others, to the fiery Chariots round about *Dathan*, where *Eliſha* was: but moſt think it to be an alluſion to an ancient cuſtom of Travellers in the Deſarts; who to prevent the aſſaults of wild Beaſts in the night, made a *Circular fire* round about them, which was as a Wall to them. Thus will God be to his people *a wall of fire*, which none can ſcale. So *Exod.* 3. 3, 4, 5. We have an excellent Emblem of the Churches low and dangerous condition, and admirable preſervation. You have here, both a *Marvel* and a *Myſtery*: The Marvel was to ſee a buſh all on fire, and yet not conſumed. The Myſtery is this; the Buſh repreſented the ſad condition of the Church in *Egypt*; the Fire flaming upon it, the grievous afflictions, troubles, and bondage it was in there; the remaining of the Buſh unconſumed, the ſtrange and admirable preſervation of the Church in thoſe troubles. It lived there as the three noble *Jews*, untouched in the midſt of a burning fiery Furnace: And the *Angel of the Lord* in a flame of fire in the midſt of the Buſh, was nothing elſe but the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, powerfully and graciouſly preſent with his people, amidſt all their dangers and ſufferings. The Lord is exceeding tender over them, and jealous for them, as that Expreſſion imports, Zech. 2. 8. *He that touches you, toucheth the apple of mine eye.* He that ſtrikes at them, ſtrikes at the Face of God; and at the moſt excellent part of the Face, the Eye, and at the moſt tender and precious part of the Eye, the Apple of the Eye. And yet (as a Learned Modern obſerves) this people of whom he uſes this tender and dear expreſſion, were none of the beſt of *Iſrael* neither; but the reſidue that ſtaid behind in *Babylon*, when their Brethren were gone to rebuild the Temple; and yet over theſe, is he as tender, as a man is over his eye.

### *REFLECTION.*

And is the ſecurity of the Church ſo great! and its preſervation ſo admirable, amidſt all Storms and Tempeſts! Then why art thou ſo prone and ſubject to deſpond, O my Soul, in the day of *Sion*'s trouble? Senſible thou waſt, and oughteſt to be; but no reaſon to hang down the head through diſcouragement, much leſs to forſake *Sion* in her diſtreſs, for fear of being ruined with her.

What *David* ſpake to *Abiathar*, 1 *Sam.* 22. 23. that may *Sion* ſpeak to all her Sons and Daughters in all their diſtreſſes: *Though he that ſeeketh thy life, ſeeketh mine alſo; yet with me ſhalt thou be in ſafeguard.* God hath intail'd great Salvation and Deliverances upon *Sion*; and bleſſed are all her Friends and Favourers; the Rock of ages is its defence. Fear not therefore, O my Soul, though the Hills be removed out of their place, and caſt into the midſt of the Sea. O let my Faith triumph, and my Heart rejoyce upon this ground of comfort. I ſee the ſame Rocks now, and in the ſame place and condition they were many years ago. Though they have endured many ſtorms, yet there they abide; and ſo ſhall *Sion*, when the proud waves have ſpent their fury and rage againſt it.

### THE POEM.

Meſopotamia, *ſcituate in the Seas,*
*May repreſent the Church, or, if you pleaſe,*
*A Rock, o're which the Waves do waſh and ſwill,*
*May figure it; chuſe either, which you will.*
*Winds ſtrive upon thoſe Seas, and make a noiſe,*
*The lofty Waves ſometimes lift up their voice,*
*And ſwelling high, ſucceſſively do beat*
*With violence againſt it, then retreat.*
*They break themſelves, but it abides their ſhock;*
*And when their Rage is ſpent, there ſtands the* Rock.
*Then they are out, that do affirm and vote,*
*Peace, Pomp, and Splendor is the Churches* Note.
*And they deſerve no leſs reproof, that are*
*In* Zion's *Troubles ready to deſpair.*
*This Rock amidſt far ſtronger Rocks doth lie,*
*Which are its fence, ſo* deep, *ſo* thick, *ſo* high,
*They cann't be* batter'd, ſcal'd *or* undermin'd:
*And theſe, environ'd by them, daily find*
*Their Bread aſcertain'd; Waters too ſecur'd:*
*Then ſhout and ſing, ye that are thus Immur'd.*

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## CHAP. XII.

*What Dangers run they for a little gains,*
*Who, for their Souls, would ne'r take half the pains!*

### *OBSERVATION.*

HOw exceeding ſolicitous and adventurous are Sea-men for a ſmall portion of the World? How prodigal of ſtrength and life for it? They will run to the ends of the Earth, engage in a Thouſand dangers, upon the hopes and probability of getting a ſmall Eſtate. *Per mare per terras, per mille pericula currunt.* Hopes of gain makes them willing to adventure their liberty, yea, their life; and encourages them to endure Heat, Cold, and Hunger, and a Thouſand ſtreights and difficulties, to which they are frequently expoſed.

### *APPLICATION.*

How hot and eager are Mens affections after the World? And how remiſs and cold towards things eternal? They are careful, and troubled about many things, but ſeldom mind the great and neceſſary matters, *Luk.* 10. 40. They can riſe early, go to bed late, eat the bread of carefulneſs: But when did they ſo deny themſelves for their poor Souls? Their heads are full of deſigns and projects to get or advance an Eſtate: *We will go into ſuch a City, continue there a year, and Buy and Sell, and get gain*, Jam. 4. 13. This is the τὸ ἔργον, the *Maſter-deſign*, which engroſſeth all their time, ſtudies and contrivances. The Will hath paſt a Decree for it, the Heart and Affections are fully let out to it, *They will be rich*, 1 Tim. 6. 9. This Decree of the Will, the Spirit of God takes deep notice of it; and indeed it is the cleareſt and fulleſt diſcovery of a Man's portion and condition: For, look what is higheſt in the eſtimation, firſt and laſt in the thoughts, and upon which we ſpend our time and ſtrength with delight; certainly, that is our Treaſure, *Mat.* 6. 20, 21. The Heads and Hearts of Saints are full of ſolicitous cares and fears about their Spiritual Condition: The great deſign they drive on, to which all other things are but [πάρεργα,] things on the by, is to make ſure their Calling and Election. This is the [*Pondus*] the weight and byaſs of their Spirit: if their hearts ſtray and wander after any other thing, this reduces them again.

### *REFLECTION.*

Lord, this hath been my manner from my Youth may the Carnal-minded Man ſay; I have been labouring for the Meat that periſheth; diſquieting ſelf in vain, full of deſigns and projects for the World, and unwearied in my endeavours to compaſs an earthly treaſure; yet therein I have either been checkt and diſappointed by Providence; or if I have obtained, yet I am no ſooner come to enjoy that Content and Comfort I promiſed my ſelf in it, but I am ready to leave it all, to be ſtript out of it by Death, and in that day all my thoughts periſh: But in the mean time, What have I done for my Soul? When did I ever break a Night's ſleep, or deny and pinch my ſelf for it? Ah fool that I am! to nouriſh and pamper a vile Body, which muſt ſhortly lie under the Clods, and become a loathſome Carkaſs; and, in the mean time, neglect and undo my poor Soul, which partakes of the Nature of Angels, and muſt live for ever. I have kept others Vineyards, but mine own Vineyard I have not kept: I have been a perpetual drudge and ſlave to the World; in a worſe condition hath my Soul been, than others that are Condemned to the Mines. Lord change my Treaſure, and change my Heart: O let it ſuffice that I have been thus long labouring on the fire, for very vanity. Now gather up my heart and affections in thy ſelf, and let my great deſign now be, to ſecure a ſpecial intereſt in thy Bleſſed Self, that I may once ſay, To me to live is Chriſt.

### THE POEM.

*The Face of Man impreſt and ſtampt on Gold,*
*With Crown and Royal Scepters we behold.*
*No wonder that an humane Face it gains,*
*Since Head, Heart, Soul, and Body it obtains.*
*Nor is it ſtrange a Scepter it ſhould have,*
*That to its Yoke the World doth ſo enſlave.*
*Charm'd with its chinking Note, away they go*
*Like Eagles to the Carcaſs, ride and row.*
*Through worlds of hazards fooliſh creatures run,*
*That into its embraces they may come.*
*Poor* Indians *in the Mines my heart condoles,*
*But ſeldom turns aſide to pity Souls,*
*Which are the ſlaves indeed, that toyl and ſpend*
*Themſelves upon its ſervice. Surely, Friend,*
*They are but Sextons to prepare and make*
*Thy Grave within thoſe Mines, whence they do take*
*And dig their Ore. Ah! many Souls, I fear,*
*Whoſe Bodies live, yet lie entombed there.*
*Is Gold ſo tempting to you? Lo, Chriſt ſtands,*
*With length of days, and riches in his hands.*
*Gold in the fire tri'd he freely proffers;*
*But few regard or take thoſe Golden Offers.*

## CHAP. XIII.

*Millions of Creatures in the Seas are fed:*
*Why then are Saints in doubt of daily bread?*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THere are multitudes of Living Creatures in the Sea. The *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, There are in it *things creeping innumerable, both ſmall and great beaſts,* Pſal. 104.25. And we read, *Gen.* 1. 20. that when God bleſſed the Waters, he ſaid, Let the Waters bring forth abundantly, both Fiſh and Fowl, that move in it, and fly about it. Yet all thoſe multitudes of Fiſh and Fowl, both in Sea and Land, are cared and provided for, *Pſal.* 145. 15, 16. *Thou giveſt them their meat in due ſeaſon; thou openeſt thy hand, and ſatisfieſt the deſire of every living thing.*

### *APPLICATION.*

If God take care for the Fiſhes of the Sea, and the Fowls of the Air, much more will he care and provide for thoſe that fear him. *When the poor and needy ſeeketh water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt; I the Lord will hear them, I the God of* Iſrael *will not forſake them,* Iſa. 41. 17. *Take no thought for your life* (ſaith the Lord) *what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; or for the body, what ye ſhall put on:* Which he backs with an Argument from God's Providence over the Creatures, and enforceth it with a [*much rather*] upon them, *Matth.* 6.25, 31. God would have his people be without *carefulneſs* (*i.e.*) anxious care, 1 *Cor.* 7. 32. *And to caſt their care upon him, for he careth for them,* 1 Pet. 5. 7. There be two main Arguments ſuggeſted in the Goſpel, to quiet and ſatisfie the hearts of Saints in this particular: The one is, that the Gift of Jeſus Chriſt amouns to more than all theſe things come to; yea, in beſtowing him, he has given that which virtually and eminently comprehends all theſe inferior mercies in it, Rom. 8.32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things?* And 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *All things are yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's.* Another Argument is, That God gives theſe Temporal Things to thoſe he never gave his Chriſt unto, and therefore there is no great matter in them: Yea, to thoſe, which in a little while, are to be thruſt into Hell, *Pſal.*17. 14. Now, if God cloathe and feed his enemies, if (to allude to that, *Luk.*12.28.) he cloathe this Graſs, which to day is in its pride and glory in the Field, and to morrow is caſt into the Oven, into Hell; How much more will he cloathe and provide for you that are Saints?

This God that feeds all the Creatures, is your Father, and a Father that never dies; and therefore you ſhall not be as expoſed Orphans, that are the Children of ſuch a Father. *For he hath ſaid, I will never leave you, nor forſake you,* Heb.13.3. I have read of a good woman, that in all wants and diſtreſſes, was wont to encourage herſelf with that word, 2 *Sam.* 22. 47. *The Lord liveth.* But one time being in a deep diſtreſs, and forgetting that conſolation, one of her little Children came to her, and ſaid, *Mother, Why weep ye ſo? What, is God dead now?* Which words from a Child, ſhamed her out of her unbelieving fears, and quickly brought her Spirit to reſt. O Saint, whilſt God lives, thou canſt not want what is good for thee.

How ſweet a Life might Chriſtians live, could they but bring their hearts to a full ſubjection to the diſpoſing-Will of God! to be content not only with what he commands and approves, but alſo with what he allots and appoints. It was a ſweet Reply, that a gracious Woman once made upon her Death-bed, to a Friend that asked her, *Whether ſhe were more willing to live or die?* She anſwer'd, *I am pleas'd with what God pleaſeth. Yea,* ſaid her Friend, *but if God ſhould refer it to you, which would you chuſe? Truly,* (ſaith ſhe) *if God ſhould refer it to me, I would refer it to him again.* Ah bleſt Life, when the Will is ſwallow'd up in the Will of God, and the heart at reſt in his care and love, and pleaſed with all his appointments!

### *REFLECTION.*

I remember my fault this day, may many a gracious Soul ſay. Ah how faithleſs and diſtruſtful have I been notwithſtanding the great ſecurity God hath given to my Faith, both in his Word and Works!

O my Soul, thou haſt greatly ſinned therein, and diſhonoured thy Father! I have been worſe to my Father, than my Children are to me. They trouble not their thoughts with what they ſhall eat or drink, or put on, but truſt to my care and proviſion for that: Yet I cannot truſt my Father, though I have ten thouſand times more reaſon ſo to do, than they have to truſt me, *Mat.* 7. 21. Surely, unleſs I were jealous of my Father's affection, I could not be ſo dubious of his proviſion for me. Ah, I ſhould rather wonder that I have ſo much, than repine that I have no more. I ſhould rather have been troubled that I have done no more for God, than that I have receiv'd no more from God. I have not proclaimed it to the World by my Converſation, that I have found a ſufficiency in him alone, as the Saints have done, *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. How have I debaſed the Faithfulneſs and All-ſufficiency of God, and magnified theſe earthly trifles, by my anxiety about them? Had I had more Faith, a light Purſe would not have made ſuch an heavy Heart. Lord, how often haſt thou convinced me of this folly, and put me to the bluſh, when thou haſt confuted my unbelief; ſo that I have reſolved never to diſtruſt thee more, and yet new exigencies renew this corruption? How contradictory alſo hath my Heart and my Prayers been? I pray for them conditionally, and with ſubmiſſion to thy Will; I dare not ſay to thee, I muſt have them; yet this hath been the language of my heart and life. O convince me of this folly!

## THE POEM.

*Variety of curious Fiſh are caught*
*Out of the Sea, and to our Tables brought;*
*We pick the choiceſt bits, and then we ſay,*
*We are ſufficed; come, now take away.*
*The Table's voided, you have done; but fain*
*I would perſwade to have it brought again.*
*The ſweeteſt bit of all remains behind*
*Which through your want of skill, you could not find.*
*A bit for Faith, have you not found it? Then*
*I have made but half a meal; come taſte agen,*
*Haſt thou conſidered (O my Soul) that Hand*
*Which feeds thoſe multitudes in Sea and Land?*
*A double Mercy in it thou ſhould'ſt ſee;*
*It fed them firſt, and then with them fed thee.*
*Food in the Waters we ſhould think were ſcant*
*For ſuch a multitude, yet none do want.*
*What numerous flocks of Birds above me fly?*
*When ſaw I one, through want fall down and die?*
*They gather what his hand to them doth bring,*
*Though but a Worm, and at that Feaſt can ſing.*
*How full a Table doth my Father keep?*
*Bluſh then, my naughty heart, repent and weep;*
*How faithleſs and diſtruſtful haſt thou been,*
*Although his care and love thou oft haſt ſeen?*
*Thus in a ſingle diſh you have a feaſt,*
*Your firſt and ſecond Courſe, the laſt the beſt.*

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## CHAP. XIV.

*Sea-waters drained through the Earth, are ſweet;*
*So are th' Afflictions which God's People meet.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THE Waters of the Sea in themſelves, are brackiſh and unpleaſant, yet being exhaled by the Sun, and condenſed into Clouds, they fall down into pleaſant Showers; or if drained through the Earth, their property is thereby altered; and that which was ſo ſalt in the Sea, becomes exceeding ſweet and pleaſant in the Springs. This we find by conſtant experience, the ſweeteſt cryſtal Spring came from the Sea, *Eccleſ.* 1. 7.

### *APPLICATION.*

Afflictions in themſelves are evil, *Amos* 2. 6. Very bitter and unpleaſant. See *Heb.* 12. 11. Yet not morally and intrinſically evil, as ſin is; for if ſo, the holy God would never own it for his own act, as he doth, *Mic.* 3. 2. but always diſclaimeth ſin, *Jam.* 1. 3. Beſides, if it were ſo evil, it could in no caſe, or reſpect, be the object of our election and deſire; as in ſome caſes it ought to be, *Heb.* 11. 25. But it is evil, as it is the fruit of ſin, and grievous unto ſenſe, *Heb.* 14. 11. But though it be thus brackiſh and unpleaſant in it ſelf, yet paſſing through Chriſt, and the Covenant, it loſes that ungrateful property, and becomes pleaſant in the fruits and effects thereof unto believers, *Heb.* 12. 11.

Yea, ſuch are the bleſſed fruits thereof, that they are to account it all joy, when they fall into divers afflictions, *Jam.* 1. 2. *David* could bleſs God, that he was afflicted; and many a Saint hath done the like. A good Woman once compared her Afflictions to her Children: *For* (ſaith ſhe) *they put me in pain in bearing them; yet as I know not which child, ſo neither which affliction I could be without.*

Sometimes the Lord ſanctifies affliction to diſcover the corruption that is in the heart, *Deut.* 8. 2. It is a furnace to ſhew the droſs. Ah! when a ſharp Affliction comes, then the pride, impatiency, and unbelief of the heart appears. *Matura vexata prodit ſeipſam.* When the Water is ſtirred, then the Mud and filthy Sediment that lay at the bottom riſes. Little (ſaith the afflicted Soul) did I think, there had been in me that pride, ſelf-love, diſtruſt of God, carnal fear, and unbelief, as I now find. O where is my Patience, my Faith, my Glory in tribulation? I could not have imagined the ſight of Death would have ſo appalled me, the loſs of outward things ſo have pierced me. Now what a bleſſed thing is this, to have the heart thus diſcovered?

Again: Sanctified Afflictions diſcover the emptineſs and vanity of the Creature. Now the Lord hath ſtained its pride, and vailed its tempting ſplendor, by this or that affliction; and the Soul ſees what an empty, ſhallow, deceitful thing it is. The World (as one hath truly obſerved) is then only great in our eyes, when we are full of ſenſe and ſelf: But now Affliction makes us more ſpiritual, and then it is nothing. It drives them nearer to God, makes them ſee the neceſſity of the Life of Faith, with multitudes of other benefits.

But yet theſe ſweet fruits of Affliction do not naturally, and of their own accord, ſpring from it: No, we may as well look for *Grapes* from *Thorns*, or *Figs* from *Thiſtles*, as for ſuch Fruits from Affliction, till Chriſt's ſanctifying Hand and Art have paſs'd upon them.

The reaſon why they become thus ſweet and pleaſant (as I noted before) is, becauſe they run now into another channel; Jeſus Chriſt hath removed them from Mount *Ebal* to *Gerezim*; they are no more the effects of vindictive Wrath, but paternal Chaſtiſement. And (as Mr. *Caſe* well notes) *A teaching affliction is to the Saints, the reſult of all the Offices of Jeſus Chriſt. As a King, he chaſtens; as a Prophet, he teacheth,* viz. *by chaſtening; and as a Prieſt, he hath purchaſed this grace of the Father, that the dry Rod might bloſſom, and bear fruit.* Behold then, a ſanctified

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fied affliction is a Cup, whereinto Jeſus Chriſt hath wrung and preſs'd the juice and virtue of all his Mediatory-Offices. Surely, that muſt be a Cup of generous, Royal Wine, like that in the Supper, a Cup of Bleſſing to the People of God.

### *REFLECTION.*

Hence may the unſanctified Soul draw matter of fear and trouble, even from its unſanctified troubles. And thus it may reflect upon it ſelf; O my Soul, what good haſt thou gotten by all, or any of thy afflictions? God's Rod hath been dumb to thee, or thou deaf to it. I have not learned one holy Inſtruction from it: My troubles have left me the ſame, or worſe than they found me; my Heart was proud, earthly, and vain before, and ſo it remains ſtill: They have not purged out, but only given vent to the pride, murmur, and atheiſm of my heart. I have been in my afflictions, as that wicked *Ahaz* was in his, 2 *Chron.* 28.22. Who *in the midſt of his diſtreſs, yet treſpaſſed more and more againſt the Lord.* When I have been in ſtorms at Sea, or troubles at home, my Soul within me hath been as a raging Sea, caſting up mire and dirt. Surely this Rod is not the Rod of God's Children. I have proved but droſs in the Furnace, and I fear the Lord will put me away as droſs, as he threatens to do by the wicked, *Pſal.* 119. 119.

Hence alſo ſhould gracious Souls draw much encouragement and comfort amidſt all their troubles. O theſe are the fruits of God's fatherly love to me! Why ſhould I fear in the day of evil? or tremble any more at affliction? though they ſeem as a *Serpent* at a diſtance, yet are they a Rod in hand. O bleſſed be that skilful and gracious hand, that makes the Rod, the dry Rod to bloſſom, and bear ſuch precious fruit.

Lord! what a myſtery of love lies in this diſpenſation! That ſin which firſt brought afflictions into the world, is now it ſelf carried out of the world by affliction, *Rom.* 5. 12. *Iſa.* 7. 9. O what can fruſtrate my Salvation, when thoſe very things that ſeem moſt to oppoſe it, are made ſubſervient to it; and contrary to their own nature do promote and further it?

### THE POEM.

*'Tis ſtrange to hear what different cenſures fall*
*Upon the ſame affliction; ſome do call*
*Their troubles ſweet, ſome bitter; others meet*
*Them both mid-way, and call them bitter ſweet.*
*But here's the queſtion ſtill, I fain would ſee,*
*Why ſweet to him, and bitter unto me?*
*Thou drink'ſt them Dregs and all, but others find*
*Their troubles ſweet, becauſe to them refin'd,*
*And ſanctifi'd; which difference is beſt*
*By ſuch apt Similies as theſe expreſt:*
*From Salt and Brackiſh Seas Fumes riſe and fly,*
*Which into Clouds condens'd, obſcure the Sky;*
*Their property there alter'd in few hours*
*Thoſe brackiſh Fumes fall down in pleaſant ſhowers:*
*Or as the dregs of Wine and Beer diſtill'd*
*By Limbeck, with ingredients, doth yield*
*A Cordial water, though the Lees were bitter,*
*From whence the Chymiſt did extract ſuch Liquor.*
*Then marvel not that one can kiſs that Rod,*
*Which makes another to blaſpheme his God.*
*get your troubles ſweet'ned and refin'd,*
*Or elſe they'll leave bitter effects behind.*
*Saints troubles are a Cord, let down by love,*
*To pully up their hearts to things above.*

## CHAP. XV.

*The Seas within their bounds the Lord contains;*
*He alſo Men and Devils holds in Chains.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

IT is a wonderful work of God, to limit and bound ſuch a vaſt and furious Creature, as the Sea; which according to the judgment of many Learned Men, is higher than the Earth; and that it hath a propenſion to overflow it, is evident, both from its nature and motion; were it not, that the great God had laid his Law upon it. And this is a work wherein the Lord glories, and will be admired, *Pſal.* 104. 9. *Thou haſt ſet a bound that they may not paſs over, that they turn not again to cover the Earth.* Which it's clear they would do, were they not thus limited. So *Job* 38. 8, 10, 11. *Who ſhut up the Seas with doors, when it break forth, as if it had iſſued out of the Womb? I brake up for it my decreed place, and ſet bars and doors, and ſaid, Hitherto ſhalt thou come, but no further; and here ſhall thy proud Waves be ſtaid.*

### *APPLICATION.*

And no leſs is the glorious Power and Mercy of God diſcovered in bridling the rage and fury of Satan and his Inſtruments, that they break not in upon the Inheritance of the Lord, and deſtroy it. *Surely, the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee, and the remainder of wrath thou ſhalt reſtrain,* Pſal. 76. 10. By which it is more than hinted, that there is a World of Rage and Malice in the hearts of wicked men, which fain would, but cannot vent it ſelf, becauſe the Lord reſtrains, or as the Hebrew, *Girds it up.* Satan is the envious one, and his rage is great againſt the People of God, *Rev.* 12. 12. But God holds him and all his Inſtruments in a Chain of Providence; and it is well for God's People that it is ſo.

They are limited as the Sea, and ſo the Lord in a providential way ſpeaks to them, *Hitherto ſhall you go, and no further.* Sometimes he ties them up ſo ſhort, that they cannot touch his people, though they have the greateſt opportunities and advantages, *Pſal.* 105. 12, 13, 14, 15. *When they were but a few men in number, yea, very few, and ſtrangers in it; when they went from one Nation to another, from one Kingdom to another people: He ſuffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved Kings for their ſakes, ſaying, Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm.* And ſometimes he permits them to touch and trouble his People, but then ſets bounds and limits to them, beyond which they muſt not paſs. That is a pregnant Text to this purpoſe, *Revel.* 2. 10. *Behold, the Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, that you may be tried, and ye ſhall have tribulation ten days.*

Here are four remarkable Limitations upon Satan and his Agents, in reference to the People of God: A limitation as to the *Perſons,* not all, but ſome: A limitation of the *Puniſhment,* a Priſon, not a Grave, not Hell: A limitation upon them as to the end; for trial, not ruin: And laſtly, as to the *Duration;* not as long as they pleaſe, but ten days.

### *REFLECTION.*

O my Soul, what Marrow and Fatneſs, Comfort and Conſolation, may'ſt thou ſuck from the Breaſt of this Truth, in the darkeſt day of trouble? Thou ſeeſt how the flowing Sea drives to over-whelm the Earth. Who has arreſted it in its courſe, and ſtopt its violence! Who has confin'd it to its place? Certainly none other but the Lord. When I ſee it threaten the ſhore with its proud, furious, and inſulting Waves, I wonder it doth not ſwallow up all: but I ſee it no ſooner touch the Sands, which God hath made its bounds, but it retires, and as it were with a kind of ſubmiſſion, reſpects thoſe limits which God hath ſet it.

Thus the fierceſt Element is repreſt by the feebleſt things: Thou ſeeſt alſo, how full of wrath and fury wicked men are, how they rage like the troubled Sea, and threaten to over-whelm *thee, and all the Lords's Inheritance: and then the floods of ungodly men make thee afraid, yet are they reſtrained by an inviſible gracious hand, that they cannot execute their purpoſe, nor perform their enterprize. How full of Devils and devillized Men is this lower World? Yet in the midſt of them all haſt thou hitherto been preſerved. O my Soul, admire and adore that glorious power of God, by which thou art kept unto Salvation. Is not the preſervation of a Saint in the midſt of ſuch hoſts of enemies, as great a Miracle, though not ſo ſenſible, as the preſervation of thoſe three noble *Jews* in the midſt of the fiery Furnace, or *Daniel* in the Den of Lions? For there is as ſtrong a propenſion in Satan, and wicked men, to deſtroy the Saints; as in the fire to burn, or a Lion to devour. O then let me chearfully addreſs my ſelf to the faithful diſcharge of my duty, and ſtand no longer in a ſlaviſh fear of creatures, who can have no power againſt me, but what is given them from above, *John* 19. 11. And no more ſhall be given than ſhall turn to the glory of God, *Pſal.* 76. 10. and the advantage of my Soul, *Rom.* 8. 28.

* See the *Turks* Letter to the Emperor of *Germany*, lately publiſhed by Authority.

## THE POEM.

*This World's a Foreſt, where from day to day,*
*Bears, Wolves, and Lions range and ſeek their prey;*
*Amidſt them all poor harmleſs Lambs are fed,*
*And by their very Dens in ſafety led.*
*They roar upon us, but are held in Chains:*
*Our Shepherd is their Keeper, he maintains*
*Our Lot. Why then ſhould we ſo trembling ſtand?*
*We meet them, true, but in their Keeper's hand.*
*He that to raging Seas ſuch Bounds hath put,*
*The mouths of ravenous Beaſts can alſo ſhut.*
*Sleep in the Woods, poor Lambs your ſelves repoſe*
*Upon his Care, whoſe Eyes do never cloſe.*
*If unbelief in you don't looſe their chain,*
*Fear not their ſtrugling, that's but all in vain.*
*If God can check the Waves by ſmalleſt Sand,*
*A Twined Thread may hold theſe in his hand.*
*Shun Sin, keep cloſe to Chriſt; for other evils*
*You need not fear, tho' compaſt round with Devils.*

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## CHAP. XVI.

*To Sea without a Compaſs none dare go;*
*Our Courſe without the Word is even ſo.*

### OBSERVATION.

OF how great uſe and neceſſity is the Compaſs to Seamen? Though they can coaſt a little way by the Shore, yet they dare not venture far into the Ocean without it. It's their Guide, and directs and ſhapes their Courſe for them: And if by the violence of Wind and Weather they be driven beſide their due Courſe, yet by the help of this, they are reduced and brought to Rights again. It is wonderful to conſider, how by the help of this Guide they can run in a direct Line many hundred Leagues, and at laſt fall right with the ſmalleſt Iſland; which is in the Ocean, comparatively, but as the head of a ſmall Pin upon a Table.

### APPLICATION.

What the Compaſs, and all other Mathematical Inſtruments are to the Navigator, that and much more is the Word of God to us in our courſe to Heaven. This is our Compaſs to ſteer our courſe by, and it is truly touched; he that orders his converſation by it, ſhall ſafely arrive in Heaven at laſt. Gal. 6. 16. *As many as walk according to this rule, Peace be on them, and mercy.*

This Word is as neceſſary to us in our way to Glory, as a Lamp or Lanthorn is in a dark night, *Pſal.* 119. 105. This is a light ſhining in a dark place, till the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in our hearts, 2 *Pet.* 1. 19. If any that profeſs to know it, and own it as a Rule, miſs Heaven at laſt, let them not blame the Word for miſguiding them, but their own negligent and deceitful hearts, that ſhuffle in and out, and ſhape not their courſe and converſation according to its preſcriptions.

What blame can you lay upon the Compaſs, if you ſteer not exactly by it? How many are there, that neglecting this Rule, will coaſt it to Heaven by their own Reaſon? No wonder ſuch fall ſhort and periſh in the way. This is a faithful Guide, and brings all that follow it to a bleſſed end; *Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterwards receive me to glory*, Pſal. 73. 24. The whole hundredth and nineteenth *Pſalm* is ſpent in commendation of its tranſcendent excellency and uſefulneſs. *Luther* profeſt, that he prized it ſo highly, that he would not take the whole World in exchange for one Leaf of it. Lay but this Rule before you, and walk accurately by it, and you cannot be out of your way to Heaven, Pſal. 119. 30. *I have choſen the way of truth, (or the true way;) thy Judgments have I laid before me.* Some indeed have opened their detracting blaſphemous mouths againſt it; as *Julian*, that curſed Apoſtate, who feared not to ſay, There was as good matter in *Phocillides* as in *Solomon*, in *Pindarus* his *Odes*, as in *David*'s Pſalms.

And the Papiſts generally ſlight it, making it a lame imperfect Rule; yea, making their own Traditions the Touchſtone of Doctrines, and Foundation of Faith. *Montanus* tells us, that although the Apoſtle would have Sermons and Service celebrated in a known Tongue, yet the Church, for very good cauſe, hath otherwiſe order'd it. *Gilford* called it, The Mother of Hereſies. *Bonner's* Chaplain judged it worthy to be burnt as a ſtrange Doctrine. They ſet up their Inventions above it, and frequently come in with a *Non obſtante* againſt Chriſt's Inſtitutions. And thus do they make it void, or, as the word ἀναλείλοντες ſignifies, *Matth.* 15. 6. unlord it, and take away its authority as a Rule. But thoſe that have thus ſlighted it, and followed the by-paths unto which their corrupt Hearts have led them, they take not hold of the paths of Life, and are now in the depths of Hell. All other Lights, to which men pretend, in the neglect of this, are but falſe fires, that will lead Men into the Pits and Bogs of Deſtruction at laſt.

### REFLECTION.

And is thy Word a Compaſs, to direct my courſe to Glory? O where am I then like to arrive at laſt, that in all my courſe have neglected it, and ſteered according to the counſel of my own heart! Lord, I have not made thy Word the Man of my counſel, but conſulted with fleſh and blood; I have not enquired at this Oracle, nor ſtudied it, and made it the guide of my way, but walked after the ſight of my eyes, and the luſt of my heart. Whither Lord, can I come at laſt, but to Hell, after this rate and reckoning? Some have ſlighted thy Word profeſſedly, and I have ſlighted it practically. I have a poor Soul embarqued for Eternity, it is now floating on a dangerous Ocean, Rocks and Sands on every ſide, and I go adrift before every Wind of Temptation, and know not where I am. Ah Lord, convince me of the danger of this condition. O convince me of my Ignorance in thy Word, and the fatal conſequence and iſſue thereof. Lord, let me now reſolve to ſtudy, prize, and obey it; hide it in my heart, that I may not ſin againſt it. Open my underſtanding, that I may underſtand the Scriptures: Open my heart to entertain it in love. O thou that haſt been ſo gracious to give a perfect Rule, give me alſo a perfect heart to walk by that Rule to glory!

## THE POEM.

*This World's a Sea, wherein a numerous Fleet*
*Of Ships are under ſail. Here you ſhall meet*
*Of every Rate and Size; Frigats, Galleons,*
*The nimble Ketches, and ſmall Pickeroons:*
*Some bound to this Port, ſome where Winds and Weather*
*Will drive them, they are bound they know not whither.*
*Some ſteer away for Heaven, ſome for Hell;*
*To which ſome ſteer, themſelves can hardly tell.*
*The Winds do ſhape their courſe, which though it blow*
*From any Point, before it they muſt go.*
*They are directed by the Wind and Tide,*
*That have no Compaſs to direct and guide:*
*For want of this, muſt run themſelves a-ground,*
*Brave Ships are caſt away, poor Souls are drown'd.*
*Thy Word our Compaſs is, to guide our way*
*To Glory; it reduces ſuch as ſtray.*
*Lord, let thy Word dwell richly in my heart,*
*And make me skilful in this heavenly Art:*
*O let me underſtand and be ſo wiſe,*
*To know upon what Point my Country lies;*
*And having ſet my Courſe directly thither,*
*Great God preſerve me in the fouleſt Weather.*
*By Reaſon ſome will coaſt it: but I fear*
*Such Coaſters never will drop Anchor there.*
*Thy Word is truly toucht, and ſtill directs*
*A proper Courſe, which my baſe heart neglects.*
*Lord, touch mine Iron heart, and make it ſtand*
*Pointing to thee, its Loadſtone. To that Land*
*Of Reſt above, let every Tempeſt drive*
*My Soul, where it would rather be than live.*

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## CHAP. XVII.

*Look as the Sea by turns doth ebb and flow,*
*So their Eſtates, that uſe it, come and go.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THE Sea hath its alternate Courſe and Motion, its Ebbings and Flowings: No ſooner is it igh-water, but it begins to Ebb again, and leave e Shore naked and dry, which but a little before it vered and over-flowed. And as its Tides, ſo alſo s Waves are the Emblem of Inconſtancy, ſtill roul- g and tumbling, this way and that, never fixt and iet. *Inſtabilis unda: As fickle as a Wave*, is common to a Proverb. See *Jam.* 1. 6. *He that wavereth, is like a Wave of the Sea, driven with Winds, and toſſed.* So Iſa. 57. 20. *It cannot reſt.*

### *APPLICATION.*

Thus mutable and inconſtant are all outward things, there is no depending on them: Nothing of any ſubſtance, or any ſolid conſiſtence in them, 1 *Cor.* 7. 31. *The faſhion of this world paſſeth away.* It is an high point of folly to depend upon ſuch vanities, *Prov.* 23. 5. *Why wilt thou ſet*, (or, as it is in the *Hebrew*) *cauſe thine eyes to fly upon that which is no? For riches certainly make themſelves wings, and fly away, as an Eagle towards Heaven.* In flying to us (ſaith *Auguſtine*) they have alas, *vix quidem paſſerinas*, ſcarce a Sparrow's wings; but in flying from us, wings as an Eagle. And thoſe Wings they are ſaid to make to themſelves, (*i. e.*) the cauſe of its tranſitorineſs is in it ſelf; the Creature is ſubjected to Vanity by ſin: they are ſweet flowers, but withered preſently, *Jam.* 1. 10. *As the flower of the graſs, ſo ſhall the rich man fade away.* The man is like the ſtalk or graſs, his riches are the flower of the graſs; his glory and outward beauty, the ſtalk is ſoon withered, but the flower much ſooner. This is either withered upon, or blown off from it, while the ſtalk abides. Many a man out-lives his eſtate and honour, and ſtands in the world as a bare dry ſtalk in the field, whoſe flower, beauty, and bravery is gone: One puff of wind blows it away, one churliſh eaſterly blaſt ſhrivels it up, 1 *Pet.* 4. 24.

How mad a thing is it then, for any man to be lifted up in pride, upon ſuch a vanity as this is; to build ſo lofty and over-jetting Roof upon ſuch a feeble, tottering Foundation? We have ſeen Meadows full of ſuch curious flowers, mown down and withered, men of great Eſtates impoveriſhed ſuddenly: And when, like a Meadow that is mown, they have begun to recover themſelves again (as the phraſe is) the Lord hath ſent *Graſhoppers in the beginning of the ſhooting up of the latter growth*, Amos 7. 1. Juſt as the Graſhoppers and other Creatures devour the ſecond tender Herbage, as ſoon as the Field begins to recover its verdure: So men, after they have been denuded and blaſted by Providence, they begin after a while to flouriſh again, but then comes ſome new affliction, and blaſts all. None have more frequent experience of this, than you that are Merchants and Seamen, whoſe eſtates are floating: and yet ſuch as have had the higheſt ſecurity in the eye of Reaſon, have notwithſtanding experienc'd the vanity of theſe things. *Henry* the fourth, a potent Prince, was reduced to ſuch a low ebb, that he petitioned for a Prebends place in the Church of *Spire*. *Gallimer*, King of the *Vandals*, was brought ſo low, that he ſent to his Friend for a Spunge, a Loaf of Bread, and an Harp: a Spunge to dry up his tears, a Loaf of bread to maintain his life, and an Harp to ſolace himſelf in his miſery. The ſtory of *Belliſarius* is very affecting: He was a man famous in his time, General of an Army, yet having his eyes put out, and ſtripped of all earthly comforts, was led about, crying, *Date abolum Belliſario*, Give one penny to poor *Belliſarius*. Inſtances in Hiſtory of this kind are infinite. Men of the greateſt eſtates and honours, have nevertheleſs become the very *Ludibria Fortunæ*, as one ſpeaks, The very ſcorn of Fortune.

Yea, and not only wicked men, that have gotten their Eſtates by rapine and oppreſſion, have lived to ſee them thus ſcattered by Providence: But ſometimes godly Men have had their Eſtates, how juſtly ſoever acquired, thus ſcattered by Providence alſo.

Who ever had an eſtate better gotten, better bottomed, or better managed, than *Job*? yet all was overthrown and ſwept away in a moment: though in mercy to him, as the iſſue demonſtrated.

Oh then! what a vanity is it to ſet the heart and let out the affections on them! You can never depend too much upon God, nor too little upon the creature, 1 Tim. 6. 17. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded and truſt in uncertain riches.*

### *REFLECTION.*

Are all earthly things thus tranſitory and vain? Then what a reproach and ſhame is it to me, that the men of this world ſhould be more induſtrious and eager in the proſecution of ſuch vanities, then I am to enrich my Soul with ſolid and everlaſting Treaſure? O that ever a ſenſual luſt ſhould be more operative in them than the love of God in me! O my Soul, thou doſt not lay out thy ſtrength and earneſtneſs for Heaven, with any proportion to what they do for the World. I have indeed higher Motives, and a ſurer Reward than they: But as I have an advantage above them herein, ſo have they an advantage above me in the ſtrength and entireneſs of the principle by which they are acted. What they do for the World, they do it with all their might; they have no contrary principle to oppoſe them; their thoughts, ſtrength, and affection, is entirely carried in one Channel: But I find *a Law in my Members warring againſt the Law of my Mind*; I muſt ſtrive through a thouſand Difficulties and Contradictions, to the diſcharge of a Duty. O my God! Shall not my heart be more enlarged in Zeal, Love, and Delight in thee, than theirs are after their Luſts? O let me once find it ſo.

Again, is the Creature ſo vain and unſtable? then why are my Affections ſo hot and eager after it? And why am I ſo apt to dote upon its beauty, eſpecially when God is ſtaining all its pride and glory! *Jer.* 45. 5, 6. Surely it is unbecoming the ſpirit of a Chriſtian at any time, but at ſuch a time we may ſay of it, as *Huſhai* of *Ahitophel's* Counſel, *It is not good at this time.*

O that my Spirit were raiſed above them, and my converſation more in Heaven! O that like that Angel, *Rev.* 10. 1, 2. which came down from Heaven and ſet one foot upon the Sea, and another upon the Earth, having a Crown upon his head, ſo I might ſet one foot upon all the cares, fears, and terrors of the World, and another upon all the tempting ſplendor and glory of the World; treading both under foot in the duſt, and crowning my ſelf with nothing but ſpiritual excellencies and glory!

### THE POEM.

*Judge in thy ſelf (O Chriſtian) is it meet*
*To ſet thy heart on what Beaſts ſet their feet?*
*'Tis no* Hyperbole, *if you be told,*
*You dig for Droſs with Mattocks made of Gold.*
*Affections are too coſtly to beſtow*
*Upon the fair-fac'd Nothings here below.*
*The Eagle ſcorns to fall down from on high*
*(The Proverb ſaith) to catch the ſilly Flie.*
*And can a Chriſtian leave the Face of God,*
*T' embrace the Earth, or dote upon a Clod?*
*Can earthly Things thy heart ſo ſtrangely move,*
*To tempt it down from the Delights above;*
*And now to court the World at ſuch a time*
*When God is laying Judgment to the Line?*
*It's juſt like him that doth his Cabbin ſweep*
*And trim, when all is ſinking in the Deep:*
*Or like the ſilly Bird, that to her Neſt*
*Doth carry ſtraws, and never is at reſt,*
*Till it be feather'd well, but doth not ſee*
*The Axe beneath that's hewing down the Tree.*
*If on a Thorn thy heart it ſelf repoſe*
*With ſuch delight, what if it were a Roſe?*
*Admire, O Saint, the Wiſdom of thy God,*
*Who of the ſelf-ſame Tree doth make a Rod,*
*Leſt thou ſhouldſt ſurfeit on forbidden Fruit,*
*And live not like a Saint, but like a Brute.*

## CHAP. XVIII.

*Like hungry Lions, Waves for Sinners gape:*
*Leave then your Sins behind, if you'll eſcape.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THE Waves of the Sea are ſometimes raiſed by God's Commiſſion, to be Executioners of his Threatnings upon ſinners. When *Jonah* fled from the preſence of the Lord to *Tarſhiſh*, the Text ſaith, *The Lord ſent out a great Wind into the Sea, and there was a mighty Tempeſt, ſo that the Ship was like to be broken,* Joh. 1. 4. Theſe were God's Bailiffs, to arreſt the Run-away Prophet. And *Pſal.* 148. 8. The ſtormy winds are ſaid to *fulfil his word*; not only his word of Command, in riſing when God bids them, but his word of *threatning* alſo. And hence it is called a *deſtroying wind*, Jer. 51. 1. and a *ſtormy wind in God's fury*, Ezek. 13. 13.

### *APPLICATION.*

If theſe be the Executioners of the Lord's threatnings, how ſad then is their condition that put forth to Sea under the guilt of all their ſins? O, if God ſhould commiſſionate the Winds to go after and arreſt thee for all thou oweſt him, where art thou then? How dare you put forth under the power of a Divine threat, before all be cleared betwixt God and thee? Sins in Scripture are called debts, *Mat.* 6. 12. They are debts to God; not that we owe them to him, or ought to ſin, but *Metonymically*, becauſe they render the Sinner obnoxious to God's Judgments, even as pecuniary debts oblige him that hath not wherewith to pay, to ſuffer puniſhment. All ſinners muſt undergo the Curſe, either in their own perſon, according to the expreſs letter of the Law, *Gen.* 2. 17. *Gal.* 3. 10. or their ſurety, according to the tacite intent of the Law, manifeſted to be the mind of the Lawgiver, *Gen.* 3. 15. *Gal.* 3. 13, 14.

Now he that by Faith hath Intereſt in his Surety, hath his Diſcharge, his *Quietus eſt*, ſealed in the Blood of Chriſt; all Proceſs at Law, or from the Law, is ſtopt, *Rom.* 8. 1. But if thou be an impenitent, perſiſting ſinner, thy debt remains upon thine own ſcore. *And be ſure thy ſin will find thee out, where-ever thou goeſt*, Numb. 32. 23. (*i. e.*) God's revenging hand for ſin will be upon thee: Thou may'ſt loſe the ſight and memory of thy ſin, but they loſe not the ſight of thee; they follow after, as the Hound doth the fleeting game upon the ſcent, till they have fetcht thee up: And then conſider, *How fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God*, *Heb.* 10. 31. How ſoon may a ſtorm arreſt, and bring thee before the Bar of God?

### *REFLECTION.*

O my Soul, what a caſe art thou in, if this be ſo? Are not all thy ſins yet upon thine own ſcore? Haſt not thou made light of Chriſt, and that precious Blood of his, and hitherto perſiſted in thy Rebellion againſt him? And what can the iſſue of this be at laſt, but ruine? There is abundant mercy indeed for returning ſinners; but the Goſpel ſpeaks of none for perſiſting and impenitent ſinners. And though many who are going on in their ſins are overtaken by Grace, yet there is no Grace promiſed to ſuch as go on in ſin. O, if God ſhould arreſt me by the next Storm, and call me to an account for all that I owe him, I muſt then lie in the Priſon of Hell to all Eternity; for I can never pay the debt; nay, all the Angels in Heaven cannot ſatisfy for it. Being Chriſtleſs, I am under all the Curſes in the Book of God; a Child of *Hagar*. Lord, pity and ſpare me a little longer! O diſcover thy Chriſt unto me, and give me Faith in his Blood, and then thou art fully ſatisfied at once, and I diſcharged for ever. O require not the debt at my hand, for then thou wilt never be ſatisfied, nor I acquitted. What profit, Lord, is there in my Blood! O my ſoul, make haſt to this Chriſt, thy Refuge-City; thou knoweſt not how ſoon the avenger of Blood may overtake thee.

### THE POEM.

*Thy ſins are debts: God puts them to account:*
*Canſt tell, poor wretch, to what thy debts amount?*
*Thou fill'ſt the treaſure of thy ſins each hour.*
*Into his Vials God doth alſo pour*
*Proportionable wrath: Thou ſeeſt it not;*
*But yet aſſure thy ſelf, there's drop for drop.*
*For every Sand of Patience running out,*
*A drop of Wrath runs in. Soul, look about.*
*God's Treaſures almoſt full, as well as thine:*
*When both are full, O then the dreadful time*
*Of Reckoning comes; thou ſhalt not gain a day*
*Of patience more, but then there haſtes away*
*Heaven's Purſevant, who comes upon the wing*
*With his Commiſſion ſeal'd, to take and bring.*
*Do'ſt ſtill reject Chriſts tenders? Well, next ſtorm*
*May be the Bailiff ordered to perform*
*This dreadful office. O then reſtleſs be,*
*Till God in Chriſt be reconcil'd to thee.*
*The Sum is great, but if a Chriſt thou get,*
*Fear not, a Prince can pay a Beggar's debt.*
*Now if the Storm ſhould riſe, thou need not fear;*
*Thou art, but the Delinquent is not there.*
*A pardoned Soul to Sea may boldly go:*
*He fears not Bailiffs, that doth nothing owe.*

## CHAP. XIX.

*To ſave the Ship, rich Lading's caſt away.*
*Thy Soul is Shipwrackt if thy Luſts do ſtay.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

N Storms and Diſtreſſes at Sea, the Richeſt Commodities are caſt over-board; they ſtand not on it, when Life and all is in jeopardy and ha-rd. *Jonah* 1. 5. The Mariners caſt forth the ares that were in the Ship into the Sea, to light- it. And *Act.* 27. 18, 19. they caſt out the very cklings of the Ship. How highly ſoever Men prize ch Commodities, yet reaſon tells them, It were tter theſe ſhould periſh, than Life. Satan himſelf could ſay, Job 1. *Skin for skin, and all that a Man hath, will he give for his Life.*

### *APPLICATION.*

And ſurely, it is every way as highly reaſonable, that Men ſhould mortifie, caſt out, and cut off their deareſt Luſts, rather than their Immortal Souls ſhould ſink and periſh in the Storm of God's wrath. Life, indeed, is a precious Treaſure, and highly valued by Men: You know what *Solomon* ſaith, *Eccleſ.* 9. 4. That *a Living Dog is better than a Dead Lion.* And we find Men willing to part with their Eſtates, Limbs, or any outward Comfort, for the preſervation of it. The Woman in the Goſpel ſpent all ſhe had on the Phyſicians for her Health, a degree below Life. Some Men indeed do much over value their Lives, and part with Chriſt and Peace of Conſcience for it; but he that thus ſaves it, ſhall loſe it. Now if Life be ſo much worth, What then is the Soul worth? Alas! Life is but a *vapour, which apreareth for a little while, and then vaniſhetk away,* Jam. 4. 14.

Life indeed is more worth than all the World, but my Soul is more worth than Ten thouſand Lives. Nature teacheth you to value the firſt ſo high, and *Grace* ſhould teach you to value the ſecond much higher, *Mat.* 19. 26. Now here is the caſe: Either you muſt part with your Sins, or with your Souls; if theſe be not caſt out, both muſt ſink together. *If ye live after the fleſh, ye muſt die,* Rom. 8. 13. God ſaith to you in this caſe, as to *Ahab,* when he ſpared *Benhadad,* 1 King. 20. 40. *Becauſe thou haſt let go a* Sin, *which God hath appointed to deſtruction, therefore thy Life ſhall go for his Life.* Guilt will raiſe a Storm of Wrath, as *Jonah* did, if not caſt out.

### *REFLECTION.*

And muſt Sin or the Soul periſh? Muſt my Life, yea, my Eternal Life go for it, if I ſpare it? O then let me not be cruel to mine own Soul, in ſparing my Sin; O my Soul, this fooliſh pity, and cruel Indulgence will be thy ruine: If I ſpare it, God hath ſaid, *He will not ſpare me,* Deut. 26. 20. It is true, the pains of Mortification are ſharp, but yet it's eaſier than the pains of Hell. To cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, is hard; but to have my Soul cut off eternally from God, is harder. Is it as eaſie (O my Soul!) to burn for them in Hell, as to Mortifie them on Earth? Surely, it is *profitable for me, that one member periſh, rather than that all be caſt into Hell,* Mat. 5. 24. I ſee the Merchant willing to part with rich Wares, if embarqued with them in a Storm: And thoſe that have Gangreen'd Legs or Arms, willingly ſtretch them out to be cut off, to preſerve Life: And ſhall I be willing to endure no difficulties for my Soul? Chriſt reckon'd Souls wrath his Blood; And is it not worth my Self-denial? Lord, let me not warm a Snake in my Boſom, that will at laſt ſting me to the heart.

### THE POEM.

*Thy Soul's the Ship, its Lading is its Luſts,*
*God's Judgments, ſtormy Winds and dang'rous guſts;*
*Conſcience the Maſter; but the ſtubborn Will*
*Goes* Supra Cargo, *and doth keep the Bill.*
*Affections are the Men, the Winds do riſe,*
*The Storm increaſes: Conſcience gives Advice*
*To throw thoſe Luſts o're-board, and ſo to eaſe*
*The Veſſel, which elſe cannot keep the Seas.*
*The Will oppoſes, and th' Affections ſay,*
*The Maſter's Counſel they will not obey.*

*The caſe is dangerous, that no man can doubt,*
*Who ſees the ſtorm within, and that without.*
*Luſts and Affections cannot part, no, rather,*
*They are reſolv'd to ſwim or ſink together.*
*Conſcience ſtill ſtrives, but they cannot abide*
*That it, or Reaſon ſhould the Caſe decide.*
*Luſt knows what Reaſon in like caſes ſtill*
*Determines well: Then chuſe ye whom ye will.*
*Shall's make the Devil Judge? This caſe has been*
*Before him, and he judg'd, That ſkin for ſkin,*
*And all men have, they'll part with for their life.*
*Then how unreaſonable is this ſtrife?*
*They that their ſins do with their perſons ſhip,*
*Do for their Souls prepare a dreadful whip.*

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## CHAP. XX.

*Chriſt with a word can ſurging Waves appeaſe;*
*His Voice a troubled Soul can quickly eaſe.*

### OBSERVATION.

When the Sea works, and is tempeſtuous, it is not in the power of any Creature to appeaſe it. When the *Egyptians* would by their Hieroglyphicks expreſs an Impoſſibility, they did it by the Picture of a Man treading upon the Waves. It is ſtoried of *Canute*, an ancient *Daniſh* King, That when a mighty ſtorm of Flattery aroſe upon him, he appeaſed it by ſhewing that he could not appeaſe the Sea: But one of his Courtiers told him, as he rode near the Sea-ſide, *That he was Lord of the Sea, as well as Land. Well*, ſaid the King, *we ſhall ſee that by and by:* and ſo went to the Water-ſide, and with a loud Voice cried, *O ye Seas and Waves, come no further, touch not my feet.* But the Sea came up, notwithſtanding that charge, and confuted the flattery. But now Jeſus Chriſt hath the command of them indeed: It is ſaid of him, Mat. 8. 26. *That he rebuked them.* And *Mark* 4. 38. He quiets them with a word, *Peace, be ſtill:* as one would huſh a Child, and it obeyed him.

### APPLICATION.

Conſcience, when awakened by the terrors of the Lord, is like a raging tempeſtuous Sea; ſo it works, ſo it roars; and it is not in the power of all the Creatures to huſh or quiet it. Spiritual Terrors, as well as ſpiritual Conſolations, are not known till felt. O when the Arrows of the Almighty are ſhot into the Spirit, and the Terrors of God ſet themſelves in array againſt the Soul; when the Venom of thoſe Arrows drink up the Spirits, and thoſe Armies of Terrors charge violently and ſucceſſively upon it, as *Job* 6. 4. What Creature then is able to ſtand before them! Even God's own dear Children have felt ſuch Terrors, as have *diſtracted them*, Pſal. 81. 15. Conſcience is the ſeat of Guilt. It is like a Burning-glaſs, ſo it contracts the Beams of the Threatnings, twiſts them together, and reflects them on the Soul, until it ſmoke, ſcorch and flame. If the wrath of a King be like the roaring of a Lion, then what is the Almighty's wrath! which is *burning wrath*, Job 19. 11. *Tearing wrath*, Pſal. 50. 22. *Surprizing wrath*, Job 20. 23. And *abiding wrath*, Job 3. 36.

In this caſe no Creature can relieve, all are Phyſicians of no value; ſome under theſe terrors, have thought Hell more tolerable, and by a violent hand have thruſt themſelves out of the World into it, to avoid theſe gnawings; Yet Jeſus Chriſt can quickly calm theſe myſtical Waves alſo, and huſh them with a word; yea, he is the Phyſician, and no other. It is the ſprinkling of his Blood, which, like a cooling Fomentation, allays thoſe heats within: That Blood of ſprinkling ſpeaks Peace, when all other have practiſed upon the Soul to no purpoſe; and the reaſon is, becauſe he is a Perſon in whom God and Man, Juſtice and Mercy meet, and kiſs each other, *Eph.* 2. 14. And hence Faith fetches in peace to the Soul, *Rom.* 5. 1.

### REFLECTION.

Can none appeaſe a troubled Conſcience, but Chriſt? Then learn, O my Soul, to underſtand, and daily more and more to ſavour that glorious Name, even Jeſus, that delivers not only from the wrath to come, but that which is felt here alſo. O if the foretaſte of Hell be ſo intolerable, if a few drops let fall on the Conſcience in this life, be ſo ſcalding and inſufferable; what is it to have all the Vials poured out to Eternity, when there ſhall be nothing to divert, mitigate, or allay it?

Here men have ſomewhat to abate thoſe Terrors, ſome hopes of Mercy, at leaſt a poſſibility; but there is none. O my Soul! how art thou loaded with Guilt! And what a *Magormiſſabib* wouldſt thou be, ſhould God rouze that ſleepy Lion in thy boſom! My condition is not at all the better, becauſe my Conſcience is quiet. Ah, the day is coming, when it muſt awake, and will lighten and thunder terribly within me, if I get not into Chriſt the ſooner. O Lord, who knows the power of thy wrath? O let me not carry this guilt out of the World with me, to maintain thoſe everlaſting flames? let me give no ſleep to mine eyes, nor ſlumber to my eye-lids, till I feel the comfort of that Blood of Sprinkling, which alone ſpeaketh Peace.

### THE POEM.

*Among the dreadful works of God, I find*
*No* Metaphors *to paint a troubled Mind.*
*I think on this, now that, and yet will neither*
*Come fully up, though all be put together.*
*'Tis like the raging Sea, that caſts up mire.*
*Or like to* Etna, *breathing ſmoke and fire;*
*Or like a rouzed Lion fierce and fell,*
*Or like thoſe Furies that do howl in Hell.*
*O Conſcience! Who can ſtand before thy power,*
*Endure thy gripes and twinges but an hour?*
*Stone, Gout, Strapado, Racks, whatever is*
*Dreadful to Senſe, is but a toy to this.*
*No Pleaſures, Riches, Honours, Friends can tell*
*How to give eaſe: in this 'tis like to Hell.*
*Call for the pleaſant Tymbrel, Lute, and Harp;*
*Alas! The Muſick howls, the Pain's too ſharp*
*For theſe to charm, divert or lull aſleep:*
*Theſe cannot reach it, no, the wound's too deep.*
*Let all the Promiſes before him ſtand,*
*And ſet a* Barnabas *at his right hand;*
*Theſe in themſelves no comfort can afford,*
*'Tis Chriſt, and none but Chriſt, can ſpeak the word.*
*And he no ſooner ſpeaks, but all is ſtill,*
*The ſtorm is over, and the mind tranquil.*
*There goes a power with his Majeſtick Voice,*
*To huſh the dreadful'ſt ſtorm, and ſtill its noiſe.*
*Who would but fear and love this glorious Lord,*
*That can rebuke ſuch Tempeſts with a Word?*

## CHAP. XXI.

*Our Food out of the Sea God doth command;*
*Yet few therein take notice of his hand.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THE Providence of God in furniſhing us with ſuch plenty and variety of Fiſh, is not ſlightly to be paſt over. We have not only ſeveral ſorts of Fiſh in our own Seas, which are caught in their Seaſons; but from ſeveral parts, eſpecially the Weſtern parts of *England*, many Sail of Ships are ſent yearly to the *American* parts of the *World*; as *New-found-Land*, *New-England*, &c. Whence every Year is brought home, not only enough to ſupply our own Nation, but many thouſand pounds worth alſo yearly returned from *Spain*, and other Countries; by which Trade many thouſand Families do ſubſiſt.

### *APPLICATION.*

But, now, what returns do we make to Heaven for theſe Mercies? O what notice is taken of the good hand of Providence, which thus ſupplies and feeds us with the Bleſſings of the Sea? I fear there are but few that own, act in ſubmiſſion to it, and are careful to return, according to received benefit. Men do not conſider, *That their works are in the hand of God*, Eccleſ. 9. 1. And even thoſe that have the moſt immediate dependence upon Providence, as Merchants and Seamen, yet are very prone to undertake deſigns in the confidence of their own wiſdom and induſtry; not looking higher for the bleſſing, *Jam.* 4. 13. They often *ſacrifice to their own net, and burn incenſe to their drag, becauſe by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous*, Hab. 1. 16. *viz.* They attribute what is due to God, unto the creature. Now this is a ſin highly provoking to the Lord: for look in what degree the heart cleaves to the ſecond cauſe, in the ſame degree it departs from the living God, *Jer.* 10. 5.

And how do you think the bleſſed God will take it, to ſee himſelf thus debaſed, and the creature thus exalted into his place; to ſee you carry your ſelves to the creature as to a God, and to the Bleſſed God, as to a creature. Surely, it is a great and common evil, and ſuch as will blaſt all, if not timely diſcover'd and lamented. If we make fleſh our arm, it's juſt with God to wither and dry up the arm. Do we not, my Brethren, look upon ſecond cauſes, as if they had the main ſtroke in our buſineſs? And with a neglective eye paſs by God, as if he came in but collaterally, and on the by, into it? But certainly, all endeavours will be unſanctified, if not ſucceſleſs, in which God is not eyed and engaged.

*It is in vain for you to riſe up early, and ſit up late, and eat the bread of ſorrows; for ſo he giveth his beloved* ſleep, Pſal. 127. 2. (*i. e.*) It is to no purpoſe for men to beat their brains, tire their ſpirits, and rack their Conſciences for an eſtate. The true way of acqui- ng and enjoying the Creature, is by ſubmitting uietly to the Will of God, in a prudent and dili- ent, yet moderate uſe of lawful means: Nothing n thrive with us till then.

### *REFLECTION.*

Why then ſhould I diſquiet my ſelf in vain; and b my ſelf of my peace, by theſe unbelieving cares d diſtractions? O this hath been my ſin! I have ted, as if my condition had been at my own diſ- ſe; I have eyed creatures and means too much, d God too little. How have my hands hanged down with diſcouragement, when ſecond Cauſes have diſappeared, or wrought croſs to my deſigns in the World, ready to transfer the fault on this thing, or that! And again, how apt am I to be vainly lifted up in carnal confidence, when I ſee my ſelf competently furniſh'd with Creature-munition and proviſion? Oh, what a God-provoking wickedneſs is this! How oft hath Providence checked my carnal preſumption, and daſht many hopeful projects? yet have I not owned it, as I ought, and ſubmitted to it. Oh, it is a wonder this hath not cloſed the hand of Providence againſt me, and pulled down a Curſe upon all! Ah Lord, let me now learn to *acquaint my ſelf with thee, then ſhall I decree a thing, and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed*, Job 22. 28.

### THE POEM.

*In all the Gifts of God we ſhould advance*
*His glorious Name; not ſay, It came by chance.*
*Or to the Idol of our Prudence pay*
*The tribute of his praiſe, and go our way.*
*The Waves do clap their hands, and in their kind*
*Acknowledge God; And what, are they more blind*
*That float upon them? yea, for what they get,*
*They offer Sacrifices to their Net.*
*This is your manner, thus to work you go:*
*Confeſs the naked truth; ſay, Is't not ſo?*
*This Net was wiſely caſt, 'tis full, 'tis full:*
*O well done Mates, this is a gallant pull.*
*Thus what is due to God, you do apply*
*Unto your ſelves moſt Sacrilegiouſly.*
*I cannot wonder ſuch come empty home,*
*That are ſo full of ſelf and ſin: yet ſome*
*I hope look higher, and on God reflect*
*Due praiſe. A Bleſſing ſuch may well expect.*

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## CHAP. XXII.

*Whilſt thou by art the ſilly Fiſh doſt kill,*
*Perchance the Devil's Hook ſticks in thy Gill.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THere is skill in Fiſhing; they that go to Sea in a Fiſhing-Voyage, uſe to go provided with their Craft (as they very fitly call it) without which they can do nothing. They have their Lines, Hooks of ſeveral ſizes, and their Bait. They carefully obſerve their Seaſons; when the Fiſh falls in, then they ply their buſineſs day and night.

### *APPLICATION.*

But how much more skilful and induſtrious is Satan to enſnare and deſtroy Souls? The Devil makes a Voyage as well as you; he hath his Baits for you, as you for the Fiſh: he hath his Devices and Wiles to catch Souls, 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. *Epheſ.* 6. 11. He is a Serpent, an old Serpent, *Rev.* 12. 9. Too crafty for Man in his perfection, much more in his collapſed and degenerated State, his underſtanding being cracked by the Fall, and all his Faculties poiſoned and perverted.

Divines obſerve four ſteps or degrees of Satan's tempting-Power.

*Firſt.* He can find out the Conſtitution-evils of Men; he knows to what ſin their Natures are more eſpecially prone and inclinable.

*Secondly.* He can propound ſuitable objects to thoſe Luſts, he can exactly and fully hit every Man's humour. As *Agrippina* mixed her Poiſon in that Meat her Husband loved beſt.

*Thirdly.* He can inject and caſt motions into the Mind, to cloſe with thoſe tempting objects; as it is ſaid of *Judas*, Joh. 13. 2. *The Devil put it into his heart.*

*Fourthly.* He can ſollicite, irritate, and provoke the Heart, and by thoſe continual reſtleſs ſollicitations weary it; and hereby he often draws Men to commit ſuch things as ſtartled them in the firſt motion.

All this can he do, if he find the work ſtick, and meet with rubs and difficulties; yet doth he not act to the utmoſt of his skill and power, at all times and with all perſons; neither indeed need he ſo to do, the very propounding of an object, is enough to ſome, without any further ſollicitation: The Devil makes an eaſie conqueſt of them.

And beſide all this, his Policy much appears in the election of place, time and inſtruments to tempt by: And thus are poor Souls caught, as *Fiſhes in an evil Net*, Eccleſ. 9. 12. The carnal Man is led by Senſe, as the Beaſt; and Satan handles and fits him accordingly. He uſeth all ſorts of Motives, not only internal, and intellective, but external and ſenſitive alſo; as the ſparkling of the Wine, when it gives its colour in the Glaſs: the Harlot's beauty, whoſe eye-lids are ſnares; hiding always the Hook, and concealing the iſſue from them. He promiſes them gain and profit, pleaſure and delight, and all that is tempting, with aſſurance of Secreſie. By theſe he faſtens the fatal Hook in their Jaws, and thus they are led captive by him at his Will.

### *REFLECTION.*

And is Satan ſo ſubtil and induſtrious to entice Souls to ſin? Doth he thus caſt out his golden baits, and allure Souls with pleaſure to their ruine? Then how doth it behove thee, O my Soul, to be jealous and wary! How ſtrict a guard ſhould I ſet upon every ſenſe! Ah, let me not ſo much regard how ſin comes towards me in the Temptation, as how it goes off at laſt. The day in which *Sodom* was deſtroyed, began with a pleaſant Sun-ſhine, but ended in Fire and Brimſtone. I may promiſe my ſelf much content in the ſatisfaction of my Luſts: But O, how certainly will it end in my ruine! *Ahab* doubtleſs promiſed himſelf much content in the Vineyard of *Naboth*, but his blood paid for it in the portion of *Jezreel.* The Harlots Bed was perfumed to entice the ſimple young man, *Prov.* 7. 17. But thoſe Chambers of Delight proved the Chambers of Death, and her Houſe the way to Hell. Ah, with what a ſmiling face doth ſin come on towards me in its temptations! How doth it tickle the carnal phantaſie, and pleaſe the deceived heart? But what a dreadful Cataſtrophe and Upſhot hath it? The delight is quickly gone, but the guilt thereof remains to amaze and terrifie the Soul with ghaſtly forms, and dreadful repreſentations of the wrath of God: As ſin hath its Delights attending it to enter and faſten it, ſo it hath its horrors and ſtings to torment and wound: And as certainly as I ſee thoſe go before it to make a way, ſo certainly ſhall I find theſe follow after, and tread upon its heels. No ſooner is the Conſcience awakened, but all thoſe Delights vaniſh as a Night-viſion, or as a Dream when one awakes; and then I ſhall cry, Here is the Hook, but where is the Bait? Here is the guilt and horror, but where the delight that I was promiſed! And I, whither ſhall I now go? Ah my deceitful Luſts! You have enticed and left me in the midſt of all miſeries.

### THE POEM.

*There's skill in Fiſhing, that the Devil knows;*
*For when for Souls Satan a fiſhing goes,*
*He Angles cunningly: He knows he muſt*
*Exactly fit the Bait unto the Luſt.*
*He ſtudies Conſtitution, Place, and Time,*
*He gueſſes what is his delight, what thine:*
*And ſo accordingly prepares the Bait;*
*Whilſt he himſelf lies cloſely hid to wait*
*When thou wilt nibble at it. Doſt incline*
*To drunken Meetings? then he baits with Wine:*
*Is this the way; if unto this he'll ſmell,*
*He'll ſhortly pledge a Cup of Wrath in Hell.*
*To Pride or Luſt is thy vile Nature bent?*
*An Object ſuitable he will preſent.*
*O think on this, when you caſt in the book,*
*Say, Thus for my poor Soul doth Satan look.*
*O play not with Temptations; do not ſwallow*
*The ſugar'd Bait, conſider what will follow.*
*If once he hitch thee, then away he draws*
*Thy captive Soul cloſe Priſoner in his paws.*

## CHAP. XXIII.

*Doth Trading fail, and Voyages prove bad?*
*If you cannot diſcern the cauſe, 'tis ſad.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THere are many ſad Complains abroad (and I think not without cauſe) that Trade fails, nothing turns to account. And though all Countries be open, and free for Traffick, a general Peace wi all Nations, yet there ſeems to be a Dearth, a ſecret Curſe upon Trading. You run from Country to Country, and come loſers home. Men can hardly render a reaſon of it; few hit the right cauſe of this Judgment.

### *APPLICATION.*

That proſperity and ſucceſs in Trade is from the bleſſing of God, I ſuppoſe few are ſo Atheiſtical, a once to deny or queſtion. The Devil himſelf ac-knowledges it, Job 1. 10. *Thou haſt bleſſed the wor of his hands, and his ſubſtance is increaſed in the Land.* It is not in the power of any man to get Riches, Deut. 8. 18. *Thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth.* It is his Bleſſing that makes good men rich, and his Per-miſſion that makes wicked men rich. That Maxim came from Hell, *Quiſque fortunæ ſuæ faber:* Every man is the Contriver of his own Condition: Certain-ly, *The good of man is not in his own hand*, Job 21. 16 *Promotion cometh not from the Eaſt or Weſt*, Pſal. 7 6, 7.

This being acknowledged, it is evident, that i all diſappointment, and want of ſucceſs in our Ca lings, we ought not to ſtick in ſecond cauſes, b to look higher, even to the hand and diſpoſe of Go For, whoſe it is to give the bleſſing, his alſo it is with-hold it. And this is as clear in Scripture the other. It is the Lord that takes away the Fiſhe of the Sea, *Hoſ.* 4. 3. *Zeph.* 1. 3. It is he that *curſ our bleſſings*, Mal. 2. 2.

This God doth as a puniſhment for ſin, and th abuſe of mercies: And therefore in ſuch caſes, w ought not to reſt in general complaints to, or of o another, but ſearch what thoſe ſins are that provo the Lord to inflict ſuch Judgments.

An

And here I muſt requeſt your patience, to bear a plain and cloſe word of Conviction. My Brethren, I am perſwaded theſe are the ſins, among many other, that provoke the Lord to blaſt all your Imployments.

1. Our undertaking deſigns without Prayer. Alas, how few of us begin with God? Intereſt him in our dealings, and ask counſel and direction at his mouth? Prayer is that which ſanctifies all employments and enjoyments, 1 *Tim.* 4. 5. The very Heathen could ſay, *A Jove Principium*, They muſt begin with God. O that we had more Prayers and fewer Oaths.

2. Injuſtice and Fraud in our dealings. A ſin to which Merchants are prone, as appears by that expreſſion, *Hoſ.* 12. 7. This is that which will blaſt all our enjoyments.

3. An over-earneſt endeavour after the World. Men make this their buſineſs, they will be rich: And hence it is, they are not only unmerciful to themſelves, in wearing and waſting their own ſpirits with carking cares, but to ſuch alſo as they employ; neither regarding the Souls or Bodies of Men: Scarce affording them the liberty of the Lord's Day (as hath been too common in our *New-found-Land* Employments;) or if they have it, yet they are ſo worn out with inceſſant Labours, that that precious time is ſpent either in ſleep or idleneſs. It is no wonder God gives you more reſt than you would have, ſince that day of Reſt hath been no better improved. This over-doing hath not been the leaſt cauſe of our undoing.

Laſtly, Our abuſe of Proſperity, when God gave it; making God's Mercies the Food and Fuel of our Luſts. When we had an affluence and confluence of outward Bleſſings, this made us *kick againſt God*, as Deut. 32. 15. *Forget God*, Deut. 4. 14. Yea, grow proud of our ſtrength and riches, *Ezek.* 16. 15. and *Jer.* 2. 31. Ah! How few of us in the days of our proſperity, behaved our ſelves as good *Jehoſaphat* did? 2 Chron. 17. 5, 6. *He had ſilver and gold in abundance, and his heart was lifted in the way of God's Commandments*; not in pride and inſolence.

## REFLECTION.

Are theſe the ſins that blaſt our Bleſſings, and wither our Mercies? O then let me ceaſe to wonder t is no better, and rather admire that it is no worſe with me; that my neglect of Prayer, injuſtice in ealings, Earthly-mindedneſs, and abuſe of former Mercies, have not provoked God to ſtrip me naked out of all my enjoyments. Let me humbly accept rom the Lord the puniſhment of my Iniquities, and ay my hand upon my mouth. And O that theſe iſappointments might convince me of the Creatures anity, and cauſe me to drive on another trade for Heaven; then ſhall I adore thy wiſdom in rending rom me thoſe idolized enjoyments. Ah Lord! when had them, my heart was a perpetual drudge to hem. How did I then forget God, neglect duty, nd not mind my eternal concernments! Oh, if theſe ad not periſhed, in all probability I had periſhed. My God, let my Soul proſper, and then a ſmall ortion of theſe things ſhall afford me more comort than ever I had in their greateſt abundance. *A tle that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches many wicked*, Pſal. 37. 16.

## THE POEM.

*There's great Complaint abroad, that Trading's bad;*
*u ſhake your head, and cry, 'Tis ſad, 'tis ſad.*
*Merchants lay out their ſtock, Seamen their pains,*
*And in their eye they both may put their gains.*
*Your Fiſhing fails, you wonder why 'tis ſo,*
*'Tis this (ſaith one) or that: but I ſay No;*
*'Twill ne'r be well, till you confeſs and ſay,*
*It is our ſin that frights the Fiſh away.*
*No wonder all goes into Bags with Holes,*
*Since ſo the Goſpel hath been in your Souls.*
*We kick'd, like* Jeſurun, *when the flowing Tide*
*Of Wealth came tumbling in, this nouriſh'd Pride.*
*'Twixt Soul and Body, now I wiſh it may*
*Fare, as betwixt the* Jews *and us this day.*
*O that our outward want and loſs may be*
*To us a Soul-enriching Poverty!*
*If diſappointments here, advance the Trade*
*For Heaven, then complain not; you have made*
*The richeſt Voyage, and your empty Ships*
*Return deep laden with Soul-benefits.*

## CHAP. XXIV.

*In Seas the greater Fiſh the leſs devour:*
*So ſome Men cruſh all thoſe within their power.*

### OBSERVATION.

There are Fiſhes of Prey in the Sea, as well as Birds and Beaſts of Prey on the Land. Our Seamen tell us, how the devouring Whales, Sharks, Dolphins, and other Fiſhes follow the Caplein, and other ſmaller Fiſh, and devour multitudes of them. It is frequent with us, in our own Seas, to find ſeveral ſmaller Fiſhes in the Bellies of the greater ones; yea, I have often heard Seamen ſay, That the poor little Fry, when purſued, are ſo ſenſible of the danger, that they have ſometimes ſeen multitudes of them caſt themſelves upon the Shore, and periſh there, to avoid the danger of being devoured by them.

### APPLICATION.

Thus cruel, mercileſs, and oppreſſive are wicked Men, whoſe *tender mercies are cruelty*, Prov. 22. 10. We ſee the like cruelty in our Extortioners, and over-reaching Sharks aſhore, who grind the faces of the Poor, and regard not the Cries of the Fatherleſs and Widows, but fill their Houſes with the gain of Oppreſſion. Theſe are, by the Holy Ghoſt, compared to the fiſhes of the Sea, *Hab.* 1. 13, 14. This is a crying ſin, yea, it ſends up a loud cry to Heaven for Vengeance, Exod. 22. 23. *If thou afflict the widow and the fatherleſs, and they cry unto me, I will ſurely hear their cry.* And Verſe 27, *I will hear his cry, for I am gracious.* Nay, God will not only hear their Cry, but avenge their Quarrel. That is a remarkable Text, 1 Theſ. 4. 6. *That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, becauſe that the Lord is the [Avenger] of all ſuch.* This word *Avenger*, is but once more uſed in the *New Teſtament*, Rom. 13. 4. And there ἔκδικος. it is applied to the Civil Magiſtrate, who is to ſee Execution done upon Offenders. But now this is a Sin that ſometimes may be out of the reach of man's Juſtice, and therefore God himſelf will be their Avenger. You may overpower the Poor in this World, and it may be they cannot contend with you at man's Bar, therefore God will bring it before his Bar.

Believe it, Sirs, it is a ſin ſo provoking to God, that he will not let it 'ſcape without ſevere puniſhment, ſooner or later. The Prophet *Habbakkuk*, Chap. 1. verſe 13. wondred how the holy God could forbear ſuch till the general day of reckoning, and that he did not take exemplary Vengeance on them in this Life. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look upon Iniquity: Wherefore then lookeſt thou upon them that deal treacherouſly, and holdeſt thy tongue when the wicked devours the man that is more righteous than he?* And Prov. 23. 10, 11. *Enter not into the Fields of the Fatherleſs*, i. e. Of the poor and helpleſs. But why is it more dangerous violently to invade their right, than another's? The reaſon is added, *For their Redeemer is mighty, and he ſhall plead their cauſe with thee.* It may be they are not able to retain a Councel to plead their cauſe here; therefore God will plead their cauſe for them.

### *REFLECTION.*

Turn in upon thy ſelf (O my Soul) and conſider, Haſt thou not been guilty of this crying ſin? Have I not (when a Servant) over-reached and defrauded others, and filled my Maſter's Houſe with Violence and Deceit? and ſo brought my ſelf under that dreadful threatning, *Zeph.* 1. 9. Or ſince I came to trade and deal upon mine own account, have not the Ballances of Deceit been in my hand? I have (it may be) kept many in my ſervice and employment; have not I uſed their labours without reward, and ſo am under that woe? *Jer.* 22. 13. Or not given them Wages proportionable to their work? *Iſai.* 58. 3. Or by bad Payment and unjuſt Deductions and Allowances, defrauded them of a part of their due? *Mal.* 3. 5. Or at leaſt delayed payment, out of a covetous diſpoſition to gain by it; whilſt their neceſſities in the mean time cryed aloud for it; and ſo ſinned againſt God's expreſs commands, *Deut.* 24. 14, 15. *Levit.* 19. 30. Or have I not perſecuted ſuch as God hath ſmitten? *Pſal.* 69. 26. And rigorouſly exacted the uttermoſt of my due, though the hand of God hath gone out againſt them breaking their eſtates? O my Soul, examine thy ſelf upon theſe particulars; reſt not quiet, until this guilt be removed by the application of the Blood of Sprinkling. Hath not the Lord ſaid, Jam. 2. 13. *That they ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy?* And is it not a *fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, who hath ſaid, *He will take vengeance for theſe things?*

### THE POEM.

*Devouring Whales and ravenous Sharks do follow*
*The leſſer Fry, and at one gulp do ſwallow*
*Some hundreds of them, as our Seamen ſay:*
*But we can tell far ſtranger things than they.*
*For we have Sharks aſhore in every Creek,*
*That to devour poor Men, do hunt and ſeek.*
*No Pity, Senſe, or Bowels in them be,*
*Nay, have they not put off Humanity?*
*Extortioners and Cheaters, whom God hates,*
*Have dreadful open Mouths, and through thoſe Gates*
*Brave Perſons with their Heritages paſs*
*In Funeral-ſtate, Friends crying out Alas!*
*O give me* Agur's *wiſh that I may never*
*Be ſuch my ſelf, or feel the hands of either.*
*And as for thoſe that in their paws are grip'd,*
*Pity and reſcue, Lord, from that ſad plight.*
*When I behold the ſqueaking Lark, that's born*
*In Falcon's Talons, crying, bleeding, torn;*
*I pity its ſad caſe, and would relieve*
*The Priſoner, if I could, as well as grieve.*
*Fountain of Pity! hear the piteous Moans*
*Of all thy Captive and Oppreſſed Ones.*

## CHAP. XXV.

*In Storms to ſpread much Sail endangres all:*
*So carnal Mirth, if God for Mourning call.*

### OBSERVATION.

IN Storms at Sea, the wiſe Navigator will not ſpread much Sail; that is the way to loſe Maſts and all. They uſe then to furl up the Sails, and lie a Hull, when not able to bear a Knot of Sail; or elſe to lie a Try, or Scud before the Wind and Seas. It is no time then to hoiſt up the Top and Top-gallant, and ſhew their bravery.

### *APPLICATION.*

When the Judgments of God are abroad in the earth, it is no time then to make mirth, Ezek. 21. 10, 11. *Should we* [*then*] *make mirth? It contemneth the rod of my ſon as every tree.* (*i.e.*) As if it were a common Rod, and ordinary affliction; whereas the Rod of my Son is not ſuch as may be had of every Tree, but it is an *Iron Rod* to ſuch as deſpiſe it, *Pſal.* 2. 9. O it is a provoking evil, and commonly God ſeverely puniſhes it. Of all perſons, ſuch ſpeed worſt in the common calamity, Amos 6. 1. *Wo to them that are at eaſe in Sion, that are not grieved for the afflictions of Joſeph*, as *ver.* 4. It may be (as one obſerves upon the Text) they did not laugh at him, or break Jeſts upon him; but they did not condole with him. And what ſhall be their puniſhment! See verſ. 7. *Therefore now ſhall they go captive with the firſt that go captive*: God will begin with them firſt. *Solomon* tells us, Eccleſ. 3. 4. *There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance: Only* (as Maſter *Trap* notes upon the Text) *we muſt not invert the order, but weep with Men, that we may laugh with Angels.* To be merry and frolick in a day of tribulation, is to diſturb the order of ſeaſons. That is a terrible Text, *Iſai.* 22. 12. which ſhould make the hearts of ſuch as are guilty in this kind to tremble: *In that day did the Lord of Hoſts call to mourning, and to girding with ſackcloath; and behold, joy and gladneſs, ſlaying Oxen, killing Sheep, drinking Wine*, &c. Well, what is the iſſue of this? *Surely, this iniquity ſhall not be purged from you, till ye die.* O dreadful word! Surely (my Brethren) Sympathy is a debt we owe to Chriſt Myſtical. Whatever our Conſtitution, Condition, or Perſonal Immunities be, yet when God calls for Mourning, we muſt hear and obey that call. *David* was a King, an expert Muſician, a Man of ſanguine and cheerful conſtitution; yet who more ſenſible of the evil of thoſe times, than he? Rivers of water ran down his eyes at the conſideration of them. *Melancthon* was ſo affected with the Miſeries of the Church in his days, that he ſeemed to take little or no notice of the death of his Child, whom he entirely loved. At ſuch a time we may *ſay of laughter, Thou art mad, and of mirth, What doth it?*

### *REFLECTION.*

Bluſh then, O my Soul! for thy levity and inſenſibility under God's angry Diſpenſations. How many of the precious Sons and Daughters of *Sion*, lie in Tears abroad, while I have been *Nouriſhing my heart, as in a day of ſlaughter? The voice of God hath cried to the City, and Men of underſtanding have heard its voice*, Mic. 6. 9. But I have been deaf to that cry. How loth (my God) have I been to urge my ſenſual Heart to acts of Sorrow and Mourning! Thou haſt bid me weep with them that weep, but my vain heart cannot comply with ſuch commands. Ah Lord! if I mourn not with *Sion*, neither ſhall I rejoyce with her.

O, were mine eyes opened, and my heart ſenſible and tender, I might ſee cauſe enough to melt into Tears! and like that Chriſtian *Niobe*, Luk. 7. 38. to lie weeping at the feet of Chriſt. Lord, What ſtupidity is this? Shall I Laugh when thou art Angry, and thy Children weeping and trembling? Then I may juſtly fear, leſt *when they ſhall ſing for joy of heart, I ſhall howl for vexation of Spirit*, Iſa. 65. 13, 14. Surely, O my Soul! ſuch laughter will be turned into mourning, either here or hereafter.

### THE POEM.

*In troublous Times, Mirth in the Sinners face*
*Is like a Mourning-Cloak with Silver Lace.*
*The Lion's roaring makes the Beaſts to quake;*
*God's roaring Judgments cannot make us ſhake.*
*What Belluine Contempt is this of God,*
*To laugh in's face, when he takes up the Rod?*
*Such laughter God in tears will ſurely drown,*
*(Unleſs he hate thee) e're he lay it down.*
*Theſe Rods have Voices; if thou hear them well:*
*If not, another Rod's prepar'd in Hell:*
*And when the Arm of God ſhall lay is on,*
*Laugh if thou canſt; no, then thy Mirth it gone.*
*All* Sion's *Children will lament and cry,*
*When all her beautious Stones in duſt do lie;*
*And he that for her then laments and mourns,*
*Shall want no joy, when God to her returns.*

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## CHAP. XXVI.

*A little Leak neglected, dangerous proves:*
*One Sin connived at, the Soul undoes.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THE ſmalleſt Leak, if not timely diſcovered and ſtopt, is enough to ſink a Ship of the greateſt burden: Therefore Seamen are wont fre-uently to try what Water is in the Hold; and if hey find it freſh, and increaſing upon them, they ply he Pump, and preſently ſet the Carpenters to ſearch or it and ſtop it; and till it be found they cannot e quiet.

### *APPLICATION.*

What ſuch a Leak is to a Ship, that is the ſmalleſt in neglected to the Soul; it is enough to ruin it ternally. For as the greateſt ſin, diſcover'd, la-ented, and mourned over by a Believer, cannot ain him; ſo the leaſt ſin indulged, covered, and onnived at, will certainly prove the deſtruction of e ſinner. No ſin, though never ſo ſmall, is tole-ated by the pure and perfect Law of God, *Pſal.* 19. 96. The *command is exceeding broad*; not as it gave Men a latitude to walk as they pleaſe, but *oad*, *i. e.* extending it ſelf to all our words, oughts, actions, and affections: Laying a Law pon them all; conniving at no evil in any Man, *Pet.* 2. 1.

And as the word gives no allowance for the leaſt n, ſo it is the very nature of ſincerity and upright-ſs, to ſet the heart againſt [*every*] way of wicked-ſs, *Pſal.* 139. 23, 24. *Job* 4. 23. And eſpecially ainſt that ſin which was its darling in the days of s vanity, *Pſal.* 18. 23. True hatred (as the Philoſopher obſerves, is of the whole * kind: He that hates ſin, as ſin, and ſo doth every upright Soul, hates all ſins as well as ſome.

Again, the Soul that hath had a ſaving ſight of Jeſus Chriſt, and a true diſcovery of the evil of ſin, in the Glaſs both of the Law and Goſpel, can account no ſin ſmall. He knows the demerit of the ſmalleſt ſin is God's eternal wrath, and that not the leaſt ſin can be remitted, without the ſhedding and application of the Blood of Chriſt, *Heb.* 9. 22. which Blood is of infinite value and price, 1 *Pet.* 1. 19.

To conclude, God's People know, that little as well as great ſins are dangerous, deadly and deſtructive in their own nature: A little poyſon will deſtroy a Man. *Adrian* was choakt with a Gnat; *Cæſar* ſtabbed with Bodkins. A man would think *Adam*'s ſin had been no great matter, yet what dreadful work did it make! It was not as a ſingle Bullet to kill himſelf only; but as a Chain-ſhot, which cut off all his poor miſerable Poſterity. Indeed, no ſin can be little, becauſe its object againſt whom it is committed is ſo great, whence it receives a kind of infiniteneſs in it ſelf, and becauſe the price paid to redeem us from it is ſo invaluable.

* Ἐις τὰ γέν.

### *REFLECTION.*

And is the ſmalleſt ſin not only damning in its own nature, but will certainly prove the ruin of that Soul that hides and covers it? O then let my ſpirit accompliſh a diligent ſearch. Look to it, O my Soul! that no ſin be indulged by thee. Set theſe conſiderations as ſo many flaming Swords in the way of thy carnal delights and luſt: Let me never ſay of any ſin, as *Lot* did of *Zoar*, *It is a little one, ſpare it.* Shall I ſpare that which coſt the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt? The Lord would not ſpare him, *When he made his Soul an offering for ſin*, Rom. 8. 32. Neither will he ſpare me, if I defend and hide it, *Deut.* 29. 20. Ah! If my Heart were right, and my Converſion ſound, that luſt whatever it be, that is ſo favoured by me, would eſpecially be abhorred and hated, *Iſa.* 2. 20. and 30. 22. Whatever my convictions and reformations have been, yet if there be but one ſin retained and delighted in, this keeps the Devils intereſt ſtill in my Soul: And though for a time he ſeem to depart, yet at laſt he will return with ſeven worſe ſpirits, and this is the ſin will open the door to him, and deliver up my Soul, *Matth.* 12. 43, 44. Lord, let me make thorough work of it: let me cut it off, and pluck it out, though it be as a right Hand, or Eye. Ah, ſhall I come ſo near the Kingdom of God, and make ſuch a fair offer for Chriſt, and yet ſtick at a ſmall matter, and loſe all for want of one thing? Lord, let me ſhed the blood of the deareſt luſt, for his ſake that ſhed his deareſt blood for me.

### THE POEM.

*There's many a Soul eternally undone*
*For ſparing ſin, becauſe a little one.*
*But we are much deceiv'd; no ſin is ſmall,*
*That wounds ſo great a God, ſo dear a Soul.*
*Yet ſay it were, the ſmalleſt Pen-knife may*
*As well as Sword or Lance diſpatch and ſlay.*
*And ſhall ſo ſmall a matter part and ſever*
*Chriſt and thy Soul? What, make you part for ever?*
*Or wilt thou ſtand on Toys with him, when he*
*Deny'd himſelf in greateſt things for thee?*
*Or will it be an eaſe in Hell, to think*
*How eaſily thy Soul therein did ſink!*

*Are Chriſt and Hell for trifles ſold and bought?*
*Strike Souls with trembling, Lord, at ſuch a thought.*
*By little ſins, belov'd, the Soul is loſt,*
*Unleſs ſuch ſins do great repentance coſt.*

## CHAP. XXVII.

*Ships make much way when they a Trade-wind get;*
*With ſuch a Wind the Saints have ever met.*

### OBSERVATION.

Though in moſt parts of the World the Winds are variable, and ſometimes blow from every point of the Compaſs, by reaſon whereof, ſailing is ſlow and dangerous: yet about the *Equinoctial*, Seamen meet with a Trade-wind, blowing for the moſt part one way; and there they Sail jocund before it, and ſcarce need to Lore a Top-ſail for ſome hundreds of Leagues.

### APPLICATION.

Although the People of God meet with many ſeeming Rubs and Set-backs in their way to Heaven, which are like contrary Winds to a Ship; yet are they from the Day of their Converſion, to the day of their compleat Salvation, never out of a Trade-winds way to Heaven, *Rom.* 8. 21. *We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpoſe.* This is a moſt precious Scripture, pregnant with its Conſolation to believers in all conditions, a Pillar of comfort to all diſtreſſed Saints: Let us look a little nearer to it.

(*We know*) Mark the certainty and evidence of the Propoſition, which is not built upon a gueſs or remote probability, but upon the knowledge of the Saints: *we know it*, and that partly by divine Revelation, God has told us ſo; and partly by our own experience, we find it ſo.

(*That all things*) Not only things that lie in a natural and direct tendency to our good; as *Ordinances, Promiſes, Bleſſings*, &c. but even ſuch things as have no natural fitneſs and tendency to ſuch an end; as afflictions, temptations, corruptions, deſertions, *&c.* All theſe help onward. They

(*Work together.*) Not all of them directly, and of their own nature and inclination; but by being over-ruled, and determined to ſuch an iſſue by the gracious hand of God: Nor yet do they work out ſuch good to the Saints, ſingly and apart, but as adjuvant cauſes or helps, ſtanding under and working in ſubordination to the ſupreme and principal cauſe of their happineſs.

Now the moſt ſeeming oppoſite things, yea ſin in it ſelf, which in its own nature is really oppoſite to their good, yet eventually contributes to it. Afflictions and Deſertions ſeem to work againſt us; but being once put into the rank and order of Cauſes, they work together with ſuch bleſſed inſtruments, as Word and Prayer, to an happy iſſue. And though the faces of theſe things, that thus agree and work together, look contrary ways; yet there be, as it were, ſecret chains and connections of Providence betwixt them, to unite them in their iſſue. There may be many inſtruments employed about one work, and yet not communicate counſels, or hold intelligence with each other. *Joſeph's* Brethren, the *Midianites, Potiphar*, &c. knew not one another's mind, nor aimed at one end, (much leſs the end that God brought about by them:) one acts out of Revenge, another for gain, a third out of Policy; yet all meet together at laſt, in that iſſue God had deſign'd to bring about by them, even *Joſeph's* advancement. Even ſo it is here, Chriſtian, there be more inſtruments at work for thine eternal good, than thou art aware of.

### REFLECTION.

Chear up then, O my Soul, and lean upon this Pillar of Comfort in all diſtreſſes. Here is a promiſe for me (if I be a called one) that, like the Philoſophers Stone, turns all into Gold it toucheth. This promiſe is my ſecurity, however things go in the world. My God *will do me no hurt*, Jer. 25. 6. Nay, he will do me good by every diſpenſation. O *that I had but an heart to make all things work for his glory, that thus cauſeth every thing to work for my good.* My God, doſt thou turn every thing to my advantage? O let me return all to thy praiſe; and if by every thing thou work my eternal good, then let me in every thing give thanks.

But ah! How fooliſh and ignorant have I been? even as a beaſt before thee. How hath my heart been diſquieted, and apt to repine at thy diſpenſations, when they have croſſed my Will! not conſidering that my God faithfully purſues my good, even in thoſe things that croſs, as well as in that which pleaſes me.

Bleſſed Lord! What a bleſſed condition are all thy people in, who are within the Line of this promiſe? All things friendly and beneficial to them, Friends helpful, Enemies helpful, every thing conſpiring and conducing to their happineſs. With others it is not ſo; nothing works for their good; nay, every thing works againſt it: Their very Mercies are ſnares, and their Proſperity deſtroys them, *Prov.* 1. 32. Even the bleſſed Goſpel it ſelf is a ſavour of death to them: When evil befals them, it is *an only evil*, Ezek. 7. 5. that is, not turned into good, to them; and as their evils are not turned into good, ſo all their good is turned into evil. As this Promiſe hath an influence into all that concerns the people, ſo the curſe hath an influence into all the enjoyments of the wicked. O my ſoul, bleſs the Lord, who hath caſt thy lot into ſuch a pleaſant place, and given thee ſuch a glorious heritage, as this promiſe is.

### THE POEM.

*When once the Dog-ſtar riſes, many ſay,*
*Corn ripens then apace, both night and day.*
*Souls once in Chriſt, that Morning-ſtar lets fall*
*Such influences on them then, that all*
*God's diſpenſations to them, ſweet or ſowr,*
*Ripens their Souls for Glory every hour.*
*All their afflictions, rightly underſtood,*
*Are bleſſings; every Wind will blow ſome good.*
*Sure at their troubles Saints would never grudge,*
*Were Senſe depoſed, and Faith made the Judge.*
*Falls make them waryer, amend their pace;*
*When gifts puff up their hearts, and weaken Grace.*
*Could Satan ſee the iſſue and the event*
*Of his temptations, he would ſcarcely tempt.*
*Could Saints but ſee what fruits their troubles bring,*
*Amidſt thoſe troubles they would ſhout and ſing.*
*O ſacred Wiſdom! who can but admire*
*To ſee how thou doſt ſave from fire, by fire!*
*No doubt but Saints in glory wondering ſtand*
*At thoſe ſtrange Methods few now underſtand.*

## CHAP. XXVIII.

*Storms make diſcovery of the Pilots skill.*
*Gods Wiſdom in affliction triumphs ſtill.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

IN fair Weather, when there is Sea-room enough, then every common perſon can guide the Ship, the Pilot may then lie down and take his reſt; but in great ſtorms and ſtreſs of weather, or when near the dangerous ſhore, then the moſt skilful Pilot is put to it: Then he ſhews the utmoſt of his Art and Skill, and yet ſometimes all is too little. They are (as the Scripture ſpeaks) *at their wits end*, know not what to do more, but are forced to commit all to the mercy of God and the Seas.

### *APPLICATION.*

In the Storms and Tempeſts of Affliction and Trouble, there are the moſt evident and full Diſcoveries of the Wiſdom and Power of our God: It is indeed continually active for his people in all conditions, *Iſai.* 27. 3. *Leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* Pſal. 121. 4. *He that keepeth Iſrael, neither ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth.* His peoples dangers are without intermiſſion, therefore his preſervations are ſo too. But now, when they come into the *Streight* of Affliction, and deadly dangers, which threaten like Rocks on every ſide; now the Wiſdom of their God rides triumphantly and viſibly upon the waves of that ſtormy Sea. And this infinite Wiſdom is then eſpecially diſcovered in theſe particulars.

1. In leaving them ſtill ſomewhat in the lieu and room of thoſe Comforts that they are deprived of; ſo that they ſee God doth exchange their comforts, and that for the better; and this ſupports them. So *John* 14. 1, 2, 3. Chriſt's bodily preſence is removed, but the Spirit was ſent in the room of it, which was better.

2. In doubling their ſtrength, as he doubles their burdens. It is obſerved, that the Saints have many times very ſtrong and ſweet Conſolation, a little before their greateſt Trials: And this is ſo ordinary, that commonly, when they have had extraordinary Conſolations from God, they have then looked for ſome eminent Trial. The Lord appeared to *Abraham*, and ſealed the Covenant to him, and then put him upon that great trial of his Faith. So the Diſciples, *Luk.* 24. 49. It was commanded them that they *ſhould tarry in Jeruſalem, till they were endowed with power from on high.* The Lord knew what an hard Providence they were like to have, and what great oppoſitions and difficulties they muſt encounter, in publiſhing the Everlaſting Goſpel to the World; and therefore firſt prepares, and endows them with power from on high, *viz.* with eminent meaſures of the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit; as Faith, Patience, Self-denial, *&c.* So *Paul* had firſt Revelations, then his Buffetings

3. In coming in ſo opportunely in the time of their great diſtreſs, with relief and comfort, 1 Pet. 14. *Then the Spirit of Glory and of God reſteth on them.* As that Martyr cried out to his friend *Auſtin*, the very ſtake, *He is come, he is come.*

4. In appointing and ordering the ſeveral kinds of Afflictions to ſeveral Saints; and allotting to every, that very Affliction, and no other, which is moſt ſuitable to his condition: Which Afflictions, like ſo many Potions of Phyſick, are prepared for that very malignant humour that predominates moſt in them. *Peter's* ſin was ſelf-confidence, God permits him to fall by denying Chriſt: which doubtleſs was ſanctified to his good, in that particular. *Hezekiah's* ſin was vain-glory; therefore Spoilers are ſent to take away his Treaſures.

5. In the duration of their Troubles; they ſhall not lie always upon them, *Pſal.* 125. 3. Our God is a God of Judgment, *Iſa.* 30. 18. Knows the due time of removing it, and is therein punctual to a day, *Rev.* 2. 10.

### *REFLECTION.*

If the Wiſdom of God do thus triumph and glorifie it ſelf in the Diſtreſſes of the Saints, then why ſhould I fear in the day of evil? *Pſal.* 49. 4. Why doth my heart faint at the foreſight and apprehenſion of approaching trouble? Fear none of thoſe things that thou ſhalt ſuffer, O my Soul; if thy God will thus be with thee in the fire and water, thou canſt not periſh. Though I walk through the Valley of the ſhadow of Death, yet let me fear no evil, whilſt my God is thus with me. Creatures cannot do what they pleaſe; his wiſdom limits and over-rules them all, to gracious and ſweet ends. If my God caſt me into the Furnace, to melt and try me, yet I ſhall not be conſumed there; for he will ſit by the Furnace himſelf all the while I am in it, and curiouſly pry into it, obſerving when it hath done its work, and then will preſently withdraw the fire. O my Soul, bleſs and adore this God of Wiſdom! who himſelf will ſee the ordering of all thine Afflictions, and not truſt it in the hands of Men or Angels!

### THE POEM.

*Though toſt in greateſt Storms, I'll never fear,*
*If Chriſt will ſit at Helm to guide and ſteer.*
*Storms are the triumph of his Skill and Art;*
*He cannot cloſe his Eyes, nor change his Heart.*
*Wiſdom and Power ride upon the Waves,*
*And in the greateſt danger helps and ſaves.*
*From dangers it by dangers doth deliver,*
*And wounds the Devil out of his own Quiver;*
*It countermines his Plots, and ſo doth ſpoil,*
*And make his Engines on himſelf recoil.*
*It blunts the Politicians reſtleſs Tool,*
*And makes* Ahitophel *the veriest Fool:*
*It ſhews us how our Reaſon us miſled,*
*And if we had not, we had periſhed.*
*Lord, to thy Wiſdom I will give the Reins,*
*And not with Cares perplex and vex my brains.*

## CHAP. XXIX.

*Things in the bottom are unſeen: No Eye*
*Can trace God's Paths, which in the Deeps do lie.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

THE Ocean is ſo deep, that no Eye can diſcover what lies in the bottom thereof. We uſe to ſay proverbially of a thing that is irrecoverably loſt, It is as good it were caſt into the Sea. What lies there, lies obſcure from all eyes, but the Eye of God.

### *APPLICATION.*

Thus are the Judgments of God, and the Ways of his Providence, profound and unſearchable, Pſal. 36. 16. *The Righteous is like the great Mountains, and thy Judgments are a great Deep: (i.e.)* his Providences are ſecret, obſcure, and unfathomable; but even then and in thoſe Providences, his Righteouſneſs ſtands up like the great Mountains, viſible and apparent to every eye. Though the Saints cannot ſee the one, yet they can clearly diſcern the other, *Jer.* 12. 1. *Jeremiah* was at a ſtand; ſo was *Job* in the like caſe, *Job* 12. 7. So was *Aſaph*, Pſal. 73. and *Habbakkuk*, Chap. 1. 3. Theſe Wheels of Providence are dreadful for their height, *Ezek.* 1. 18. There be deep Myſteries of Providence, as well as of Faith. It may be ſaid of ſome of them, as of *Paul*'s Epiſtles, That they *are hard to be underſtood.* Darkneſs and Clouds are round about the Throne of God: No man can ſay what will be the particular iſſue and event of ſome of his diſpenſations. *Luther* ſeemed to hear God ſay to him, when he was importunate to know his mind in ſome particular Providence, *Deus ſum non ſequax:* I am a God not to be traced. Some Providences, like Hebrew Letters, muſt be read backward, *Pſal.* 92. 7. Some Providences poſe Men of the greateſt parts and graces. *His way is in the Sea, his paths in the great Waters, and his foot-ſteps are not known*, *Pſal.* 77. 19. Who can trace Foot-ſteps in the bottom of the Sea? *The Angels*, Ezek. 1. *Have their hands under their wings.* The hand is either, *Symbolum roboris*, The Symbol of Strength; or *Inſtrumentum Operationis*, The Inſtrument of Action: Where theſe hands are put forth, they work effectually, yea, but very ſecretly, they are hid under their wings. There be ſome of God's Works that are ſuch Secrets, as that they may not be enquired into: they are to be believed and adored, but not pryed into, *Rom.* 11. 33. Others that may be enquired after, but yet are ſo profound, that few can underſtand them, *Pſal.* 111. 2. *The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all thoſe that have pleaſure therein.* When we come to Heaven, then all thoſe myſteries, as well in the Works, as in the Word of God, will lie open to our view.

### *REFLECTION.*

O then, why is my heart diſquieted, becauſe it cannot ſometimes diſcern the way of the Lord, and ſee the connection and dependance on his providential diſpenſations? Why art thou ſo perplexed, O my Soul, at the Confuſions and Diſorders that are in the world! I know that Goodneſs and Wiſdom ſits at the Stern: And though the Veſſel of the Church be toſſed and diſtreſſed in Storms of Trouble, yet it ſhall not periſh. Is it not enough for me, that God hath condeſcended ſo far for my ſatisfaction, as to ſhew me plainly the ultimate and general iſſue of all theſe myſterious Providences, *Epheſ.* 1. 22. *Rom.* 8. 28. unleſs I be able to take the height of every particular? Shall I preſume to call the God of Heaven to account? Muſt he render a reaſon of his ways, and give an account of his matters to ſuch a worm as I am? Be ſilent (O my Soul) before the Lord; ſubſcribe to his Wiſdom, and ſubmit to his Will, whatſoever he doth. However it be, yet God is good to *Iſrael*; the event will manifeſt it to be all over a deſign of love. I know not how to reconcile them to each other, or many of them to the Promiſe; yet are they all harmonious betwixt themſelves, and the certain means of accompliſhing the Promiſes. O what a favour is this, that in the midſt of the greateſt confuſions in the world, God hath given ſuch abundant ſecurity to his people, that it ſhall be well with them? *Amos* 9. 8. *Eccleſ.* 8. 12.

### THE POEM.

*Lord! how ſtupendious, deep, and wonderful,*
*Are all thy draughts of Providence; So full*
*Of puzling Intricacies, that they lie*
*Beyond the ken of any mortal eye,*
A Wheel within a Wheel'*s the Scripture Notion,*
*And all thoſe Wheels tranſverſe, and croſs in motion.*
*All Creatures ſerve it in their place; yet ſo,*
*As thouſands of them know not what they do.*
*At this or that, their aim they do direct;*
*But neither this, nor that, is the effect:*
*But ſomething elſe they do not underſtand,*
*Which ſets all Politicians at a ſtand.*
*Deep Counſels, as the birth, this hand doth break,*
*And deeper things performeth by the weak.*
*Men are like Horſes, ſet at every ſtage,*
*For providence to ride from age to age;*
*Which like a Poſt ſpurs on, and makes them run*
*From ſtage to ſtage until their Journey's done;*
*Then take a freſh: But they the buſineſs know,*
*No more than Horſes the Poſt-Letters do.*
*Yet though its work be not conceal'd from ſight,*
*'Twill be a glorious piece, when brought to light.*

## CHAP. XXX.

*Millions of Men are ſunk into the Main:*
*But it ſhall not thoſe Dead always retain.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

WHat multitudes of Men hath the Sea devoured! Thouſands have made their Graves in it. What numbers of Men have been ingulfed together in Sea-fights, or Storms, or Inundations; whereby whole Towns have been ſwallowed up; Certainly the dead which are there are innumerable.

### *APPLICATION.*

But though the Sea have received ſo many thouſand Bodies of Men into its devouring Throat, yet is it not the abſolute Lord or Proprietor of them, but rather a Steward intruſted with them, till the Lord require an account of them; and then it muſt deliver up all it hath received, even to a perſon. *Revel.* 20. 11, 12. *And I ſaw the Dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was open, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the Books, according to their works. And the Sea gave up the dead which were in it.*

The Doctrine of the Reſurrection of the Body, is a Doctrine full of ſingular Conſolations to Believers, 1 *Cor.* 15. and moſt clearly aſſerted in Scripture, *Acts* 26. 8. *Job* 19 25. 1 *Cor.* 15, &c. And it is well for us this point is ſo plainly revealed; becauſe, as it is a moſt comfortable Truth to the people of God, for there is ſcarce any truth that lies under more prejudice as to Senſe or Reaſon, and is more difficult to receive, than this is. The *Epicures* and *Stoicks* laughed *Paul* to ſcorn when he preached it to them, *Acts* 17. 32. The *Familiſts* and *Quakers* at this day reject it as a Fable. The *Socinians* ſay the ſame Body ſhall not riſe, but an aerial Body. And indeed if Men ſet up Reaſon as the onely Judge of ſupernatural things, it is incredible to think that a Body ſhould be reſtored that hath been burnt to aſhes, and thoſe aſhes ſcattered in the wind, as Hiſtory tells us was frequently done by the Bodies of the Saints in *Dioc* an's Reign! Or when drowned in the Sea, and there devoured by ſeveral Fiſhes, and thoſe again devoured by others. But yet this is not to be objected to the Almighty Power of God, that gave them their firſt being. Difficulties and Impoſſibilities are for Men, but not for him. *Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead?* Acts 26. 8.

### *REFLECTION.*

And muſt I riſe again, where-ever my body fall at death? Then, Lord, how am I concerned to get union with Chriſt while I live? by vertue thereof only, my Reſurrection can be made comfortable and bleſſed to me! Ah, let my body lie where it will, in Earth or Sea; let my bones be ſcattered, and fleſh devoured by Worms or Fiſh, I know thou canſt and wilt reunite my ſcattered parts; and in this body I muſt ſtand before thine awful Tribunal, to receive according to what I have done therein, 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. Thou that commandedſt me to ſtand forth amongſt the nobleſt rank of Creatures, when I had no being, and ſaweſt my Subſtance, being yet imperfect, canſt as eaſily reduce me to that Being again.

What though Reaſon vote impoſſible, and Senſe incredible? Though all theſe Difficulties and Encumbrances grow upon my Faith, yet I know my body is not loſt for ever; the ſound of thy laſt and dreadful Trumpet ſhall awaken me; and thy mighty Power, to which all things are poſſible, ſhall bring me before thy Bar.

O Lord, I know that I ſhall ſtand in that great Aſſembly at the laſt day, when multitudes, multitudes, even all the ſons and daughters of *Adam* ſhall appear together. O! If I die Chriſtleſs, it were good for me that there were no Reſurrection: for then thoſe eyes that have been windows of Luſt, muſt behold Chriſt the Judge, not as a Redeemer, but as a Revenger. That tongue that has vented ſo much of the filthineſs of my heart, will then be ſtruck ſpeechleſs before him; and this fleſh which I ſo pamper'd and provided for, condemned to everlaſting flames. O my God, let me make ſure work for ſuch a day. If I now get real union with thy Son, I ſhall awake with ſinging out of the duſt: And then, as thou ſaidſt to *Jacob*, ſo to me, when I go down into the Sea or Grave, Gen. 46. 3, 4. *Fear not to go down into the deep; for I will ſurely bring thee thee up again.*

## THE POEM.

*It ſhould not ſeem incredible to thee,*
*hat God ſhould raiſe the dead in Seas that be:*
*We ſee in Winter, Swallows, Worms, and Flies*
*Depriv'd of Life, yet in the Spring they riſe.*
*hat though your Bodies ſeveral Fiſh devour,*
*bject not that to the Almighty pow'r.*
*me Chymiſts in their Art are ſo exact,*
*hat from one Herb they uſually extract*
*ur different Elements; what think ye then,*
*an poſe that God, who gave this Skill to men?*
*be Gard'ner can diſtinguiſh thirty kinds*
*f ſeeds from one another, though he finds*
*hem mixt together in the ſelf-ſame diſh;*
*uch more can God diſtinguiſh Fleſh from Fiſh.*
*hey ſeem as loſt, but they again muſt live;*
*be Sea's a Steward, and Stewards account muſt give.*
*ok what you are, when in the Ocean drown'd.*
*e very ſame at Judgment you'll be found.*
*would not care where my vile body lies,*
*ere I aſſur'd it ſhou'd with comfort riſe.*

## CHAP. XXXI.

*The Seaman's greateſt danger's near the Coaſt;*
*When we are neareſt Heav'n, the danger's moſt.*

### *OBSERVATION.*

Though Seamen meet with violent Storms, yet if they have Sea-room enough, they are not much diſmaid; but if they find themſelves near the ſhore, they look upon their condition as very dangerous. The ſight of the Shore is to them (as *Solomon* ſpeaks of the Morning in another Caſe) like the ſhadow of death, if not able to Weather it. For one Ship ſwallowed up in the Ocean, many periſh upon the Coaſt.

### *APPLICATION.*

The greateſt Streights and Difficulties that many Saints meet with in all their lives, is when they come neareſt to Heaven, and have almoſt finiſhed their Courſe. Heaven indeed is a glorious Place, the Spacious and Royal Manſion of the great King; but *difficilia quæ pulchra.* It hath a ſtreight and narrow entrance, *Luk.* 13. 24. O the difficulty of arriving there! How many hard tugs in Duty! What earneſt contention of ſtriving, even to an Agony, as that word imports! *Luk.* 13. 24. Multitudes put forth, and by profeſſion are bound for this *fair Haven*; but of the multitudes that put out, how few do arrive there? A man may ſet out by a glorious profeſſion, with much reſolution, and continue long therein; he may offer very fair for it, and not be far from the Kingdom of God, and yet not be able to enter at the laſt, *Matth.* 7. 22.

Yea, and many of thoſe who are ſincere in their profeſſion, and do arrive at laſt, yet come to Heaven (as I may ſay) by the gates of Hell; and put in, as a poor Weather-beaten Veſſel comes into the Harbour, more like a Wreck than a Ship, nor Maſt nor Sail left. The righteous themſelves are ſcarcely ſaved, (*i. e.*) they are ſaved with very much difficulty. They have not all an *abundant entrance*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Pet.* 1. 11.

*Some Perſons* (as one well notes) are *afar off*, Eph. 2. 23. (i. e.) *touch with no care of Religion: Some come near, but never enter, as* Semiconverts, *ſee* Matth. 12. 34. *Others enter, but with great difficulty; they are ſaved as by fire,* 1 Cor. 3. 13. *Make an hard ſhift. But then there be ſome that go in with full ſail before a Wind, and have an abundant entrauce: They go triumphing out of the world.* Ah! when we come into the Narrow Channel, at the very point of entrance into life, the Soul is then in the moſt ſerious frame, all things look with a new face. Conſcience ſcans our evidence moſt critically; then alſo Satan falls upon us, and makes his soreſt aſſaults and batteries. It is the laſt encounter; if they eſcape him now, they are gone out of his reach for ever: And if he cannot hinder their Salvation, yet if he can but cloud their Evening, and make them go groaning and haling out of the world, he reaches another end by it, even to confirm and prejudice the wicked, and weaken the hands of others that are looking towards Religion.

*Manton* on *Juda* p. 119.

### *REFLECTION.*

If this be ſo, how inevitable is my perdition, may the careleſs Soul ſay; if they that ſtrive ſo much, and go ſo far, yet periſh at laſt, and if the righteous themſelves are *ſcarcely* ſaved, then where ſhall ſuch an ungodly Creature as I appear? O Lord! if they that have made Religion their buſineſs, and have been many years purſuing a work of Mortification, have gone mourning after the Lord Jeſus, and walked humbly with God; yet if ſome of theſe have ſuch an hard tug at laſt, then what will become of ſuch a vain, ſenſual, careleſs, Fleſh-pleaſing Wretch as I have been?

Again, Do Saints find it ſo ſtreight an entrance? Then, though I have well-grounded Hopes of ſafe arrival at laſt; yet let me look to it, that I do not increaſe the difficulty. Ah! they are the things that are now done, or omitted, that put Conſcience into ſuch an agony then; for then it comes to review the life with the moſt ſerious eye. O, let me not ſtick my Death-bed full of Thorns, againſt I come to lie down upon it. O that I may turn to the Wall, in that hour, as *Hezekiah* did, 2 *Kings* 20. 2, 3. and ſay, *Remember now, O Lord, I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart,* &c.

## THE POEM.

*After a tedious Paſſage, Saints deſcry*
*The glorious Shore, Salvation being nigh:*
*Death's Long-boat's launch'd, ready to ſet aſhore*
*Their panting Souls.* O, *how they tug at Oar,*
*Longing to be at reſt! but then they find,*
*The hardeſt Tug of all is yet behind.*
*Juſt at the Harbours mouth, they ſee the Wrack*
*Of Souls there caſt away, and driven back.*
*A world of dangerous Rocks before it lie;*
*The Harbours barr'd, and now the Winds blow high:*
*Thoughts now ariſe, fears multiply apace;*
*All things about them have another face.*
*Life blazes juſt like an expiring light;*
*The Soul's upon the lip, prepar'd for flight.*
*Death, till the Reſurrection, tears and rends*
*Out of each other's arms two parting Friends,*
*The Soul and Body. Ah! but more than ſo,*
*The Devil falls upon them ere they go,*
*With new temptations, back'd with all his pow'r,*
*And ſcruples kept on purpoſe for that hour.*
*This is the laſt encounter, now or never,*
*If he ſucceeds not now, they're gone for ever.*
*Thus in they put, with hardſhip at the laſt,*
*As Ships out of a Storm, nor Sail, nor Maſt:*
*Yet ſome go in before a Wind, and have*
*Their* Streamer *of Aſſurance flying brave.*
*Lord, give me eaſier entrance, if thou pleaſe;*
*Or if I may not there arrive with eaſe,*
*Yet I beſeech thee ſet me ſafe aſhore,*
*Though ſtormy Winds at Harbours mouth ſhould roar.*

## CHAP. XXXII.

*How glad are Seamen, when they make the Shore?*
*And Saints no leſs, when all their Danger's o're.*

### OBSERVATION.

WHat Joy is there among Seamen, when at laſt, after a tedious and dangerous Voyage, they deſcry Land, and ſee the deſired Haven before them? Then they turn out of their loath'd Cabbins, and come upon open Deck with much joy, *Pſal.* 107. 30. *Then they are glad, becauſe they be quiet: So he bringeth them to their deſired Haven.* Now they can reflect with comfort upon the many dangers they have paſt, *Olim hæc meminiſſe juvabit*; It is ſweet to recount them.

### APPLICATION.

But O, what tranſcendent Joy, yea, raviſhing, will over-run the hearts of Saints, when after ſo many Conflicts, Temptations, and Afflictions, they arrive in glory, and are harbour'd in Heaven, where they ſhall reſt for ever! 2 *Theſ.* 1. 7. The Scripture ſaith, *They ſhall ſing the Song of* Moſes, *and of the Lamb,* Rev. 15. 3. The Song of *Moſes* was a triumphant Song, compoſed for the celebration of that glorious Deliverance at the Red Sea. The Saints are now fluctuating upon a troubleſome and tempeſtuous Sea; their hearts ſometime ready to ſink and die within them, at the apprehenſion of ſo many and great dangers and difficulties. Many an hard ſtorm they ride out, and many ſtreights and troubles they here encounter with: But at laſt they arrive at their deſired and long-expected Haven, and then Heaven rings and reſounds with their joyful acclamations. And how can it be otherwiſe, when as ſoon as ever they ſet foot upon that glorious Shore, Chriſt himſelf meets and receives them with a *Come ye bleſſed of my Father?* Matth. 25. 34. O joyful voice! O much deſired Word! (ſaith *Paræus*) What tribulation would not a man undergo for his Words ſake!

Beſides, then they are perfectly freed from all evils, whether of ſin or ſuffering, and perfectly filled with all deſired good. Now they ſhall joyn with that great Aſſembly, in the high praiſes of God. O what a day will this be! if (ſaith a worthy Divine) *Diagoras* died away with an exceſs of Joy, whilſt he embraced his three Sons that were crowned as Victors in the *Olympic* Games in one day: And good old *Simeon*, when he ſaw Chriſt but in a body ſubject to the infirmities of our natures, cryed out, *Now let th Servant depart in Peace*; what unſpeakable joy will i be to the Saints, to behold Chriſt in his glory, and ſee their godly relations alſo, (to whoſe converſion, perhaps, they have been inſtrumental) all crown'd in one day with everlaſting Diadems of bliſs! And if the ſtars did (as *Ignatius* ſaith) make a Quire, a it were, about that ſtar that appear'd at Chriſt's Incarnation, and there be ſuch joy in Heaven at the converſion of a ſinner: no wonder then, the Morning-ſtars ſing together, and the Sons of God ſhou for Joy, when the general Aſſembly meet in Heaven; O how will the Arches of Heaven ring and eccho, when the high praiſes of God ſhall be in the mouth of ſuch a Congregation! then ſhall the Saints be joyful in glory, and ſing aloud upon their Beds of everlaſting Reſt.

Morning Exerciſe, p. 65

### REFLECTION.

And is there ſuch a day approaching for the Sons of God indeed! and have I [*authority*] to call my ſelf one of the number! *John* 1. 12. O then let me not droop at preſent difficulties, nor hang down my hands when I meet with hardſhips in the way. O my Soul, what a joyful day will this be! for a preſent we are toſt upon an Ocean of troubles, fears temptations; but theſe will make Heaven th ſweeter.

Chear up then, O my Soul, thy *Salvation is no nearer* than when thou firſt believedſt, *Rom.* 13. 1 And it will not now be long ere I receive the en of my Faith, 1 *Pet.* 1. 9. And then it will be ſweet reflect even upon theſe hardſhips in the way. Yet few days more, and then comes that bleſſed day tho haſt ſo long waited and panted for. Oppoſe th glory of that day (O my Soul) to thy preſent ab ſures and ſufferings, as bleſſed *Paul* did, *Rom.* 1.1

An

And thou ſhalt ſee how it will ſhrink them all up to nothing. Oppoſe the Inheritance thou ſhalt receive in that day, to thy loſſes for Chriſt now; and ſee how joyfully it will make thee bear them, *Heb.* 10. 34. Oppoſe the honour that will be put upon thee in that day, to thy preſent reproaches; and ſee how eaſie it will make them to thee, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. What condition can I be in, wherein the believing thoughts of this bleſſed day cannot relieve me?

Am I poor, Here is that which anſwers Poverty, Jam. 3. 5. *Hearken, my beloved Brethren, hath not God choſen the poor of this world, rich in Faith, and heirs of the Kingdom?*

Am I tempted? Here is relief againſt that, Revel. 12. 16. *Now is come Salvation and ſtrength; for the Accuſer of our Brethren is caſt down,* &c.

Am I deſerted? Here is a remedy for that too, Revel. 22. 5. *And there ſhall be no night there,* &c. Come then, my Soul, let us enter upon our Inheritance by degrees, and begin the Life of Heaven upon Earth.

## THE POEM.

*When* Solomon *in* Iſrael *firſt was King,*
*Heaven's Arches, Earth's Foundations ſeem'd to ring*
*With joyful Exclamations! How much more*
*Will Heaven reſound, when Saints are come aſhore!*
*How will the raviſh'd Souls tranſported be*
*At the firſt glimpſe of Chriſt! Whom they ſhall ſee*
*In all his glory; and ſhall live and move*
*Like* Salamanders *in the fire of love.*
*A flood of tears convey'd them to the Gate,*
*Where endleſs Joys receiv'd them. Now the date*
*Of all their Sorrow's out; henceforth they walk*
*In Robes of Glory. Now there's no more talk*
*Of fears, temptations, of that ſnare, or this:*
*No Serpent in that Paradiſe doth hiſs.*
*No more deſertions, troubled thoughts or tears;*
*Chriſt's full enjoyment ſuperſedes thoſe fears.*
*Delights of Princes Courts are all but toys*
*To theſe delights, theſe are tranſcendent joys,*
*The joys of Chriſt himſelf; and what they are,*
*n Angel's Tongue would ſtammer to declare.*
*ere our Conceptions clear, did their Tongues go*
*nto their* Ela, *yet the Note's too low.*
*hat! Paint the Sun too bright! it cannot be;*
*ure Heaven ſuffers no Hyperbole.*
*y thoughts are ſwallowed up, my Muſe doth tire*
*nd hang her Wings, Conception ſoars no higher.*
*Give me a place among thy Children there,*
*Although I lie with them in Dungeons here.*

### *A Concluding Speech.*

I Have now done, and am looking to Heaven for a bleſſing upon theſe weak Labours: what uſe you will make of them, I know not; but this I know, that the day is coming, when God will reckon with you for this, and all other helps and means afforded to you. And if it be not improved by you, be ſure it will be produced as a witneſs againſt you. Sirs, I beg you in the Name of Chriſt, before whom both you and I muſt ſhortly appear, that you receive not theſe things in vain. Did I know what other lawful means to uſe that might reach your hearts, they ſhould not be in vain to you; but I cannot do God's part of the work, nor yours. Only I requeſt you all, both Maſters, common Men, and all others, into whoſe hands this ſhall come, that you will lay to heart what you read; pray unto him that hath the Key of the Houſe of *David, that openeth and no man ſhutteth,* to open your hearts to give entertainment to theſe truths. Alas! If you apply it not to your ſelves, I have laboured to no purpoſe, the Pen of the Scribe is in vain: But God may make ſuch an application of them, in one Storm or another, as may make your hearts to tremble. O Sirs! when Death and Eternity look you in the face, Conſcience may reflect upon theſe things to your horror and amazement, and make you cry out, as *Prov.* 5. 12, 13. *How have I hated knowledge, and my heart deſpiſed reproof? And have not obeyed the voice of my Teacher, nor inclined my ears to them that inſtructed me?* And O what a dreadful ſhriek will ſuch Souls give, when the Lord opens their eyes, to ſee that miſery that they are here warned of! But if the Lord ſhall bleſs theſe things to your Converſion, then we may ſay to you, as *Moſes* did to *Zebulun,* the Mariner's Tribe *Deut.* 33. 12. *Rejoyce Zebulun, in thy going out.* The Lord will be with you which way ſoever you turn your ſelves; and being in the boſom of the Covenant, you are ſafe in the midſt of all dangers. O! thou that art the Father of Spirits, that formedſt, and canſt eaſily reform the heart, open thou the blind eye, unſtop the deaf ear, let the Word take hold upon the heart. If thou wilt but ſay the word, theſe weak Labours ſhall proſper, to bring home many loſt Souls unto thee. *Amen.*

### A Pathetical and Serious

# DISSUASIVE

### From the Horrid and Deteſtable SINS
### OF

**Drunkenneſs, Swearing, Uncleanneſs, Forgetfulneſs** of Mercies, **Violation** of Promiſes; **and Atheiſtical Contempt of** Death.

Applied by way of CAUTION to *Seamen*, and now added as an APPENDIX to their *NEW COMPASS*.

Being an Eſſay toward their much-deſired Reformation: Fit to be ſeriouſly recommended to their Prophane *Relations*, whether Seamen or others, by all ſuch as unfeignedly deſire their Eternal Welfare.

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To the Right Worſhipful Sir *JOHN FREDERICK*, Kt. One of the Worſhipful Aldermen of the City of *London*, and their Honourable BURGESS in the preſent Parliament: And to the truly Religious and ever Honoured, Mr. *JOHN LOVERING*, of the City of *London*, Merchant.

Much honour'd and eſteem'd,

*Although Dedications are too often abuſed to a vain flattery, yet is there an excellent uſe and advantage to be made of them: Partly to encourage Perſons of Worth and Eminency to eſpouſe the Intereſt of Religion themſelves; and partly to oblige thoſe Readers, for whom ſuch Books are principally intended, to a diligent peruſal of them, by intereſting ſuch Perſons in them, for whom they have great Reſpects, or on whom they have any dependance.*

*Upon the firſt account, a Dedication would bee needleſs to you: for I am perſwaded, you do not only in your Judgment* approve *the Deſign I here manage,* viz. *The Reformation of the prophane and looſer ſort of our Seamen; but are alſo heartily willing to* improve *your Intereſt to the uttermoſt for the promotion of it. I cannot look upon you as Perſons acted by that low and common ſpirit that the moſt of your Profeſſion are acted by, who little regard, if they be good Servants to them, whether God have any Service from them, or no; and if they pay them the Wages due for their work, never think of the Wages they are to receive for their ſin. You are judged to be Perſons of another ſpirit, who do not only mind, but advance Chriſt's Intereſt above your own, and negotiate for his Glory, as well as for your own gain: And yet, herein you conſult your own Intereſt as well as God's:* Subordinata non pugnant. *Your Intereſt is never more proſperouſly* managed, *or abundantly* ſecured, *than when it is carried on in a due ſubordination to God's. Their Reformation will apparently tend to your advantage. Thoſe ſins of theirs, againſt which I have here engaged, are the* Jonahs *in your Ships: 'tis ſin that ſinks them, and drives them againſt the Rocks.* One ſinner deſtroys much good, *Ecleſ.* 8. 11. *How much more a lend Crew of them conſpiring to provoke God! The* death *of their Luſts, is the moſt probable means to give* life *to your Trade. And as theſe Counſels proſper in their hearts, ſo will your Buſineſs thrive in your hands.* Piety *and* Proſperity *are married together in that Promiſe,* Pſal. 1. 3. Oneſimus *was never ſo profitable a Servant to* Philemon, *as when he became his* Brother *in a* Spiritual, *as well as his* Servant *in a* Civil *Capacity.* Philem. *verſ.* 11. *and* 16. *compared. And yet if your Intereſt were forced to ſtep back, to give way to Chriſt's, I hope you would (notwithſtanding) rejoyce therein. So that my preſent buſineſs is, not ſo much to perſwade you, whoſe hearts, I hope, God hath already perſwaded, to ſo good a work; as to make your Fames and Reſpects, which are great among them, an innocent Bait to tempt them to their Duty. And if either your Name or Intereſt may be uſeful to ſuch an end, I preſume I may uſe them freely, and welcome: for, ſure I am, they can never be put to a better uſe.*

*Well then, I will make bold to ſend this ſmall* Adventure *in your Ships; and if the Return of it be but the Converſion of one Soul to God, I ſhall reckon that I have made a better Voyage than you, let your Returns be never ſo rich.*

*How theſe things will affect them, I know not. I do ſuppoſe it will produce different effects upon them, according to the different tempers of their ſpirits, and according as God ſhall command, or ſuſpend the Bleſſing. Poſſibly ſome will ſtorm at the cloſe and cutting Rebukes of the Word, (for moſt mens Luſts are a great deal more ſenſible and tender than their Conſciences) and will fondly imagine that this neceſſary plainneſs tends to their reproach. But if none but the guilty can be ſuppoſed to be angry at them, they will thereby reproach themſelves a great deal more than ever I intend to do.*

*I confeſs it is a bitter Pill, and compounded of many operative, and ſtrong Ingredients, which do acute it; but not a jot more than is neceſſary. I ſhall beg the aſſiſtance of your Prayers to God for them, and of your grave Admonitions and Exhortations to them for God; which will much help its Operation, and facilitate my Deſign, to do their Souls a piece of everlaſting Service; with which Deſign I can truly ſay I even travel in pain for them. Your aſſiſtance therefore in this good Work, will put the higheſt Obligation upon*

Your moſt affectionate
Friend and Servant
to be commanded,

*JOHN FLAVEL*

# A Sober Conſideration Of the SIN of DRUNKENNESS.

IN the former Treatiſe I have endeavoured to Spiritualize earthly Objects, and elevate your thoughts to more ſublime and excellent Contemplations; that earthly things may rather be a *ſtep*, than a *ſtop* to Heavenly. You have therein my beſt advice to guide you in your Courſe to that Port of your Eternal Reſt and Happineſs.

In this, I have given warning of ſome dangerous Rocks and Quick-ſands that lie upon your left hand; upon which millions of Souls have periſhed, and others are wilfully running to their own perdition. Such are the horrid Sins of *Drunkenneſs*, *Uncleanneſs*, profane *Swearing*, *Violation of Promiſes*, and Ingagements made to God, and *Atheiſtical ſlighting and contempt of Death and Eternity*. All which I have here given warning of, and held forth a Light to diſcover where your danger is. If after this you obſtinately proſecute your Luſts, and will not be reclaimed; you periſh without Apology, I have freed mine own Soul.

Let none interpret this neceſſary plainneſs, as a reproach to Seamen, as if I repreſented them to the world worſe than they are. If upon that account any of them be offended, methinks theſe three or four Conſiderations ſhould remove that offence.

Firſt, that if this cloſe and plain dealing be neceſſary in order to your Cure, and you will be offended thereat, it's better you ſhould be offended than God. Miniſters are often put upon lamentable ſtreights, they ſail betwixt *Sylla* and *Charibdis*; the wrath of God upon one ſide, if we do not ſpeak plain, and home, as the neceſſity of the Caſe requires; and Man's wrath, if we do: What ſhall we do in this ſtreight? Either God or you, it ſeems, muſt be offended; and if it cannot be avoided, I ſhall rather hazard your anger than God's, and think it far more tolerable.

Secondly, If you did but ſee the neceſſity and end of this manner of dealing with your Souls, you would not be offended. But put it into a more ſenſible caſe, and you will ſee and acknowledge it preſently. If I ſhould ſee an high-built Wall giving way, and ready to fall upon you; would you be angry with me, if by plucking you out of the danger, I ſhould pluck your arm out of joint? Certainly you would not. Why this is the caſe here: See Iſa. 30. 13. *Therefore this Iniquity ſhall be unto you as a breach ready to fall, ſwelling out in a high Wall, whoſe breaking cometh ſuddenly, at an inſtant.*

Thirdly, What a madneſs is it to abide in a condition over which all Woes and Curſes hang, and yet not be able to endure to hear of it! Why what will it profit you to have your miſery hid from your eyes, and kept from your ears a little while? You muſt ſee this wrath, and hear louder vollies of Woes from your own Conſciences, if you remain in this condition. You cannot bear that from us, which your Conſcience will one of theſe days preach themſelves to you, and that in a more dreadful dialect: than I have uſed here.

Fourthly, I do not charge theſe ſins indifferently upon all Seamen. No, I know there are ſome choice and good men amongſt your men, that fear an Oath, and hate even the garments ſpotted with the fleſh, who are (I queſtion not) the credit and glory of our *Engliſh* Nation, in the eyes of Strangers that converſe with them. Nor yet do I think, that all that are wicked amongſt them, are equally guilty of all theſe evils; for though all that are graceleſs, be equally under the dominion of *Original Corruption*, yet it follows not from thence, that therefore actual ſins muſt reign alike in them: There is great difference, even among ungodly men themſelves, in this reſpect; which difference ariſeth from their various Cuſtoms, Conſtitutions, Abilities, Educations, and the different Adminiſtrations of the Spirit, in enlightning, convincing, and putting checks upon Conſcience: For though God be not the *Author*, yet he is the *Orderer* of ſin. And this makes a great diſparity, even among wicked men themſelves. Some are perſons of good Morals, though not Gracious Principles, which produce a civil and ſober, though not a holy and a religious Life. And others, though they live in ſome one of theſe Luſts, yet are not guilty of ſome others of them. For it is with Original Corruption, juſt as it is with the ſap of the Earth, which though it be the matter of all kind of Fruits, yet in ſome ground it ſorts better with one grain than with another: And ſo in Plants, in one tree it becomes an Apple, in another a Cherry; even ſo it is with this Original Corruption: In one man it runs moſt into Swearing, in another into Uncleanneſs, in a third into Drunkenneſs. Luſt is nothing elſe but the corrupt appetite of the Creature to ſome ſinful object: and therefore look as it is with the Appetite with reſpect to Food, ſo it is with the vitiated Appetites of Souls to ſin. One man loves this Food beſt, and another that; there is endleſs variety in that, and ſo in this.

Having ſpoken thus much to remove offence, I ſhall now beg you to peruſe the following Diſcourſe. Conſider what evidence theſe things carry with them. Search the alledged Scriptures, ſee if they be truly recited and applied to the caſe in hand: And if ſo, Oh tremble at the truth you read; bring forth your Luſts that they made die the death: Will you not part with theſe abominable practices till Death and Hell make the ſeparation? Ah how much better is it for you, that Grace ſhould do it! And becauſe many of you ſee not the danger, and therefore prize not the Remedy, I do here Requeſt all thoſe that have the Bowels of Pity in them for their poor Relations, who are ſinking, drowning, periſhing, to ſpread theſe following Cautions before the Lord for a Bleſſing, and then put them into their hands. And oh that all pious Maſters would perſwade thoſe that are under their charge to buy this enſuing Treatiſe, and diligently peruſe it. And the firſt Caution I ſhall give them, is this.

## I. CAUTION.

TAke heed and beware of the deteſtable Sin of *Drunkenneſs*, which is a beaſtly ſin, a voluntary madneſs, a ſin that unmans thee, and makes thee like the beaſt that periſhes; yea, ſets thee below the brute beaſts, which will not drink to exceſs; or if they do, yet it's not their ſin, One of the Ancients calls it, "A "diſtemper of the Head, a ſub-"verſion of the ſenſes, a tempeſt "in the tongue, a ſtorm of the "body, the ſhipwreck of vertue, "the loſs of time, a wilful mad-"neſs, a pleaſant devil, a ſugar'd "poyſon, a ſweet ſin, which he "that has, has not himſelf, and "he that commits it, doth not "only commit Sin, but he himſelf "is altogether ſin. It is a Sin at which the moſt ſober Heathens bluſhed. The *Spartans* brought their Children to loath it, by ſhewing them a Drunkard, whom they gazed at as a Monſter: even *Epicurus* himſelf, who eſteemed happineſs to conſiſt in Pleaſure, yet was temperate, as *Cicero* obſerves: Among the Heathens, he was accounted the beſt man, that ſpent more Oyl in the Lamp, than Wine in the Bottle. Chriſtianity could once glory in its profeſſors: *Tertullian* ſaith of the Primitive Chriſtians, They ſat not down before they prayed, they eat no more than might ſuffice hunger, they drank no more than was ſufficient for temperate men; they did ſo eat and drink, as thoſe that remembred they muſt pray afterward. But now it may bluſh to behold ſuch beaſtly ſenſualiſts adorning themſelves with its name, and ſheltring themſelves under its wings.

*Turbatum capitis, ſubverſio ſenſus tempeſtas linguæ, procella corporis, naufraginm virtutus, amiſſio temporis, inſania voluntaria, blande dæmon, dulce venenum, ſuave peccatum, quam qui habet, ſepiſum non habet, quam qui fecit, peccatum non fecit, ſed ipſe totus eſt peccatatum.* Aug. ad. lacr. Viginis.

And amongſt thoſe that profeſs Chriſtianity, how ordinarily is this ſin committed by Seamen? This inſatiable *Dropſie* is a Diſeaſe that reigns eſpecially among the inferiour and ruder ſort of them. Some of them have gone aboard drunk, and laid the foundation of their Voyage in ſin. O what a preparation is this! They know not whether ever they ſhall ſee the Land of their Nativity any more; the next Storm may ſend them into Eternity: yet this is the Farewel they take; this is their preparation to meet the Lord. And ſo in their returns, notwithſtanding the terrible and aſtoniſhing Works of the Lord, which they have beheld with their eyes, and their marvellous preſervation in ſo great and terrible extremities; yet thus do they requite the Lord, aſſoon as their dangers are over, as if they had been deliver'd to commit all theſe abominations. But a few hours, or days ſince, they were reeling to and fro upon a ſtormy Ocean, and ſtaggering like drunken men, as it is *Pſal.* 107. 27. and now you may ſee them reeling and ſtaggering in the ſtreets, drowning the ſenſe of all thoſe precious Mercies and Deliverances in their drunken Cups.

Reader, If thou be one that is guilty of this ſin, for the Lord's ſake, bethink thy ſelf ſpeedily, and weigh, with the reaſon of a man, what I ſhall now ſay, in order to thy Conviction, Humiliation and Reformation. I need not ſpend many words, to open the nature of this ſin to you: we all grant, that there is a lawful uſe of Wine and ſtrong Drink, to ſupport Nature, not to clog it; to cure Infirmities, not to cauſe them. *Drink no longer water, but uſe a little Wine, for thy ſtomach ſake, and thine often infirmities,* ſaith *Paul* to *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 23. mark; drink not water, but wine, *ſed modice* (i. e.) *medice; pro remedio, non pro delicis,* ſaith *Ambroſe*: that is, uſe it modeſtly, *viz.* Medicinally, not for pleaſure, but for Remedy. Yea, God allows it, not noly for bare neceſſity, but for chearfulneſs and alacrity, that the body may be more fit and expedite for duty, *Prov.* 31. 7. But further no man proceeds, without the violation of Sobriety. When men ſit till Wine have inflamed them, and reaſon be diſturbed (for Drunkenneſs is the privation of reaſon, cauſed by immoderate drinking) then do they come under the guilt of this horrid and abominable Sin. To the Satiſfaction and refreſhment of nature, you may drink; for it is a part of the Curſe, to drink, and not be ſatisfied: but take heed you go no further, *For Wine is a* [*mocker*] *ſtrong Drink is raging, and whoſoever is deceived thereby is not wiſe,* Prov. 20. 1. The Throat is a ſlippery place; how eaſily may a ſin ſlip through it into the Soul? theſe ſenſual Pleaſures have a kind of inchanting power upon the Soul; and by cuſtom gain upon it, till they have enſlaved it, and brought it under their power. Now this is the ſin againſt which God hath delivered ſo many Precepts, and denounced ſo many Woes, in his Word: *Epheſ.* 5. 18. *Be not drunken with wine wherein is exceſs,* Rom. 13. 18. *Not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in chambering and wantonneſs,* Iſa. 5. 11. *Wo to them that riſe early in the morning, that they may follow ſtrong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them;* with many other of dreadful importance. Now to ſtartle thee for ever from this abominable and filthy luſt, I ſhall here propound to thy Conſideration theſe ten enſuing Arguments: and oh that they might ſtand in the way, as the Angel did in *Balaam*'s, when thou art in the proſecution of thy ſenſual Pleaſures! And the firſt is this.

*Qui dedit aquam, dedit vinum.*

*Arg.* 1. It ſhould exceedingly diſſwade from this Sin, to conſider ~~that it~~ is an high abuſe of the Bounty and Goodneſs of God, in affording us thoſe ſweet Refreſhments, to make our Lives comfortable to us upon earth. In *Adam* we forfeited all right, to all earthly, as will as heavenly Mercies. God might have taken thee from the Womb, when thou waſt a Sinner but of a ſpan long, and immediately have ſent thee to thine own place: thou hadſt no right to a drop of water, more than what the bounty of God gave thee. And whereas he might have thruſt thee out of the world as ſoon as thou cameſt into it, and ſo all thoſe days of mercy thou haſt had on earth, might have been ſpent in howling and unſpeakable miſery in Hell: Behold the Bounty and Goodneſs of God in thee; I ſay, behold it, and wonder: He hath ſuffered thee for ſo many years to live upon the earth, which he hath prepared and furniſhed with all things fit for thy neceſſity and delight; out of the earth on which thou treadeſt, *he bringeth forth thy food, and* [*Wine*] *to make glad thy heart*, Pſal. 104. 14, 15. And doſt thou thus requite the Lord? Hath Mercy armed an enemy to fight againſt it with its own Weapons? Ah that ever the Riches of his Goodneſs, Bounty, and Long-ſuffering (all which are arguments to lead thee to repentance) ſhould be thus abuſed! If God had not been ſo bountiful, thou couldſt not have been ſo ſinful.

*Arg.* 2. It degrades a man from the honour of his Creation, and equalizeth him to the beaſt that periſheth. Wine is ſaid to take away the heart. *Hoſ.* 4. 11. (*i.e.*) the wiſdom and ingenuity of a man, and ſo brutifies him; as *Nebuchadnezzar*, who loſt the heart of a man, and had the heart of a beaſt given him, *Dan.* 4. 32. The heart of a man hath its generoſity and ſprightlineſs, brave vigorous ſpirit in it, capable of, and fitted for noble and worthy actions and imployments; but his luſt effeminates, quenches and drowns that maſculine vigour in the puddle of exceſs and ſenſuality. For no ſooner is a man brought under the dominion of this Luſt, but the government of Reaſon is renounced, which ſhould exerciſe a coercive power over the Affections; and all is delivered up into the hand of Luſt and Appetite; and ſo they act, not by diſcretion and reaſon, but by Luſt and Will, as the Beaſts do by Inſtinct. The ſpirit of Man entertains it ſelf with intellectual and chaſt Delights, the ſoul of a Beaſt is onely fitted for ſuch low, ſenſitive and dreggie Pleaſures. Thou haſt ſomething of the *Angel*, and ſomething of the *Beaſt* in thee; thy Soul partakes of the nature of Angels, thy Body of the nature of Beaſts: Oh how many pamper the *Beaſt*, while they ſtarve the *Angel!* God in the firſt Chapter, put all the Creatures in ſubjection to thee; by this Luſt thou putteſt thy ſelf in Subjection to the creature, and art brought under his power, 1 *Cor.* 6. 12. If God had given thee the feet or head of a beaſt, Oh what a miſery wouldſt thou have eſteemed it! And is it nothing to have the heart of a Beaſt? Oh conſider it ſadly.

*Arg.* 3. It is a Sin by which thou greatly wrongeſt and abuſeſt thine own Body. The Body is the Souls Inſtrument, it is as the Tools are to a skilful Artificer, this Luſt both dulls and ſpoils it, ſo that it's utterly unfit for any ſervice of him that made it. Thy body is a curious piece, not made by a word of *command*, as other Creatures, but by a word of *counſel*, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and curiouſly wrought*, (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) Pſal. 139. 14. or as the Vulgar, *Ace pictus ſum*, Painted as with a Needle, like a Garment of Needlework of divers colours, richly embroidered. Look how many members, ſo many wonders. There are Miracles enough (ſaith one) betwixt head and foot, to fill a volume. There is (ſaith another) ſuch curious workmanſhip in the eye, that upon the firſt ſight of it ſome Atheiſts have been forced to acknowledge a God; eſpecially that fifth Muſcle in the eye is wonderful, whereby (as a learned * Author obſerves) Man differeth from all other Creatures, who have but four; one to turn the eye downward, a ſecond to hold it forward, a third to move it to the right hand, a fourth to the left; but none to turn it *upward* as a man hath. Now judge in thy ſelf, did God frame ſuch a curious piece, and enliven it with a Soul, which is a ſpark, a ray of his own light, whoſe motions are ſo quick, various and indefatigable, whoſe flights of reaſon are ſo tranſcendent; did God, thinkeſt thou, ſend down this curious piece, the top and glory of the Creation, the *Index* and *Epitome* of the whole world, *Eccl.* 12. 2. did God (I ſay) ſend down this picture of his own perfection, to be but as a ſtrainer for meats and drinks, a ſpunge to ſuck in Wine and Beer? Or canſt thou anſwer for the abuſe and deſtruction of it? By this exceſs thou filleſt it with innumerable diſeaſes under which it languiſheth; and at laſt thy life, like a lamp extinguiſht, being drowned with too much Oyle. Infinite Diſeaſes are begotten by it (ſaith *Zanch.*) hence come Apoplexies, Gouts, Palſies, ſudden Death, trembling of the hands and legs; herein they bring *Cain*'s curſe upon themſelves, ſaith *Ambroſe*. Drunkenneſs ſlays more than the Sword. Oh! what a terrible thing will it be to conſider upon a Death-bed, that theſe pangs and aches are the fruits of thy Intemperance and Exceſs! *Who hath wo? Who hath ſorrows? Who hath contention? Who hath babling? Who hath wounds without cauſe? Who hath redneſs of eyes? They that tarry long at Wine, they that go to ſeek mixt Wine*, Prov. 23. 29, 30. By this *Enumeration*, and manner of *Interrogation*, he ſeems to make it a difficult thing to recount the miſeries that Drunkenneſs loads the outward man with: for look as Vermine abound where there is ſtore of Corn, ſo do Diſeaſes in the bodies of Drunkards, where crudities do ſo abound: Now methinks if thou have no regard to thy poor Soul, or the glory of God; yet ſuch a ſenſible Argument as this, from thy body, ſhould move thee.

* *Columb. de re Anat.*

*Infinitæ morborum genera indenaſcuntur Applexæ, Paralyſes, Arthrides,* &c. *Ille optimus medicus ſibi, qui modicus cibi.* Aug.

*Arg.* 4. Drunkenneſs waſtes and ſcatters thine eſtate, Poverty attends exceſs: the Drunkard ſhall be cloathed with Rags, and brought to a morſel of bread. *Solomon* hath read thy fortune, *Prov.* 21. 17. *He that loveth Wine and Oyl ſhall not be rich*, Luxury and Beggary are ſeldom far aſunder. When *Diogenes* heard a Drunkard's houſe cryed to be ſold; I thought, quoth he, it would not be long ere he vomited up his houſe alſo. The *Hebrew* word תירוש and the *Greek* work ἀσωτία, which ſignifie Luxury; the former is compounded of two words, which ſignify, *Thou ſhalt be poor*; and the latter ſignifies the loſing of the poſſeſſion of that good which is in our hand. *The Drunkard and the Glutton ſhall ſurely come to poverty*, Prov. 23. 21. In the *Hebrew* it is, He ſhall be diſinherited, or diſpoſſeſſed. It doth not only diſpoſſeſs a man of his Reaſon, which is a rich and fair inheritance given to him by God, but it alſo diſpoſſeſſes him of his eſtate: it waſtes all that either the provident care of thy Progenitors, or the bleſſing of God upon thine own induſtry, hath obtained for thee. And how will this ſting like an Adder, when thou ſhalt conſider it? *Apicius* the *Roman*, hearing that there were ſeven hundred Crowns only remaining of a fair eſtate that his Father had left him, fell into a deep Melancholly, and fearing want, hanged himſelf, ſaith *Seneca*. And not to mention the miſeries and ſorrows they bring hereby upon their Families, drinking the tears, yea, blood of their Wives and Children: Oh what an account will they give to God, when their reckoning-day comes! Believe it, Sirs, there is not a ſhilling of your eſtates, but God will reckon with you for the expence thereof. If you have ſpent it upon your luſts, while the neceſſity of your families, or the poor, called upon you for it; I ſhould be loth to have your account to make, for a thouſand times more than ever you poſſeſſed. O woful expence, that is followed with ſuch dreadful reckonings!

*Arg.* 5. Conſider what vile and ignominious Characters the Spirit of God hath put upon the ſubjects of this ſin. The Scripture every where notes them for infamous, and moſt abominable perſons. When *Eli* ſuppoſed *Hannah* to be drunken, *Count not thy handmaid a daughter of* Belial, ſaid ſhe, 1 *Sam.* 1. 16. Now a Son or daughter of *Belial* is, in Scripture-language, the vileſt of men or women. So Pſal. 69. 12. *They that ſit in the gate, ſpeak againſt me, and I am the Song of Drunkards, (i.e.)* of the baſeſt and vileſt of men, as the oppoſition plainly ſhews; for they are oppoſed to them that ſit in the gate, that is, honourable perſons. The Lord would have his people ſhun the ſociety of ſuch, as a peſt. Not to eat with them, 1 *Cor.* 5. 11. Yea, the Scripture brands them with Atheiſm; they are ſuch as have loſt the ſenſe and expectation of the Day of Judgment; mind not another world, nor do they look for the coming of the Lord, *Matth.* 24. 27, 28. He ſaith the Lord delayeth his coming, and then falls a drinking with the drunken. The thoughts of that day will make them leave their Cups, or their Cups will drown the thoughts of ſuch a Day. And will not all the contempt, ſhame and infamy, which the Spirit of God hath poured on the head of this ſin, cauſe thee to abhor it? Do not all Godly, yea Moral Perſons, abhor the Drunkard? Oh methinks the ſhame that attends it, ſhould be as a fence to keep thee from it.

*Arg.* 6. Sadly conſider, there can be nothing of the ſanctifying Spirit in a ſoul that is under the dominion of this luſt; for upon the firſt diſcovery of the Grace of God, the Soul renounces the Government of Senſuality. *The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, teacheth men to live ſoberly*, Tit. 2. 11, 12. That is one of its firſt effects. Drunkenneſs indeed may be found among Heathens, that are loſt in the darkneſs of Ignorance; but it may not be once named among the Children of the Day. *They that be drunken, are drunken in the night; but let us that are of the day be ſober*, 1 Theſ. 5. 7, 8. And the Apoſtles often oppoſe Wine and the Spirit as things incompatible, Eph. 5. 16. *Be not drunk with Wine wherein is exceſs, but be filled with the Spirit.* So Jude 19. *Senſual, not having the Spirit.* Now what a dreadful Conſideration is this: *If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt the ſame is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. Senſual perſons have not the Spirit of Chriſt, and ſo can be none of his. It's true, *Noah*, a Godly man, once fell into this ſin, but as *Theodoret* ſaith, and that truly, it proceeded *ab inexperientiæ non ab intemperantia*, from want of experience of the force and power of the Grape, not from Intemperance; and beſides, we find not that ever he was again overtaken with that ſin; but thou knoweſt it, and yet perſiſteſt. O wretched Creature! the Spirit of Chriſt cannot dwell in thee. The Lord help thee to lay it to heart ſadly.

*Arg.* 7. It's a Sin over which many direful woes and threats hang in the Word, like ſo many lowring clouds, ready to pour down vengeance upon the heads of ſuch Sinners. Look as the condition of the Saints is compaſſed round with Promiſes, ſo is yours with Threatnings, Iſa. 5. 11. *Wo to them that riſe up early in the morning, that they may follow ſtrong drink, and continue until night, until Wine inflame.* So Iſa. 28. 1, 2. *Wo to the Crown of Pride, to the Drunkards of Ephraim, &c.* With many other, too long to enumerate here. Now conſider what a fearful thing it is to be under theſe woes of God: Sinner, I beſeech thee, do not make light of them, for they will fall heavy: aſſure thy ſelf, not one of them ſhall fall to the ground: they will all take place upon thee, except thou repent.

There are woes of Men, and woes of God: Gods woes are true woes, and make their condition woful to purpoſe on whom they fall. Other woes (as one ſaith) do but touch the skin, but theſe ſtrike the Soul; other woes are but temporal, theſe are eternal; others do only part betwixt us and our outward comforts, theſe betwixt God and us for ever.

*Arg.* 8. Drunkenneſs is a leading ſin, which has a great retinue and attendance of other ſins waiting on it, it's like a ſudden Land flood, which brings a great deal of dirt with it. So that look as Faith excels among the Graces, becauſe it enlivens, actuates, and gives ſtrength to them; ſo is this among ſins. It is not ſo much a ſpecial ſin againſt a ſingle Precept of God, as a general violation of the whole Law, (ſaith accurate *Ameſius.*) It doth not only call off the guard, but warms and quickens all other Luſts, and ſo expoſes the Soul to be proſtituted by them. (1.) It gives occaſion, yea, is the real cauſe of many contentions, and fatal quarrels, Prov. 23. 29. *Who hath wo! Who hath ſorrow, Who hath [contention] babling, wounds without cauſe? They that tarry long at the wine*, &c. *Contentions* and *Wounds* are the ordinary effects of drunken meetings: when Reaſon is depoſed, and Luſt heated, what will not men attempt? (2.) Scoffs and reproaches of the ways and people of God. *Pſal.* 69. 12. David *was the Song of the Drunkards.* (3.) It's the great incendiary of Luſt: You ſhall find rioting and drunkenneſs joyned with chambering and wantonneſs, *Rom.* 13. 13. *Nunquam ego ebrium caſtum putabo*, ſaith *Hierom*, I will never think a drunkard to be chaſte. *Solomon* plainly tells us, what the iſſue will be, Prov. 23. 33. *Thine eyes ſhall behold a ſtrange woman, and thy heart ſhall utter perverſe things*, ſpeaking of the Drunkard. It may be called *Gad*, for a troop followeth it. Hence one aptly calls it, *The Devils bridle*, by which he turneth the ſinner which way he pleaſes: he that is overcome by it, can overcome no other ſin.

*Arg.* 9. But if none of the former Conſiderations can prevail, I hope theſe two laſt may, unleſs all ſenſe and tenderneſs be loſt. Conſider therefore in the *9th* place, That Drunkards are in Scripture marked out for Hell: the Characters of Death are upon them. You ſhall find them pinioned with other Sons of death, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. *Know ye not, that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: Neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor [Drunkards,] nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.* Oh dreadful thunderbolt! He is not *aſleep* but *dead*, that is not ſtartled at it. Lord, how are guilty ſinners able to face ſuch a Text as this is! Oh Soul! Dareſt thou for a ſuperfluous Cup adventure to drink a Cup of pure unmixed wrath? O think when the Wine ſparkles in the glaſs, and gives its colour, think, I ſay, what a Cup of trembling is in the hand of the Lord for thee. Thou wilt not now believe this; O but the day is coming, when thou ſhalt know the price of their brutiſh pleaſures. Oh it will then ſting like an Adder. Ah! this ſhort-lived beaſtly pleaſure is the price for which thou ſelleſt Heaven, and rivers of pleaſure that are at Gods right hand.

Obj. *But I hope I ſhall repent, and then this Text can be no bar to my Salvation.*

*Sol.* True, if God ſhall give thee Repentance, it could not. But in the laſt place, to awaken thee throughly, and ſtartle thy ſecure Conſcience, which Senſuality hath brawned and cauterized, let me tell thee,

*Arg.* 10. That it is a ſin out of whoſe power few or none are ever reſcued or reclaimed. On this account it was that Saint *Auguſtine* called it the *Pit of Hell:* he that is addicted to this Sin, becomes incurable (ſaith a *Reverend Divine*) for ſeldom, or never, have I known a Drunkard recalled. And its power to hold the ſoul in ſubjection to it, lies in two things eſpecially: (1.) as it becomes habitual; and habits are not eaſily broken; be pleaſed to view an Example in the caſe, *Prov.*23. 35. *They have ſtricken me, ſhalt thou ſay, and I was not ſick; they have beaten me and I felt it not. When I ſhall awake, I will ſeek it yet again.* (2.) As it *takes away the heart,* Hoſ. 4. 11. that is, the underſtanding, reaſon and ingenuity of a man, and ſo makes him uncapable of being reclaimed by counſel. Upon this account it was, that *Abigail* would not ſpeak leſs or more to *Nabal,* till the Wine was gone out of him, 1 *Sam.* 25. 36, 37. plainly intimating, that no wholſome counſel can get in, till the Wine be gone out. When one asked *Cleoſtratus,* whether he were not aſhamed to be drunken, he tartly replied; *And are not you aſhamed to admoniſh a Drunkard?* intimating that no wiſe man would caſt away an admonition upon ſuch an one. And it not only renders them uncapable of counſel for the time, but by degrees it beſots and infatuates them; which is a very grievous ſtroke from God upon them, making way to their eternal ruin. So then you ſee upon the whole, what a dangerous gulph the ſin of Drunkenneſs is. I beg you for the Lord's ſake, and by all the regard you have to your ſouls, bodies, and eſtates, beware of it. Oh conſider theſe ten Arguments I have here produced againſt it. I ſhould have proceeded to anſwer the ſeveral Pleas and Excuſes you have for it. But I mind brevity, and ſhall ſhut up this firſt Caution, with a very pertinent and ingenious Poem of Mr. *George Herbert,* in his Temple.

*Ames, de conſc. p.* 139.

*Drink not the third glaſs, which thou canſt not tame*
*When once it is within thee; but before*
*Mayſt rule it as thou liſt, and pour the ſhame*
*which it will pour to thee, upon the floor.*
*It is moſt juſt to throw that on the ground,*
*Which would throw me there, if I kept the round.*

*He that is drunken may his Mother kill,*
*lie with his Siſter; he hath loſt the Reins;*
*outlaw'd by himſelf: all kind of ill*
*did with the liquor ſlide into the veins.*
*The Drunkard forfeits Man, and doth diveſt*
*All worldly right, ſave what he has by Beaſt.*

*hall I to pleaſe anothers wine-ſprung mind,*
*loſe all my own? God has given me a meaſure*
*hort of his Can, and Body: muſt I find*
*a pain in that wherein he finds a pleaſure?*
*Stay at the third glaſs; if thou loſe thy hold,*
*Then thou art modeſt, but the wine grows bold.*

*Reaſon move not Gallants, quit the room,*
*(all in a ſhipwrack ſhipt their ſeveral way.)*
*t not a common Ruin thee entomb;*
*be not a Beaſt in courteſies; but ſtay,*
*Stay at the third Glaſs, or forgo the place;*
*Wine above all things doth Gods ſtamp deface.*

## II. CAUTION.

THE Second Evil I ſhall deal with, is the evil of the Tongue, which, as St. *James* ſaith, is full of deadly Poyſon, Oaths, Curſes, Blaſphemies: and this poyſon it ſcatters up and down the World in all places; an untamed member that none can rule, *Jam.* 3. 7, 8. The fierceſt of beaſts have been tamed by Man, (as the Apoſtle there obſerves) which is a relick of his old ſuperiority and dominion over them; But this is an unruly Member that none can tame, but he that made it: no beaſt ſo fierce and crabbed as this is. It may be, I may be bitten by it for my labour and endeavours to put a reſtraint upon it: but I ſhall adventure it. My deſign is not to diſhonour or exaſperate you: But if my faithfulneſs to God and you ſhould accidentally do ſo, I cannot help that.

Friends, Providence oftentimes confines many of you together within the narrow limits of a Ship, where you have time enough, and if your hearts were ſanctified, many choice advantages of edifying one another. O what tranſcendent ſubjects doth Providence daily preſent you with, to take up your diſcourſes! How many experiences of extraordinary mercies and preſervations have you to relate to one another, and bleſs the Lord for! Alſo, how many works of wonder do you daily behold, who go down into the deeps? O what heavenly imployment is here for your Tongues! How ſhould they be talking of all his wonders! How ſhould you call upon each other, as *David* did, Pſal. 66. 16. *Come hither, and I will tell you what God hath done for my ſoul,* at ſuch a time, in ſuch an extremity. How ſhould you call upon one another, to pay *the vows your lips have uttered in your diſtreſs?* Thus ſhould one provoke another to this Angelical Work, as one lively Bird ſets the whole Flock a Chirping.

But tell me, Sirs, Should a Man come aboard you at Sea, and ask of you, as Chriſt did of thoſe two Diſciples going to *Emmaus,* Luk. 24. 17. *What manner of communication is this that ye have by the way?* O what a ſad account would he have from moſt of you! It may be he ſhould find one *Jeſting,* and another *Swearing,* a third *Reviling* Godlineſs and the Profeſſors of it, ſo that it would be a little Hell for a ſerious Chriſtian to be confined to your Society. This is not (I am confident) the manner of all. We have a company of more ſober Seamen, and bleſſed be God for them; but ſurely thus ſtands the caſe with moſt of you. Oh what ſtuff is here from perſons profeſſing Chriſtianity, and bordering cloſe upon the confines of Eternity, as you do!

It is not my purpoſe to write of all the diſeaſes of the Tongue; that would fill a Volume, and is inconſiſtent with my intended brevity. Who can recount the evils of the Tongue? The Apoſtle ſaith *It is a world of Iniquity,* Jam. 3. 6. And if there be a world of Sin in one member, Who can number the Sins of all the members? *Laurentius* reckons as many ſins of the Tongue, as there are Letters in the *Alphabet.* And it is an obſervable Note that one hath upon *Rom.* 3. 13, 14. That when *Paul* anatomizeth the unnatural Man there, he inſiſteth longer upon the Organs of Speech, than all the other members. *Their throat is an open ſepulchre, with their Tongues they have uſed deceit, the poyſon of Aſps is under their Lips, their mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs.*

But to be ſhort, we find the Spirit of God in Scripture comparing the Tongue to a Tree, *Prov.* 15. 4. *A wholeſome Tongue is a Tree of Life.* And words is the fruit of the Tree, Iſa. 57. 12. *I create the fruit of the Lips.* Some of theſe Trees bear precious fruits, and it is a lovely ſight to behold them laden with them in their ſeaſons, Prov. 25. 11. *A word fitly ſpoken, is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver.* Such a Tongue is a Tree of Life. Others of theſe Trees bear evil Fruit, Grapes of *Sodom*, and Cluſters of *Gomorrah.* I ſhall only inſiſt upon two ſorts of theſe fruits, *viz.* (1.) Withered ſapleſs fruit; I mean, idle and unprofitable words. (2.) Rotten and corrupt fruit; I mean, prophane Oaths, and prophanations of the ſacred Name of God. No fruit in the world ſo apt to corrupt and taint, as the fruits of the Lips. When it is ſo, the Scripture calls it σαπρὸς λόγος, corrupt or rotten communication, *Epheſ.* 4. 29. To prevent this, the Spirit of God preſcribes an excellent way to ſeaſon our words, and keep them ſweet and ſound, that they may neither wither nor become idle and ſapleſs, or putrifie and become rotten, as prophane words are, Col. 4. 6. *Let your ſpeech be always with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, that you may know how to anſwer every man.* Oh, if the ſalt of Grace were once caſt into the fountain, the Heart, the ſtreams muſt needs become more ſavoury and pleaſant, as the waters of *Marah* when they were healed. My preſent work is to attempt the cure of this double evil, of *idle words*, and *prophane Oaths*, whereof thouſands among you are deeply guilty. I ſhall begin with the firſt, *viz.*

I. IDLE WORDS: that is, uſeleſs Chat, unprofitable Talk, that is not referred any way to the glory of God: This is a common evil, and little regarded by moſt men, but yet a ſin of ſeverer aggravations than the moſt imagine. Light words weigh heavy in God's ballance.

*Arg.* 1. For firſt, the evil of them is exceedingly aggravated by this: They abuſe and pervert the Tongue, that noble member, from that employment and uſe which God by the law of Creation deſigned it to. God gave not to man the Organs and power of Speech (which is his excellency above the Beaſts) to ſerve a paſſion, or vain humour, to vent the froth and vanity of his ſpirit: but to extol his Creator, and render him the praiſe of all his admirable and glorious works. For though the Creation be a curious well-tuned Inſtrument, yet man is the Muſician that muſt touch it and make the melody; this was the end of God in forming thoſe Inſtruments and Organs: but now hereby they are ſubject to Satan and Luſt, and employed to the diſhonour of God that made them. God is pleaſed to ſuſpend the power of Speech (as we ſee in Children) till Reaſon begin to bud in them; they have not the liberty of one, till they have the uſe of the other: which plainly ſhews, that God is not willing to have our words run waſte.

*Arg.* 2. It is a ſinful waſting of our precious time, and that puts a further aggravation upon it. Conſider, Sirs, the time of Life is but a little ſpot betwixt two eternities. The long ſuffering God wheels about thoſe glorious Celeſtial Bodies over your heads in a conſtant revolution, to beget time for you; and the preciouſneſs of every minute thereof reſults from its uſe and end: it is intended and afforded as a ſpace to you to repent in, *Rev.* 2. 21. And therefore great things depend upon it: no leſs than your eternal Happineſs or Miſery, hangs upon thoſe precious opportunities. Every minute of it hath an influence into Eternity. How would the damned value one hour of it, if they might enjoy it! The buſineſs you have to do in it, is of unſpeakable weight and concernment; this great work, this Soul-work, and Eternity-work lies upon your hands, you are caſt into ſtreights of time about it. And if ſo, Oh what an evil is it in you, to waſte it away thus to no purpoſe!

*Arg.* 3. It's a ſin that few are ſenſible of, as they are of other ſins, and therefore the more dangerous. It's commonly committed, and that without checks of Conſcience. Other ſins, as Murther and Adultery, though they be horrid ſins, yet are but ſeldom committed, and when they are, Conſcience is ſtartled at the horridneſs of them: Few, except they be prodigious wretches indeed, dare make light of them. But now for idle and vain words, there are innumerable ſwarms of theſe every day, and few regard them. The intercourſe betwixt the heart and tongue is quick; they are quickly committed, and as eaſily forgotten.

*Arg.* 4. And then 4thly, They have miſchievous effects upon others. How long doth an idle word or fooliſh jeſt ſtick in mens minds, and become an occaſion of much ſin to them? The froath and vanity of thy Spirit, which thy tongue ſo freely vents among thy vain Companions, may be working in their minds, when thou art in the duſt, and ſo be tranſmitted from one to another; for unto that no more is requiſite than an *objective exiſtence* of thoſe vain words in their memories. And thus mayſt thou be ſinning in the perſons of thy Companions, when thou art turned into duſt. And this is one reaſon that *Suarez* gives for a general Judgment, after men have paſt their particular judgment, immediately after their death, *Becauſe* (ſaith he) *after this, multitudes of ſins by their means will be committed in the world, for which they muſt yet be judged to a fuller meaſure of wrath.* So that look as many of the precious Servants of God now in glory, have left many weighty and holy Sayings behind them, by which many thouſands of ſouls have been benefited, and God glorified on Earth, after they had left it: So thou leaveſt that vanity upon the mind of others behind thee, by which he may be diſhonoured to many generations.

And then 2. For PROPHANE OATHS, the corrupt fruit of a graceleſs heart; Oh how common are theſe among you! yea, the habit of ſwearing is ſo ſtrengthened in ſome, that they have loſt all Senſe and Conſcience of the ſin. Now, Oh that I might prevail with you to repent of this wickedneſs, and break the force of this cuſtomary evil among you! Will you but give me the reading of a few pages more; and weigh with the reaſon of men, what you read? If you will not hearken to counſel, it is a fatal ſign, 2 *Cor.* 2. 15, 16. and you ſhall mourn for this obſtinacy hereafter, *Prov.* 5. 12, 13. Deſperate is that evil that ſcorns the remedy. And if you have patience to read it, the Lord give you an heart to conſider what you read, and obey the Counſels of God; or elſe it were better thine eyes had never ſeen theſe lines. Well then, I beſeech you conſider,

*Arg.* 1. That prophane Oaths are an high abuſe of the dreadful and ſacred Name of God, which ſhould neither be ſpoken or thought of without the deepeſt awe and reverence. It is the taking of that ſacred Name in vain, *Exod.* 20. 7. Now God is exceeding tender and jealous over his Name: it is dear to him: his Name is dreadful and glorious, *Malac.* 1. 14. *I am a great King, and my Name i* *dreadful among the Heathens.* The Heathen would not ordinarily mention the names of ſuch as they reverenced. *Suetonious* ſaith, that *Auguſtus* prohibited the common uſe of his name: he thought it an indignity to have his name toſt up and down in every one's mouth. Yea, ſays Dr. *Willet* on *Exod.* 20. it was a uſe among them to keep ſecret ſuch names as they would have in reverence. They durſt not mention the name of *Demogorgon*, whom they held to be the firſt God: They thought when he was named, the earth would tremble. Alſo the name of *Mercurius Triſmegiſtus* was very ſparingly uſed, becauſe of that reverence the people had for him. Now conſider, ſhall poor worms be ſo tender of preſerving the reverence of their names? Shall not Heathens dare to uſe the names of their Idols; and ſhall the ſacred and dreadful name of the true God be thus bandied up and down by tongues of his own Creatures? Will not God be avenged for theſe abuſes of his Name? Be confident, it ſhall one day be ſanctified upon you in judgment, becauſe ye did not ſanctifie it according to your duty.

*Arg.* 2. Swearing is a part of the Worſhip of God, and therefore prophane ſwearing can be no leſs than the profanation of his worſhip, and robbing him of all the glory he has thereby, Deut. 6. 13. *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his Name.* So Jer. 4. 2. *Thou ſhalt ſwear, the Lord liveth, in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righteouſneſs.* If a man ſwear by God after this manner, God is exceedingly glorified thereby. Now that you may ſee what revenue of Glory God hath from this part of his worſhip, and how it becomes a part of Divine Worſhip; you muſt know, Than an Oath is nothing elſe, but *The asking or deſiring a Divine Teſtimony, for the confirmation of the truth of our teſtimony.* Heb. 6. 16. *For men verily ſwear by the greater, and an Oath for [confirmation] is to them an end of all ſtrife.* The corruption of humane nature by the fall, has made man ſuch a falſe and fickle creature, that his ſingle teſtimony cannot be Sufficient Security for another, (eſpecially in weighty Caſes) to reſt upon; and therefore in ſwearing, he calleth God for a witneſs of the truth of that he affirms, or promiſeth. I ſay, calleth God to be a witneſs of the truth of what he ſaith, becauſe he is Truth it ſelf, and cannot lie, *Heb.* 6. 18. Now this calling for, or asking of a Teſtimony from God, makes an Oath become a part of God's Worſhip, and gives him a great deal of Glory and Honour: For hereby he that ſweareth, acknowledgeth his *Omniſciency*, and *Infallible Truth* and *Righteouſneſs.* His *Omniſciency* is acknowledged; for by this appeal to Him, we imply and acknowledge him to be the *Searcher of the hearts and reins*; that he knows the ſecret intents and meaning of our ſpirits. *His ſupreme and Infallible Truth* is alſo acknowledged; for this is manifeſtly carried in an Oath, That though I am a falſe and deceitful Creature, and my affirmation cannot obtain univerſal and full credence, yet he that is greater than I, by whoſe Name I ſwear, cannot deceive. And laſtly, his *Righteouſneſs* is acknowledged in an Oath: for he that ſweareth doth either *expreſly* or *implicitly* put himſelf under the curſe and wrath of God, if he ſwear falſely, Every Oath hath an execration or imprecation in it, Neh. 10. 29. *They entered into a curſe and an oath to walk in God's law.* And ſo 2 Cor. 1. 23. *I call God for a record upon my ſoul.* And the uſual form in the Old Teſtament was, *The Lord do ſo to me, and more alſo.* Now hereby God hath the Glory of his Righteouſneſs and Juſtice given him by the Creature, and therefore it is a choice part of the Divine Worſhip, or of that homage which a creature oweth to his God. And if this be ſo, then how eaſily may the ſin of raſh and profane Oaths be hence argued and aggravated? The more excellent any thing is by an inſtitution of God, by ſo much more horrid and abominable is the abuſe thereof. O how often is the dreadful Majeſty of Heaven and Earth called to witneſs to frivolous things! and oft to be a witneſs of our rage and fury! as 1 *Sam.* 14. 39. Is it a light thing to rob him of his peculiar Glory, and ſubject poor ſouls to his curſe and wrath, who has ſaid, He *will be a ſwift witneſs againſt you?* Mal. 3. 5. Your tongues are nimble in committing this ſin, and God will be ſwift in puniſhing of it.

*Arg.* 3. It is a ſin which God hath ſeverely threatned to puniſh, and that with temporal and corporal plagues: *For by reaſon of Oaths, the land mourns,* Hoſ. 4. 2, 3. That is, it brings the heavy Judgment of God upon whole Nations, under which they ſhall mourn. And in *Zech.* 5. 2, 3, 4. you have there *a Roll of curſes, (i. e.)* a Catalogue of judgments and woes, *the length thereof twenty Cubits* (*i. e.* ten yards.) To ſet out the multitude of woes contained in it, it's a long Catalogue: and *A flying Roll,* to denote the *ſwiftneſs* of it; it flyes towards the houſe of the Swearer; it makes haſte. The Judgments that are written in it linger not, but are even in pain to be delivered. And this flying Roll full of dreadful Woes, flyes and enters into the houſe of the Swearer: *and it ſhall therein remain,* ſaith the Lord, it ſhall cleave to his family; none ſhall claw off theſe woes from him: And it ſhall conſume the Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof, *(i. e.)* bring utter ſubvertion, ruine, and deſolation to his Houſe. O dreadful ſin! What a deſolation doth it make! Your Mouths are full of Oaths, and your Houſes ſhall be full of Curſes. Wo to that wretched Family into which this flying Roll ſhall enter; Wo, I ſay, to the wretched Inhabitants thereof. *The Curſe of the Lord* (ſaith *Solomon*) *is in the houſe of the wicked; but He bleſſeth the [habitation] of the juſt,* Prov. 3. 33. *Tuguriolum,* (i. e.) ſaith *Mercer*, *his poor little Tenement or Cottage.* There is a Bleſſing, the promiſes like Clouds of Bleſſing, dwell over it, and drop mercies on it: but a Curſe is in the houſe of the wicked. Ah, how many ſtately *Manſions* are there, in which little other language but Oaths and Curſes are heard! and theſe are as ſo much Gunpowder laid under the foundation of them, which when Juſtice ſhall ſet fire to, O what work will it make! Wo to the Inhabitants thereof. Well then, break off this ſin by Repentance, unleſs you intend to ruine your Families, and bring all the Curſes of God into your Houſes. If you have no pity for your ſelves, yet pity your Poſterity; have mercy for your Wives and Children, don't ruine all for the indulgence of a luſt.

*Arg.* 4. But that is not all; It brings Soul judgments and ſpiritual plagues upon you: It brings Hell along with it. And if thou be not afraid to ſin, yet methinks thou ſhouldſt be afraid to *burn*; if the love of God can work nothing upon thy brawny heart, yet methinks the Terrors of the Lord ſhould ſtartle and affright it. To this purpoſe, I beſeech you, weigh theſe Scriptures; and methinks, unleſs God hath loſt all his Authority with you, and Hell all its Terrors, it ſhould ſtartle you. The firſt is that dreadful Scripture, James 5. 12. *But above all things, my Brethren, ſwear not; neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other oath, but let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; leſt ye fall into [Condemnation.]*

*demnation.*] O view this Text ſeriouſly. Methinks it ſhould be like the fingers that came forth and wrote upon the wall, that dreadful Sentence that changed the Countenance of a King, and that in the height of a frolick humour, and made his Knees ſmite together. Mark, [*Above all things*] a form of vehemency and earneſtneſs, like that, Epheſ. 6. 16. *But above all, taking the ſhield of Faith.* As Faith hath a prelation there before all the Graces, ſo Swearing here before all other Vices. [*Swear not*] (i. e.) *vainly, raſhly, profanely:* for otherwiſe 'tis a lawful thing, and a part of Gods worſhip, as I have ſhewed: but ſwear not vain Oaths, by the Creatures, Heaven, or Earth, *&c.* Which is to advance the creature into the room of God. A ſin to which the *Jews* were much addicted. But, *Let your yea, be yea! and nay, nay? (i.e.)* accuſtom your ſelves to ſhort and plain Affirmations and Negations, to a ſimple and candid expreſſion of your minds. And the thundering Argument that backs it, is this; [*leſt ye fall into Condemnation*] *(i.e.)* leſt for theſe things the Judge of Heaven and Earth paſs a Sentence of condemnation to Hell upon you. Oh Sirs, Dare you touch with this hot iron? Dare you from henceforward commit that Sin, that you know will bring you under the condemnation and judgment of God? Do you know what it is for a ſoul to be caſt at Gods bar? Did you never ſee a poor malefactor tried at the Aſſizes, and obſerve how his face gathers paleneſs, how his Legs tremble, and Death diſplays its colours in his cheeks, when ſentence is given upon him? But what's that to Gods condemnation? What is a Gallows to Hell? Another Text I would commend to your conſideration is that, Exod. 20. 7. *The Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his Name in vain.* Where vain Oaths are eſpecially included. Now what doth God mean, when He ſaith, He will not hold him guiltleſs? The meaning is plain, his ſins ſhall be reckoned and imputed to him, they ſhall lie upon his Soul; he ſhall be bound over to anſwer God for them. O terrible ſentence! What Soul can bear it, or ſtand before it! *Bleſſed is the man* (ſaith *David*) *to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* Surely then, curſed is that man, to whom God will impute them. And to the Swearer they ſhall all be imputed, if he break not off his ſin by repentance,and get a Chriſt the ſooner. O Soul! How dar'ſt thou think of going before the Lord with the guilt of all thy ſins upon thee? When Chriſt would adminiſter the very ſpirit of Joy in one ſentence to a poor Sinner, Matth. 9. 4. He ſaid, *Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven.* And when God would contract the ſum of all miſery into one word, He ſaith, *His ſins ſhall lie down with him in the duſt*, Job 20. 11. Ah ſoul! One of theſe days thou ſhalt be laid on thy Death-bed, or ſee the waves that ſhall entomb thee leaping and roaring upon every ſide; and then thou wilt ſurely have other thoughts of the happineſs that lies in remiſſion of ſin, than thou haſt now. Obſerve the moſt incorrigible Sinner then; hark how he ſighs, and groans, and cries; Ah Lord! and muſt I die? And then ſee how the tears trickle down his Cheeks, and his heart ready to burſt within him. Why, what's the matter? Oh, the Lord will not pardon him, he holds him guilty. If he were ſure his ſins were forgiven, then he could die; but oh! to appear before the Lord in them, appals him, daunts him, kills the very heart of him. He would fain cry for mercy, but Conſcience ſtops his mouth. Oh, ſaith Conſcience, how canſt thou move that tongue to God in prayer for mercy, that hath ſo often rent and torn his glorious Name, by Oaths and Curſes? Sirs! I pray you, do not make light of theſe things: they will look wiſhly upon you one of theſe days, except ye prevent it by ſound converſation.

*Arg.* 5. And then laſtly, to name no more, I pray you conſider, that a cuſtom of vain words and prophane Oaths, is as plain an *indication* and *diſcovery* of an unregenerate Soul, as any in the world. This is a ſure ſign thou art none of Chriſt's, nor haſt any thing to do with the promiſes and priviledges of his people: for by this the Scripture diſtinguiſhed the ſtate of Saints and Sinners, Eccl. 9. 2. *There is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that ſacrificeth, and to him that ſacrificeth not: as is the good, ſo is the ſinner: and he that ſweareth, as he that feareth an Oath.* Mark; he that ſweareth, and he that feareth an Oath, do as manifeſtly diſtinguiſh the Children of God from wicked men, as clean and unclean, righteous and wicked, ſacrificing and not ſacrificing. This fruit of the tongue plainly ſhews what the tree is that bears it, Iſa. 2.6. *The vile perſon will ſpeak of villany; and out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth ſpeaks. Loquere, ut videam,* ſaid one; Speak, that I may ſee what you are. Look what is in the heart, that is vented by the Tongue: where the treaſures of Grace are in the Heart, words miniſtring Grace will be in the Lips, Pſal. 37. 30. *The mouth of the righteous ſpeaketh wiſdom, and his tongue talketh of Judgment; for the law of the Lord is in his heart.* To this ſenſe we muſt underſtand that Scripture, Matt. 12. 27. *By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.* Certainly, Juſtification and Condemnation, in the day of Judgment, ſhall not paſs upon us meerly for the good or bad words we have ſpoken; but according to the ſtate of the Perſon, and frame of the heart. But the meaning is, that our words ſhall juſtifie or condemn us in that day, as evidence of the ſtate and frame of the Soul. We uſe to ſay, ſuch Witneſſes hang'd a man; the meaning is, the Evidence they gave caſt and condemned him. O think ſeriouſly of this; if words evidence the ſtate of the Soul, what a woful ſtate muſt thy Soul needs be in, whoſe mouth overflows with Oaths and Curſes! How many witneſſes will be brought in, to caſt thee in the great Day? *Your own tongue ſhall then fall upon you*, as the expreſſion is, *Pſal.* 64. 8. And out of your own mouth, God will fetch abundant evidence to condemn you. And thus I have opened unto you the evil of vain words, and prophane Oaths; and preſented to your view their ſeveral aggravations. If by theſe things there be a relenting pang upon thy heart, and a ſerious reſolution of reformation, then I ſhall commend theſe few helps or means to thy peruſal,and conclude this Head. And the firſt help is this,

*Help.* 1. Seriouſly fix in thy thoughts that Scripture, *Matth.* 12. 36. *But I ſay unto you, that every idle word that Men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account thereof in the day of Judgment.* Oh let it ſound in thine ears day and night! Oh ponder them in thy heart. [*I ſay unto you*] I that have always been in the Father's boſom, and do fully know his mind, I that am conſtituted the Judge of quick and dead, and do fully underſtand the rule of Judgment,and the whole proceſs thereof, I ſay, and do aſſure you, that [*every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak,*] (i. e.) every word that hath not a tendency and reference to the Glory of God though there be no other obliquity or evil in them than this, that they want a good end. How much more then ſcurrilous Words, bloody Oaths and Blaſphemies! [*Men ſhall give an account thereof*] that is, ſhall be caſt and condem

d to ſuffer the wrath of God for them; as appears
y that parallel Scripture, 1 *Pet.* 4. 4, 5. For as
e Learned obſerve, there is plainly a *Matalepſis* in
eſe words; The *Antecedent*, *to give an account*, is put
r the *Conſequent*, puniſhment, and condemnation to
ell fire; the certainty whereof admits but of this
e exception, *viz.* intervenient repentance, or a
rdon obtained through the blood of Chriſt here,
efore you be preſented at that judgment-ſeat. Oh
en, what a bridle ſhould this Text be to thy extra-
gant tongue! I remember *Hierom* was wont to ſay
*hether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, methinks I*
*ll hear the ſound of theſe words in mine ear, Ariſe ye*
*ad, and come to judgment.* O that the ſound of the
ords may be always in your ears!

*Help* 2. Conſider before you ſpeak, and be not
ſh to utter words without knowledge. He that
peaks what he thinks not, ſpeaks *Hypocritically*; and
e that thinks not what to ſpeak, ſpeaks *incon-*
*ſiderately.* You have cauſe to weigh your words,
efore you deliver them by your tongue; for whe-
ther you do, or do not, the Lord *pondereth* them.
ecords are kept of them; elſe you could not be
lled to an account for them, as I ſhewed you you
muſt.

*Help* 3. Reſign up your Tongues to God every
y, and beg him to guide and keep it. So did *Da-*
, Pſal. 141. 3. *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth,*
*keep thou the door of my lips.* Beg him to keep
from provocations and temptations; or if you
l into them, intreat him for ſtrength to rule your
its in them, that you may not be conquered by
ptations.

*Help* 4. But above all, labour to get your Souls
nſed and purified by Faith, poſſeſt with ſaving
gracious Principles: All other means will be in-
ctual without this. Oh ſee the vileneſs of thy
ure, and the neceſſity of a change to paſs upon it.
t make the tree good, and then his fruit good: a
Nature will produce new words and actions. To
your ſouls with Vows and Reſolutions, while
are ſtrangers to a regenerate work, is to bind
*pſon* with green withs, whilſt his locks remain
n his head. I will ſhut up this with the Advice
hat divine Poet, Mr. *George Herbert*, it may be it
affect thee, and run in thy thoughts when thou
alone.

*ake not his Name, who made thy mouth, in vain;*
*gets thee nothing, and hath no excuſe.*
*and wine, plead a pleaſure; avarice gain:*
*t the cheap Swearer, through his open ſluce,*
*Lets his Soul run for nought, as little fearing.*
*Were I an* Epicure, *I could bate ſwearing.*

*n thou doſt tell anothers jeſt, therein*
*mit the Oaths, which true Wit cannot need?*
*out of tales the mirth, but not the ſin.*
*e pares his apple, that will cleanly feed.*
*Play not away the virtue of that Name,*
*Which is thy beſt ſtake, when grief makes thee tame.*

*cheapeſt ſins moſt dearly puniſht are,*
*cauſe to ſhun them alſo is ſo cheap:*
*e have wit to mark them, and to ſpare.*
*crumble not away thy Souls fair heap.*
*If thou wilt die, the gates of Hell are broad.*
*Pride, and full ſins, have made the way a road.*

## III. CAUTION.

THE next danger I ſhall give you warning of, is the ſin of *Uncleanneſs*; with which, I fear, too many of the rude and looſer ſort of Seamen defile themſelves; and poſſibly, the temptations to this ſin are advantaged, and ſtrengthened upon them more than others, by their condition and employments. Let no Man be offended that I here give warning of this evil; I intend to aſperſe no Man's perſon, or raiſe up jealouſie againſt any: but would faithfully diſcharge my duty to all, and that in all things. It was the complaint of *Salvian* many hundred years ago, that he could not ſpeak againſt the Vices of men, but one or other would thus object, *There he meant me, he hit me*; and ſo *ſtorm and fret. Alas* (as he replieth) *it is not we that ſpeak to you, but your own Conſcience; we ſpeak to the Order, but Conſcience ſpeaks to the Perſon.* I ſhall uſe no other Apology in this caſe. That this Sin is a dreadful Gulph, a Quick-ſand that hath ſuck'd and deſtroyed thouſands, is truly apparent, both from Scripture and Experience. *Solomon* tells us, Prov. 22. 14. *That it is a deep ditch, into which ſuch as are abhorred of the Lord ſhall fall.* Oh the multitudes of dead that are there! And if ſo, I cannot in duty to God, or love to you, be ſilent, where the danger is ſo great. It is both needleſs, and beſides my intention, here to inſiſt largely upon the explication of the particulars in which uncleanneſs is diſtributed: the more ordinary and common ſins of this kind are known by the names of Adultery and Fornication: the latter is, when ſingle perſons come together, out of the ſtate of marriage; the former is, when at leaſt one of the perſons committing uncleanneſs is contracted in marriage. This now is the evil I ſhall warn you of. And that thou mayſt never fall into this pit, I ſhall endeavour to fence and hedge up thy way to it, by theſe enſuing Arguments: And Oh that the light of every Argument may be powerfully reflected upon your Conſcience! Many men are very wiſe in generals, but very vain ἐν διαλογισμοῖς, in the reaſonings, or imaginations, as the Apoſtle calls them, *Rom.* 1. 22. (*i. e.*) in their *practical inferences.* They are good at ſpeculation, but bunglers at application. But it is truth in the particulars, that, like an hot Iron, pierces; and Oh that you might find theſe to be ſuch in your Soul! To that end, conſider,

*Gubcr. Di lib. 4. Salv.*

*Arg.* 1. The names and titles by which this ſin is known in Scripture, are very vile and baſe. The Spirit of God, doubtleſs, hath put ſuch odious names upon it, on purpoſe to deter and affright men from it. In general, it's called *Luſt*; and ſo (as one notes) it beareth the name of its mother. It is *Uncleanneſs* in the abſtract, *Numb.* 5. 19. Filthineſs it ſelf; *An abomination*; Ezek. 22. 11. And they that commit are called *abominable*, Revel. 21. 8. *Varro* ſaith, the word imports that which is not lawful to mention; or rather, abominable perſons are ſuch as are not fit for the ſociety of men, ſuch as ſhould be hiſs'd out of all mens company: They are rather to be reckoned to beaſts than man. Yea, the Scripture compares them to the filthieſt of beaſts, even to Dogs: When *Iſhboſheth* charged this ſin upon *Abner*, 2 Sam. 3. 8. *Am I a Dogs head,* (ſaith he) *that thou chargeſt me with a fault concerning this woman?* And in Deut. 23. 18. *The hire of a whore,* and the *price of a dog*, are put together. The expreſſion of this luſt in words or geſture, is called *neighing*, Jer. 5. 8. Even as fed Horſes do, that ſcatter their luſt promiſcuouſly. Or if the Scripture ſpeaks of them as men, yet it allows them but the external ſhape of men, not the underſtanding of men. Among the *Jews* they were called Fools in Iſrael, 2 *Sam.* 13. 13. and ſo Prov. 6. 32. *Whoſo committeth adultery with a woman, lacketh underſtanding.* And ſinners, Luke 7. 37. *And behold a woman that was a* [*ſinner*;] that is, an eminent notorious ſinner. by which term, the Scripture deciphers an unclean perſon; as if among ſinners there were none of ſuch a prodigious ſtature in ſin as they. And we find that when the ſpirit of God would ſet forth any ſin by an odious name, he calls it Adultery; ſo Idolatry is called Adultery, *Ezek.* 16. 32. And indeed this ſpiritual and corporal Adultery, oftentimes are found in the ſame perſons. They that give themſelves up to the one, are by a righteous hand of God given up to the other, as it is too manifeſtly and frequently exemplified in the World. So earthly-mindedneſs hath this name put upon it, on purpoſe to affright men from it, *Jam.* 4. 4. Now certainly, God would never borrow the name of this ſin to ſet out the evil of other ſins, if it were not moſt vile and abominable. It's call'd the ſin of the *Gentiles*, or heathen, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 5. And oh that we could ſay, it were only among them that know not God! Now then, are you able to look theſe Scriptures in the face, and not bluſh? Oh what a ſin is this! Art thou willing to be ranked with *Fools, Dogs, Sinners, Heathens,* and take thy lot with them? God hath planted that affection of ſhame in thy nature, to be as a guard againſt ſuch filthy luſts; it's a ſin that hath filthineſs enough in it, to defile the tongue that mentions it, *Ephеſ.* 5. 3.

*Arg.* 2. It is a ſin that the God of Heaven hath often prohibited, and ſeverely condemned in the Word, which abundantly declares his abhorrence of it. You have prohibition upon prohibition, and threatning upon threatning in the Word againſt it. Exod. 20. 14. *Thou ſhalt not commit adultery.* This was delivered upon Mount *Sinai*, with the greateſt ſolemnity and terrour, by the mouth of God himſelf. Turn to, and ponder the following Scriptures, among many others, *Prov.* 5. 2, 3, 4. *Acts* 5. 29. *Rom.* 1. 24, 29. *Rom.* 13. 13. 1 *Cor.* 6. 13, 14, 15, 16, 18. 2 *Cor.* 12. 21. *Gal.* 5. 29. *Epheſ.* 5. 3. *Col.* 3. 5. 1 *Theſ.* 4. 2, 3, 4, 5. *Heb* 12. 16. *Heb.* 13. 4. All theſe, with many others, are the true ſayings of God; By them thou ſhalt be tryed in the laſt day. Now conſider how terrible it will be to have ſo many words of God, and ſuch terrible ones too, as moſt of thoſe are, to be brought in and pleaded againſt thy Soul in that day: mountains and hills may depart, but theſe words ſhall not depart; Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away, but not one tittle of the Word ſhall paſs away. Believe it, Sinner, as ſure as the Heavens are over thy head, and the Earth under thy feet, they ſhall one day take hold of thee, though we poor worms who plead them with thee, die and periſh, Zech. 1. 5, 6. *The Lord tells us it ſhall not fall to the ground.* Which is a borrowed ſpeech from a Dart that is flung with a weak hand; it goes not home to the mark, but falls to the ground by the way. None of theſe words ſhall ſo fall to the ground.

*Arg.* 3. It is a ſin that defiles and deſtroys the body, 1 *Cor.* 6. 18. *He that committeth adultery, ſinneth againſt his own body.* In moſt other ſins the body is but the *Inſtrument*, here it is the *Object* againſt which the ſin is committed; that body of thine, which ſhould be the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, is turned into a ſtye of filthineſs; yea, it not only *defiles*, but deſtroys it. *Job* calls it a *fire that burneth to deſtruction, Job* 31. 12. or as the *Septuagint* reads it, a fire that burneth in all the Members. It is a ſin that God hath plagued with ſtrange and terrible diſeaſes; that *Morbus Gallicus*, and *Sudor Anglicus*, and that *Plica Polonica* whereof you may read in *Bolton*'s four laſt things, page 30. and *Sclater* on *Rom.* 1. 30. Theſe were judgments ſent immediately by God's own hand, to correct the new ſins and enormities of the world; for they ſeem to put the beſt Phyſicians beſides their Books. O how terrible is it to lie groaning under the ſad effects of this ſin! As *Solomon* tells us, Prov. 5. 11. *And thou mourn at the laſt, when thy fleſh and thy body are conſumed.* To this ſenſe ſome expound that terrible Text, Heb. 13. 4. *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge: (i. e.)* with ſome remarkable judgment inflicted on them in this world: if it eſcape the puniſhment of men, it ſhall not eſcape the vengeance of God. Ah! with what comfort may a man lie down upon a ſick bed, when the ſickneſ can be looked upon as a Fatherly Viſitation comin in Mercy? But thou that ſhorteneſt thy life, an bringeſt ſickneſs on thy ſelf by ſuch a ſin, art th Devil's Martyr; and to whom canſt thou turn i ſuch a day for comfort?

*Arg.* 4. Conſider what an indelible blot it is t thy nature, which can never be wiped away: thoug thou eſcape with thy life, yet as one ſays, thou ſhal be burnt in the hand, yea, branded in the forehead What a foul ſcar is that upon the face of *David* himſelf, which abides to this day? *He was upright in a things, ſave in the matter of* Uriah. And how w he ſlighted by his own Children and Servants afte he had committed this ſin? Compare 1 *Sam.* 2. 30 with 2 *Sam.* 12. 10, 11. *A wound and diſhonour ſh be get; and his reproach ſhall not be wiped away.* Th *is to give thine honour to another*, Prov. 5. 9. Th ſhame and reproach attending it, ſhould be a preſervative from it. Indeed the Devil tempts to it b hopes of ſecrecy and concealment; but though man other ſins lie hid, and poſſibly ſhall never come t light, until that day of manifeſtation of all hidd things, yet this is a ſin that is moſt uſually diſcovered. Under the Law, God appointed an extraordina way for the diſcovery of it, *Numb.* 5. 13. And t this day the Providence of God doth often ve ſtrangely bring it to light, though it be a deed o darkneſs. The Lord hath many times brought ſu perſons either by terrors of Conſcience, Phrenſie, some other means, to be the publiſhers and pr claimers of their own ſhame. Yea, obſerve th ſaid Reverend Mr. *Hilderſham* on the Fourth of *J* even thoſe that are moſt cunning to conceal and hi it from the eyes of the world, yet through the j judgment of God, every one ſuſpects and conden them for it; this daſhes in pieces, at one ſtroke, th Veſſel in which the precious Oyntment of a go name is carried. A fool in *Iſrael* ſhall be thy ti and even Children ſhall point at thee.

*Arg.* 5. It ſcatters thy ſubſtance, and roots up t foundation of thy eſtate. *Job* 31. 12. *It roots u the increaſe. Strangers ſhall be filled with thy we and thy labours ſhall be in the houſe of a ſtranger.* Pr 5. 10. *For by means of a whoriſh woman, a ma brought to a morſel of bread,* Prov. 6. 26. It gi rags for its Livery (ſaith one:) and though it b *furthered* by the fulneſs, yet it's *followed* with a mo of bread. This is one of thoſe temporal Judgm with which God puniſhes the unclean perſon in this life. The word *Delilah*, which is the name of an Harlot, is conceived to come from a root that ſignifies to exhauſt, drain, or draw dry. This ſin will quickly exhauſt the fulleſt eſtate; and oh what a dreadful thing will this be, when God ſhall require an account of thy Stewardſhip in the great day! How righteous is it, that that man ſhould be fuel to the wrath of God, whoſe health and wealth have been ſo much fuel to maintain the flame of Luſt! Oh how laviſh of their eſtates are ſinners to ſatisfie their Luſts! If the Members of Chriſt be ſick, or in priſon, they may there periſh and ſtarve, before they will relieve them; but to obtain their Luſts, Oh how expenſive! *Ask me never ſo much, and I will give it*, ſaid *Shechem*, Gen. 34. 12. *Ask what thou wilt, and it ſhall be given thee*, ſaid *Herod* to the daughter of his *Herodias*. Well, you are liberal in ſpending treaſures upon your Luſts; and believe it, God will ſpend treaſures of wrath to puniſh you for your Luſts. It had been a thouſand times better for thee, thou hadſt never had an eſtate, that thou hadſt begged thy bread from door to door, than to have ſuch a ſad reckoning as thou ſhalt ſhortly have for it.

*Arg*. 6. Oh ſtand off from this ſin, becauſe it is a pit out of which very Few have been recovered that have fallen therein. Few are the footſteps of returners from this den. The longer a man lives in it, the leſs power he hath to leave it. It is not only a *damning*, but an *infatuating* ſin. The danger of falling this way muſt needs be great, and the fall very deſperate, becauſe few that fall into it do ever riſe again. I ſhall lay two very terrible Scriptures before you to this purpoſe, either of them enough to drive thee ſpeedily to Chriſt, or to drive thee out of thy wits; the one is that, Eccleſ. 7. 26. *And I find more bitter than death, the woman whoſe heart is ſnares and nets, and whoſe hands are bands: Whoſo pleaſeth God ſhall eſcape from her, but the ſinner ſhall be taken by her.* The Argument which the ſpirit of God uſes here to diſſwade from this Sin, is taken from the *ſubject*; they that fall into it, for the moſt part, are perſons in whom God has no delight, and ſo in judgment are delivered up to it, and never recovered by Grace from it. The other is that in Prov. 22. 14. *The mouth of a ſtrange woman is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord ſhall fall therein.* Oh terrible word! able to daunt the heart of the ſecureſt ſinner; your Whores *embrace* you, yea, but God *abhors* you; you have their *love*, oh but you are under Gods *hatred!* What ſay you to theſe two Scriptures? If you are not Atheiſts, methinks ſuch a word from the mouth of God, ſhould ſtrike like a Dart through thy Soul. And upon this account it is that they never are recover'd, becauſe God has no delight in them. If this be not enough, view one Scripture more, Prov. 2. 18, 19. *For her houſe inclineth unto Death, and her paths unto the Dead: None that go to er, return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.* Reader, if thou be a perſon addicted to this ſin, go hy ways, and think ſeriouſly what a caſe thou art n. *None return again* (*i. e.*) a very few of many: e examples of ſuch as have been recovered, are very re. *Pliny* tells us, the *Mermaids* are commonly ſeen green Meadows, and have inchanting Voices; ut there are always found heaps of dead mens bones ing by them. This may be but a fabulous ory: But I am ſure it is true of the Harlt, whoſe Syren-Songs have allured thouſands to eir inevitable deſtruction. It's a captivating ſin, at leads away the ſinner in triumph; they cannot deliver their ſouls: Prov. 7. 22. *He goeth after her ſtraightway, as an Ox goeth to the ſlaughter, or as a* [*Fool*] *to the correction of the ſtocks.* Mark; a Fool: it dementates and befools men, takes away their underſtanding; the *Septuagint* renders it, ὥσπερ κύων ἐπὶ δεσμοὺς, As a dog to the Collar, or, like as we uſe to ſay, a dog in a ſtring. I have read of one, that having by this ſin waſted his body, was told by Phyſitians, that except he left it, he would quickly loſe his Eyes; he anſwered, If it be ſo, then *Vale lumen amicum*, Farewel ſweet light. And I remember *Luther* writes of a certtain Nobleman in his Country who was ſo beſotted with the ſin of Whoredom, that he was not aſhamed to ſay, That if he might live here for ever, and be carried from one ſtews to another, would never deſire any other Heaven. The greateſt Conquerors that have ſubdued Kingdoms, and ſcorned to be commanded by any, have been miſerably enſlaved and captivated by this Luſt. O think ſadly upon this argument; God often gives them up to Impenitency, and will not ſpend a rod upon them to reclaim them. See *Hoſ*. 4. 14. *Revel.* 22. 11.

*Arg*. 7. And then in the 7*th* place, Thoſe few that have been recovered by Repentance out of it, oh how bitter hath God made it to their ſouls! *I find it* (ſaith *Solomon*) *more bitter than death*, Eccleſ. 7. 26 Death is a very bitter thing; Oh what a ſtrugling and reluctance is there in Nature againſt it! But this is more bitter. Poor *David* found it ſo, when he roared under thoſe bloody laſhes of Conſcience for it, in *Pſalm* 51. Ah! when the Lord ſhall open the poor Sinner's eyes, to ſee the horrid guilt he hath hereby contracted upon his own poor ſoul, it will haunt him as a Ghoſt, day and night, and terrifie his ſoul with dreadful forms and repreſentations O dear-bought pleaſure, if this were all it ſhould coſt. What is now become of the pleaſure of ſin? Oh! what gall and wormwood wilt thou taſte, when once the Lord ſhall bring thee to a ſight of it; the Hebrew word for Repentance (*Nacham*) and the Greek word (*Metamelia*) the one ſignifies an *irking of the Soul*, and the other ſignifies *After grief*. Yea, it is called *A renting of the heart*, as if it were torn in pieces in a man's breaſt. Ask ſuch a poor ſoul, what it thinks of ſuch Courſes now? Oh now it loaths, abhors it ſelf for them. Ask him, if he dare ſin in that kind again? You may as well ask me (will he anſwer) whether I will thruſt my hand into the fire. Oh it breeds an *indignation* in him againſt himſelf. That word [ἀγανάκτησιν] 2 *Cor*. 7 11. ſignifies the riſing of the ſtomach with very rage, and being ſick with anger. Religious wrath is the fierceſt wrath. Oh what a furnace is the breaſt of the poor penitent! what fumes, what heats do abound in it, whilſt the ſin is even before him, and the ſenſe of guilt upon him? One night of carnal pleaſure will keep thee many days and nights upon the rack of horrour, if ever God give thee repentance unto life.

*Arg*. 8. And if thou never repent, as indeed but few do that fall into this ſin, then conſider how God will follow thee with eternal vengeance. Thou ſhalt have flaming Fire for burning Luſt. This is a ſin that hath a ſcent of fire and brimſtone with it, whereever you meet with it in Scripture. The Harlots gueſts are lodged in the *depths of Hell*, Prov. 9. 18 No more perfumed beds; they muſt now lie down in flames. Whoremongers ſhall have their part in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone; which is the ſecond death, *Revel*. 21. 1. Such ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God and Chriſt, 1 *Cor*. 6. 9.

No Dog ſhall come into the new *Jeruſalem*; there ſhall in no wiſe enter in any thing that defileth, or that worketh abomination. You have ſpent your ſtrength upon ſin, and now God ſets himſelf a work to ſhew the glory of his Power in puniſhing, *Rom.* 9. 22. The wrath of God is tranſacted upon them in Hell by his own immediate hand, *Heb.* 10. 30. Becauſe no Creature is ſtrong enough to convey all his wrath, and it muſt all be poured out upon them, therefore he himſelf will torment them for ever with his own immediate Power; now he will *ſtir up all his wrath*, and ſinners ſhall know the price of their pleaſures. The puniſhment of *Sodom* is a little Map of Hell, as I may ſay. Oh how terrible a day was that upon thoſe unclean wretches! but that fire was not of many days continuance; when it had conſumed them, and their houſes, it went out for want of matter: but here, the breath of the Lord like a ſtream of brimſtone, kindles it. The pleaſure was quickly gone, but the ſting and torment abide for ever. *Who knoweth the power of his anger? Even according to his fear ſo is his wrath*, Pſal. 90. 11. Oh conſider, how will his Almighty Power rack and torment thee! Think on this, when ſin comes with a ſmiling face towards thee in the temptation. Oh think! If the humane nature of Chriſt recoiled, when his cup of Wrath was given him to drink; if he were ſore amazed at it, how ſhalt thou, a poor worm, bear and grapple with it for ever?

*Arg.* 9. Conſider further, how cloſely ſoever thou carrieſt thy wickedneſs in this world, tho it ſhould never be diſcovered here, yet there is a day coming when all will out, and that before Angels and men. God will rip up thy ſecret ſins in the face of that great Congregation at the day of judgment: then that which was done in ſecret ſhall be proclaimed as upon the houſe-top, *Luke* 12. 3. *Then God will judge the* (*ſecrets*) *of men*, Rom. 2. 16. *the hidden things of darkneſs will be brought into the open light.* Sinner, there will be no ſculking for thee in the Grave, no declining this Bar; thou refuſedſt indeed to come to the *Throne of Grace*, when God invited thee, but there will be no refuſing to appear before *the Bar of Juſtice*, when Chriſt ſhall ſummon thee. And as thou canſt not decline appearance, ſo neither canſt thou then palliate and hide thy wickedneſs any longer; for then ſhall the *Books* be opened; the book of God's Omniſcience, and the Book of thine own Conſcience, wherein all thy ſecret Villany is recorded; for though it ceaſed to ſpeak to thee, yet it ceaſed not to write and record thy actions. If thy ſhameful ſins ſhould be divulged now, it would make thee tear off thy hair in indignation; but then all will be diſcovered. Angels and men ſhall point at thee, and ſay, Lo, this is the Man, this is he that carried it ſo ſmoothly in the world; Mr. *Thomas Fuller* relates a ſtory of *Ottocar* King of *Bohemia*, *who refuſing to do his homage to* Rodolphus *the firſt, Emperor, being at laſt ſorely chaſtiſed with war, condeſcended to do him homage privately in a Tent: but the Tent was ſo contrived by the Emperor's Servants*, (ſaith the Hiſtorian) *that by drawing one cord it was all taken away, and ſo* Ottocar *preſented on his knees, doing Homage to the Emperor, in the view of three Armies.* O Sirs, you think to carry it cloſely, you wait for the Twilight, that none may ſee you; but alas! it will be to no end, this day will diſcover it; and then what confuſion and everlaſting ſhame will cover thee! Will not this work then?

*Arg.* 10. Laſtly, conſider but one thing more, and I have done. By this ſin thou doſt not only damn thine own ſoul, but draweſt another to hell with thee. This ſin is not as a ſingle bullet that kills but one, but as a chain-ſhot, it kills many, two at leaſt, unleſs God give repentance. And if he ſhould give thee repentance, yet the other party may never repent, and ſo periſh for ever through thy wickedneſs; and Oh, what a ſad conſideration will that be to thee, that ſuch a poor ſoul is in Hell, or likely to go thither by thy means! Thou haſt made faſt a ſnare upon a Soul which now thou canſt not untie; thou haſt done that which may be matter of ſorrow to thee as long as thou liveſt; but though thou canſt grieve for it, thou canſt not remedy it. In other ſins it is not ſo; If thou hadſt ſtoll'n another's Goods, reſtitution might be made to the injured party, but here can be none. If thou hadſt murthered another, thy ſin was thine own, not his that was murthered by thee; but this is a complicated ſin, defiling both at once; and if neither repent, then oh what a ſad greeting will theſe poor wretches have in hell! how will they curſe the day that ever they ſaw each others face! Oh what an aggravation of their miſery will this be! For look, as it will be matter of joy in Heaven, to behold ſuch there as we have been inſtrumental to ſave; ſo muſt it needs be a ſtinging aggravation of the miſery of the Damned, to look upon thoſe that have been the inſtruments and means of their damnation. Oh, methinks, if there be any tenderneſs at all in thy Conſcience, if this ſin have not totally brawned and ſtupified thee, theſe Arguments ſhould pierce like a ſword through thy Guilty Soul. Reader, I beſeech thee, by the mercies of God, if thou haſt defiled thy Soul by this abominable ſin, ſpeedily to repent. Oh get the blood of ſprinkling upon thee; there is yet mercy for ſuch a wretch as thou art, if thou wilt accept the terms of it, *Such were ſome of you, but ye are waſhed*, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Publicans and Harlots may enter into the Kingdom of God, *Matth.* 21. 31. Though but few ſuch are recovered, yet how knoweſt thou but the hand of mercy may pull thee, as a brand out of the fire, if now thou wilt return and ſeek it with tears? Though it be a *fire that conſumeth unto deſtruction*, as *Job* calls it, *Job* 1. 12. yet it is not an unquenchable fire, the blood of Chriſt can quench it.

And for you whom God hath kept hitherto from the contagion of it, O bleſs the Lord, and uſe all God's means for the prevention of it. The ſeeds of this ſin are in thy nature; no thank to thee, but reſtraining grace, that thou art not delivered up to it alſo. And that thou mayeſt be kept out of this Pit, conſcionably practiſe theſe few Directions.

*Direct.* 1. Beg of God a clean heart, renewed and ſanctified by ſaving grace; all other endeavours do but palliate a cure: the root of this is deep in thy nature; Oh get that mortified, *Matth.* 15. 9 *Out of the heart proceed fornication, adulteries*, 1 Pe 2. 11, 12. *Abſtain from fleſhly luſt —— having Converſation honeſt.* The luſt muſt firſt be ſubdued, before the converſation can be honeſt.

*Direct.* 2. Walk in the fear of God all the da long, and in the ſenſe of his Omniſcient eye th is ever upon thee. This kept *Joſeph* from this ſin, *Gen.* 39. 9. *How can I do this wickedneſs and againſt God?* Conſider, the darkneſs hideth n from him, but ſhineth as the light. If thou could find a place where the eye of God could not diſco ver thee, it were ſomewhat: Thou dareſt not act this wickedneſs in the preſence of a Child, and wi thou adventure to commit it before the face of Go See that Argument, *Prov.* 5. 20. *And why wilt th* *my Son, be raviſht with a ſtrange woman, and embrace the boſom of a ſtranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.*

*Direct.* 3. Avoid lewd Company, and the Society of unclean perſons; they are but *panders* for Luſt. *Evil communication corrupts good manners.* The tongues of ſinners do caſt fire-balls into the hearts of each other, which the corruption within is eaſily kindled and enflamed by.

*Direct.* 4. Exerciſe thy ſelf in thy Calling diligently. It will be an excellent means of preventing this ſin. It is a good obſervation that one hath; That *Iſrael* was ſafer in the Brick-kilns in *Egypt*, than in the Plains of *Moab*, 2 Sam. 11. 2. *And it came to paſs in the even-tide, that* David *aroſe from off his bed, and walked on the roof of the Kings houſe*; and this was the occaſion of his fall. See 1 *Tim.* 5. 11, 13.

*Direct.* 5. Put a reſtraint upon thine appetite: feed not to exceſs. Fulneſs of bread and idleneſs were the ſins of *Sodom*, that occaſioned ſuch an exuberancy of Luſt. *They are like fed horſes every one neighing after his neighbour's Wife. When I had fed them to the full, then they committed Adultery, and Aſſembled themſelves by Troops in the Harlots houſes,* Jer. 5. 7, 8. This is a ſad requital of the bounty of God, in giving us the enjoyment of the Creatures, to make them fuel to luſt, and inſtruments of ſin.

*Sine Cerere & Baccho friget Venus.*

*Direct.* 6. Make choice of a meet Yoke-fellow, and delight in her you have choſen; This is a lawful Remedy; See 1 *Cor.* 7. 9. God ordained it, *Gen.* 2. 21. But herein appears the corruption of nature, that men delight to tread by-paths, and forſake the way in which God hath appointed; as that Divine Poet Mr. *Herbert* ſaith:

*If God had laid all common, certainly,*
*Man would have been the cloſer: but ſince now*
*God hath impal'd us, on the contrary,*
*Man breaks the fence, and every ground will plow.*
*O what were Man, might he himſelf miſplace!*
*ure, to be croſs he would ſhift feet and face.*

Stollen waters are ſweeter to them, than thoſe waters they might lawfully drink at their own fountain: ut withal know, it is not the having, but the de-ghting in a lawful Wife, as God requires you to o, that muſt be a fence againſt this ſin. So *Solomon*, rov. 5. 19. *Let her be as the loving Hind, and pleaſant oe; Let her breaſts ſatisfie thee at all times, and be ou raviſht always with her love.*

*Direct.* 7. Take heed of running on in a courſe of , (eſpecially Superſtition and Idolatry) in which ſes, and as a puniſhment of which evils, God often es up men to theſe vile affections, *Rom.* 1. 25, 26. *o changed the truth of God into a lye* [*worſhipped*] *ſerved the Creature more than the Creator, who is ſſed for ever, Amen.* [*For this cauſe*] *God gave them o vile affections,* &c. They that defile their Souls Idolatrous practices, God ſuffers as a juſt recomce, their bodies alſo to be defiled with unclean-ſ, that ſo their ruin may be haſtened Let the nirers of Tradition beware of ſuch a judicial dition as this is. Wo to him that is thus delid by the hand of an angry God: No puniſhment he world like this, when God puniſhes ſin with When he ſhall ſuffer thoſe κοινὰς ἐννοίας, thoſe mon notices of Conſcience to be quench'd, all reſtraints to be moved out of the way of ſin, ill not be long ere that ſinner come to his own e.

## IV. CAUTION.

IN the next place, I ſhall make bold to expoſtulate a little with your Conſcience concerning the precious mercies you have received, and the ſolemn promiſes you have bound your ſelves withal for the obtaining of thoſe mercies. I fear God hath many bankrupt debtors among you, that have dealt ſlipperily and unfaithfully with him, that have not rendered to the Lord according to the great things he hath done for them, nor according to thoſe good things they have vowed to the Mighty God of *Jacob*: But truly, if thou be a *deſpiſer* of mercy, thou ſhalt be a *pattern* of wrath; God will *remember* them in fury, who *forget* him in his favours. I will tell you what a grave and eminent Miniſter once told his people (dealing with them about this ſin of unthankfulneſs for mercy) and I pray God it may affect you duly: *Let us all mourn* (ſaith he) *and take on; we are all behind-hand with God: The Chriſtian world is become bankrupt, quite broke, makes no return to God for his Love. He is iſſuing out proceſs to ſeize upon body, goods, and life, and will be put off no longer: Bloody Baylifſs are abroad for bad debtors all the world over. Chriſtians are broke, and make no return, and God is breaking all. He cannot have what he would have, what he ſhould have; he will take what he can get: for money, he will take goods, limbs, arms, legs; he, will have his own out of your skin, out of your blood, out of your bodies and ſouls. He is ſetting the Chriſtian world as light and as low as they have ſet his love. Ah Lord! what a time do we live in? Longſuffering is at an end, Mercy will be righted in Juſtice, Juſtice will have all behind, it will be paid to the utmoſt farthing; 'twill ſet abroach your blood, but 'twill have all behind,* &c.

*Mr.* Lockyer *on* Col. 1. p. 113.

Do you hear, Souls? Is not this ſad news to ſome of you, who have received vaſt ſums of mercy, and given God your bond for the repayment of him in praiſe and anſwerable fruit, and yet forfeited all, and loſt your credit with God? Oh how can you look God in the face, with whom you have dealt ſo perfidiouſly? I am now come in the Name of God to demand his due of you; to call to remembrance the former receipts of mercy which you mind not, but God doth, and there is a witneſs in your boſom that doth, and will one day witneſs to your faces, that you have dealt perfidiouſly with your God? your ſouls have been the *graves* of mercy, which ſhould have been as ſo many gardens where they ſhould have lived and flouriſhed. I am come now to open thoſe graves, and view thoſe mercies that your unthankfulneſs hath killed and buried, to lay them before your eyes, and ſee whether your ungrateful hearts will bleed upon them. Buried mercies are not loſt for ever; they ſhall as certainly have a day of * Reſurrection as thy ſelf: It were better for thee they ſhould have a Reſurrection now in thy heart, than to riſe as witneſſes againſt thee, when thou ſhalt riſe out of the duſt; that will be a terrible Reſurrection indeed, when they ſhall come to plead againſt thy Soul: nothing pleads more dreadfully againſt a ſoul than abuſed mercy doth. But I ſhall come to the particulars upon which I interrogate your Conſciences, and I pray deal truly and ingenuouſly in anſwering theſe Queries.

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* *There is a double reſurrection of Mercy: A reſurrection of Mercy in Mercy, and a reſurrection of Mercy in Wrath. It is the firſt I now labour for, and that to prevent the ſecond.*

*Quer.* 1. And firſt I ſhall demand of you, Whether you never had experience of the power and goodneſs of God, in reſtoring you to Health from dangerous Sickneſs and Diſeaſes? Have you not ſometimes had the ſentence of Death in your ſelves? and that poſſibly when you have been in remote parts far from your Friends and Relations, and deſtitute of all means and accommodations. Did you not ſay in that condition, as *Hezekiah* did in a like caſe? *Iſa.* 38. 10, 11, 12. *I ſaid in the cutting off of my days, I ſhall go to the gates of the grave, I am deprived of the reſidue of my years. I ſaid, I ſhall not ſee the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living; I ſhall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.* Remember thy ſelf, man, canſt not thou call to mind the day when the Arrows of death came whisking by thee, and it may be hit thoſe next thee; took away thoſe that were as lively and as luſty as thy ſelf, when you began your Voyage, and yet they were caſt for death, thou for life, and that when there was but an hairs breadth betwixt thee and the grave? Tell me, Soul, What friend was that ſtood by thee then, when thou waſt forſaken of all friends? When it may be thy Companions ſtood ready to throw thee overboard, Who was it that pitied and remembred thee in thy low eſtate? Who was it that rebuked thy diſeaſe? or (as one very aptly expreſſes it) *reſtrained the humours of thy body, from overflowing and drowning thy life? for when they are let out in a ſickneſs, they would overflow and drown it, as the Waters would the earth, if God ſhould not ſay to them, Stay you proud waves.* Who was it, man, that when thy body was brought low and weak, and like a crazy rotten Ship in a ſtorm, took in water on all ſides, ſo that all the Phyſicians in the World could not have ſtopt thoſe Leaks; conſider, what hand was that which quieted and calmed the tempeſtuous Sea, *careened* and mended thy crazy Body, and launched thee into the World again, as whole, as ſound, as ſtrong as ever? Was it not the Lord, that hath done all this for thee? Did not he keep back thy ſoul from the Pit, and thy Life from periſhing? Yea, when thou waſt chaſtened with pain upon thy Bed (as *Elihu* ſpeaks) *Job* 33. 19, 20, 21. and the multitude of thy bones with ſtrong pains, ſo that thy life abhorred bread, and thy Soul dainty meat; thy fleſh conſumed away that it could not be ſeen, and thy bones that were not ſeen ſtuck out: yet then as it is, *verſe* 28. he delivered thy Soul from going down into the Pit, and cauſed thy Life to ſee the Light. Had the Lamp of life been then extinguiſht, thou hadſt gone into endleſs Darkneſs; Hell had ſhut her mouth upon thee. Now tell me, Soul, What haſt thou gone with this precious mercy? Haſt thou walked before the Lord in a deep ſenſe thereof, and anſwered his end therein, which was, to lead thee to Repentance? Or hath thy ſtupid or diſingenuous heart forgotten it, and loſt all ſenſe of it, ſo that God's end is fruſtrated, and thy Salvation not a jot furthered thereby? O! if it be ſo, wo to thee; for the blood of this Mercy, which thy Ingratitude hath murther'd, like the blood of *Abel*, cries to God againſt thee. What a Wretch art thou thus to requite the Lord for ſuch a Mercy! He ſaw thy Tears, and heard thy Groans, and ſaid within himſelf, He ſhall not die, but live; Alas, poor Creature, If I cut him off now, he is eternally loſt: I will ſend him back a few years more into the World; I will try him once more, it may be he will bear ſome fruits to me from this deliverance; and if ſo, well; if not, I will cut him down hereafter: He ſhall be ſet at liberty upon his Good-Behaviour a little longer. And is all this nothing in thine eyes? Wretch that thou art, Doſt thou forget and ſlight ſuch a favour as this! Is it worth no more in thine eyes? Well, it would be worth ſomething in the eyes of the poor Damned Souls, if they might have ſo many years cut out of their Eternity, for a meer intermiſſion of their Torments, much more as a time of patience and mercy. O conſider, what pity and goodneſs thou haſt abuſed.

Mr. Tho. Goodwin.

*Quer.* 2. Waſt thou never caſt upon miſerable ſtreights and extremities, wherein the good Providence of God relieved and ſupplied thee? How many of you have been beaten ſo long at Sea, by reaſon of contrary winds, and other accidents, till your Proviſions have been even exhauſted and ſpent? To how ſhort allowance have you been kept? And what a mercy would you have eſteemed it, if you could but have ſatisfied Nature with a full draught of Water? Certainly, this hath been the caſe of many of you. Oh what a price and value did you then ſet upon thoſe common Mercies, which at other times have been ſlightly over-look'd! and when you have ſeen no hopes of relief, Have you not looked ſadly one upon another? and it may be ſaid as that Widow of *Zarephtah* did to the Prophet, 1 King. 17. 12. *And ſhe ſaid, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oyl in a cruſe: and behold, I am gathering two ſticks that I may go in and dreſs it for me and my ſon, that we may eat it, and die.* Even ſuch hath been your caſe; yet hath that God, whoſe Mercies are over all his Works, heard your ſorrows, and provided Relief yor you, either by ſome Ship, which Providence ſent to relieve you in that diſtreſs; or by altering the Winds, and ſending you ſafe to the Land, before all your Proviſions have been ſpent. And haſt thou kept no Records of theſe gracious Providences? yea, Doſt thou abuſe the Creature, when thou art brought again to the full enjoyment of it? and poſſibly receiveſt the Creatures (whoſe worth thou ſo lately haſt ſeen in the want of them) without thankſgiving, or a ſenſible acknowledgment of the goodneſs of God in them? I ſay, doſt thou thus anſwer the expectations of God? Well, beware leſt God teach ſuch an unworthy Creature, by woful experience, that the opening of his hand to give thee a Mercy, is worth the opening thy Lips to bleſs him for it. Beware leſt that unthankful Mouth that will not bleſs the Lord for Bread and Water, have neither the one nor the other to Bleſs him for. I can give you a ſad inſtance in the caſe, and I have found it in the Writing of an eminen Divine, who ſaith he had it from an eye and ear-wi neſs of the truth of it. A young Man lying upon hi Sick bed, was always calling for meat, but when th meat he called for was brought unto him, he ſhook and trembled dreadfully at the ſight of it, and tha in every part of his body; and ſo continued, unt his food was carried away. And thus he did, often as any food was brought into his preſence; and not being able to eat one bit, pined away: b before his death, he freely acknowledged the Juſti of God in this puniſhment; For, ſaid he, in the ti of my Health, I ordinarily received my meat wi out thankſgiving. O! Let the abuſers and deſpi of ſuch Mercies, fear and tremble.

*Quer.* 3. Have you not been eminently protec and ſaved by the Lord, in the greateſt dangers a hazards of life; in fights at Sea, when men h dropt down at your right hand and at your left, yet the Lord hath cover'd your heads in the day of battle? and though you have been equally obnoxious to Death and Danger with others, yet your name was not found among theirs in the liſt of the dead; Or in Shipwrecks, ah, how narrowly have ſome of you eſcaped! A plank hath been caſt in, you know not how, to ſave you, when your Companions, for want of it, have gone down to the bottom; or you have been enabled to ſwim to the Shore, when others have fainted in the way, and periſhed. In what a variety of ſtrange and aſtoniſhing Providences hath God walked towards ſome of you, and what returns have you made to God for it? Oh Sirs, I beſcech you, conſider but theſe two or three things that I ſhall now lay before you to conſider of.

*Conſid.* 1. An Heathen will do more for a dunghill-Deity, than thou, that calleſt thy ſelf a Chriſtian, wilt do for the true God, that made Heaven and Earth, *Dan.* 5. 4. They praiſed the Gods of Silver, and of Gold, and of Braſs, of Iron, Wood, and Stone. When the *Philiſtines* were delivered from the hand of *Sampſon*, the Text ſaith, *Judg.* 16. 24. *They praiſed their God*, &c. Then *Dagon* muſt be extolled. O let ſhame cover thy face!

*Conſid.* 2. That the abuſe of Mercy and Love, is a ſin that goes near to the heart of God. O! he cannot bear it. It is not the giving out of mercy that troubles him, for that he doth with delight; but the recoyling of his mercies upon him by the creatures ingratitude, this wounds. *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid.* And again, *Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth*, Iſa. 1. 2. *q. d.* O you innocent Creatures which inviolably obſerve the law of your Creation, be you all aſtoniſhed and cloathed in black, to ſee Nature caſt by ſin ſo far below it ſelf; and that in a Creature ſo much ſuperior to you as Man, who in the very womb, was crown'd a King, and admitted into the higheſt Order of Creatures, and ſet as Lord and Maſter over you; yet doth he act not only below himſelf, but below the very beaſts. *The Ox knoweth his owner, i. e.* There is a kind of gratitude in the beaſts, by which hey acknowledge their benefactors that feed and preſerve them. Oh! What a pathetical exclamaion is that, *Deut.* 32. 6. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, fooliſh people, and unwiſe?*

*Conſid.* 3. It is a ſin that kindles the wrath of God, nd will make it burn dreadfully againſt thee, unhankful ſinner; it ſtirs up the anger of God, in whomſoever it be found, though in the perſon of a aint, 2 *Chron.* 32. 25. *But Hezekiah rendred not gain according to the benefit done unto him: for his eart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, nd upon Jeruſalem.* And ſo you read, *Rom.* 1. That e Heathen, becauſe they were not thankful, were iven up to vile affections; the foreſt Plague in the orld. It is a ſin that the God of Mercy ſcarce nows how to pardon, *Jer.* 5. 7. *How ſhall I pardon ee for this?* This forgetting of the God that ſaves in our extremities, is a ſin that brings deſolation nd ruin, the effects of God's high diſpleaſure, upn all our temporal enjoyments. See that remarkae Scripture, Iſa. 17. 10, 11. *Becauſe thou haſt* [*fortten*] *the God of* [*thy Salvation*] *and haſt not been mindful*] *of the rock of* [*thy ſtrength:*] *Therefore ſhalt ou plant pleaſant plants, and ſhalt ſet it with ſtrange ps; in the day ſhalt thou make thy plant to grow, and the morning ſhalt thou make thy ſeed to flouriſh, but Harveſt ſhall be an heap in the day of grief and deſpete ſorrow.* The meaning is, that God will blaſt d curſe all thine employments, and thou ſhalt be under deſperate ſorrow, by reaſon of the diſappointments of thy hopes.

*Conſid.* 4. It's a ſin that cuts off Mercy from you in future ſtraits: if you thus requite the Lord for former mercies, never expect the like in future diſtreſſes. God is not weary of his bleſſings, to caſt them away upon ſuch Souls that are but graves to them. Mark what a reply God made to the *Iſraelites*, when they cryed unto him for help, being invaded by the *Amorites*, Judg. 10. 11, 12, 13. *Did not I deliver you from the* Egyptians, *and from the* Amorites, *from the Children of* Ammon, *and from the* Philiſtins? *The* Zidonians *alſo, and the* Amalekites, *and ye cryed unto me, and I delivered you out of their hands; yet ye have forſaken me, and ſerved other Gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more.* O ſad word! It is (as if the Lord had ſaid) I have tryed what mercy and deliverance will do with you, and I ſee you are never the better for it; deliverance is but ſeed ſown upon the Rocks: I will caſt away no more favours upon you; now look to your ſelves, ſhift for your ſelves for time to come, wade through your troubles as well as you can. O brethren, there is nothing more quickly works the ruin of a People, than the abuſe of mercy. O methinks this Text ſhould ſtrike terrour into your hearts. How often hath God delivered you? Remember thy eminent deliverance at ſuch a time, in ſuch a Countrey, out of ſuch a deep diſtreſs: God was gracious to thy cry then; thou haſt forgotten and abuſed this mercy; what now, if God ſhould ſay, as in the Text, Therefore I will deliver thee no more. Ah poor Soul! What would'ſt thou do then, or to whom wilt thou turn? It may be thou wilt cry to the Creatures for help and pity; but alas, to what purpoſe? they will give as cold and as comfortleſs an anſwer, as *Samuel* gave unto *Saul*, 1 Sam. 28. 15, 16. *And Samuel ſaid to Saul, Wherefore haſt thou diſquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul anſwered, I am ſore diſtreſſed; for the Philiſtines make war againſt me, and God is departed from me, and anſwereth me no more, neither by Prophets, nor by Dreams; therefore have I called thee*, &c. *Then ſaid Samuel, Wherefore then doeſt thou ask of me, ſeeing the Lord is departed from thee, and become thine enemy?* O! thou wilt be a poor ſhiftleſs creature, if once by abuſing mercy thou make it thy Enemy.

*Secondly*, For the breach of Vows made in diſtreſs to obtain theſe mercies, and eaſily forgotten and violated by thee when thou haſt obtained thy deſire: A word or two to convince you what a further evil lies in this, and how by this conſideration thy ſins come to be buoyed up to a greater height, and aggravation of ſinfulneſs; and then I have done with this Head.

*A Vow, is a promiſe made to God, in the things of God.* The Obligation of it is by Caſuiſts judged to be as great as that of an Oath. It is a ſacred and ſolemn bond, wherein a Soul binds it ſelf to God in lawful things: and being once bound by it, it is a moſt heinous evil to violate it. It is an high piece of diſhoneſty to fail in what we have promiſed to men, ſaith Dr. *Hall*; but to diſappoint God in our Vows, is no leſs than Sacriledge. The act is free and voluntary; but if once a juſt and lawful vow or promiſe hath paſt your lips (ſaith he) you may not be falſe to God in keeping it. It is with us for our vows, as it was with *Ananias* and *Saphira*, for their ſubſtance: *Whilſt it remained* (ſaith *Peter*) *was it not thine own?* He needed not to ſell and give it; but if he will give, he may not reſerve; it is death to ſave ſome: he lies to the Holy Ghoſt, that

*Caſe of Conſc.*

defalks from that which he engaged himſelf to beſtow. If thou have vowed to the mighty God of *Jacob*, look to it that thou be faithful in thy performance, for he is a great and jealous God, and will not be mocked.

Now I am confident, there be many among you, that in your former diſtreſſes have ſolemnly engaged your ſouls thus to God; that if he would deliver you out of thoſe dangers, and ſpare your lives, you would walk more ſtrictly, and live more holy lives than ever you did. You have, it may be, engaged your Souls to the Lord againſt thoſe ſins, as Drunkenneſs, Lying, Swearing, Uncleanneſs, or whatſoever evil it was that your Conſcience then ſmote you for: the vows of God ( I ſay ) are upon many of you. But have you performed thoſe vows that your lips have uttered? Have you dealt truly with God? or have you mocked him, and lyed unto him with your lips, and omitted thoſe very duties you promiſed to perform, and returned to the ſelf-ſame evils you promiſed to forſake. I only put the queſtion, let your Conſcience anſwer it. But if it be ſo indeed, that thou are a perſon that makeſt light of thy engagements to God, as indeed Seamens Vows, and Sick-mens Promiſes are, for the moſt part, deceitful and ſlippery things, being extorted from them by fear of Death, and not from any deep reſentment of the neceſſity and weight of thoſe Duties to which they bind their Souls: I ſay if this ſin lie upon any of your Souls, I adviſe you to go to God ſpeedily, and bewail it; humble your ſelf greatly before him, admire his patience in forbearing you, and pay unto him what your lips have promiſed. And to move you thereunto, let theſe Conſiderations, among many other, be laid to heart.

*Conſid.* 1. Think ſeriouſly upon the greatneſs of that Majeſty whom thou haſt wronged, by lying to him, and falſifying thy engagements. Oh think ſadly on this: It is not man whom thou haſt abuſed, but God; even that God in whoſe hand thy life and breath is. For although ( as one truly obſerves ) there be not in every vow a formal invocation of God, ( God being the proper Correlate, and as it were a party to every vow, and therefore not formally to be invoked for the conteſtation of it ) yet there is in every vow an implicite calling God to witneſs; ſo that certainly the Obligation of a Vow is not one jot beneath that of an Oath. Now if God be as a party to whom thou haſt paſt thy promiſe, and its obligation on that ground be ſo great, oh what haſt thou done? for a poor worm to mock with the moſt glorious Majeſty of Heaven, and break Faith with God, what a dreadful thing is that? If it were but to thy fellow-creature, though the ſin would be great, yet not like unto this. Let me ſay to thee, as the Prophet *Iſaiah* 7. 13. *Is it a ſmall thing for you to weary men, but you will weary my God alſo?* If you dare to deceive and abuſe men, dare you do ſo by God alſo? Oh if the exceeding vileneſs of the ſin do not affect thee, yet methinks the danger of provoking ſo dreadful a Majeſty againſt thee ſhould. And therefore conſider,

*Conſid.* 2. Secondly, That the Lord will moſt certainly be avenged upon thee for theſe things except thou repent, O read and tremble at the word of God, *Eccleſ.* 5. 4. *When thou voweſt a vow unto God, defer not to pay it: for he hath no pleaſure in fools? pay that which thou haſt vowed. But better it is that thou ſhouldeſt not vow, than that thou ſhouldeſt vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cauſe thy fleſh to ſin, neither ſay thou before the Angel, that it was an errour; wherefore* [*ſhould God be angry*] *at thy vice, and* [*deſtroy*] *the works of thy hands?* Mark, God will be angry, and in that anger he will deſtroy the Work of thy hand, ( *i. e.* ) ſaith *Dirdate*, *bring thee and all thy actions to nought, by reaſon of thy perjury.* Now the anger of God, which thy breach of promiſe kindles, as appears by this Text, is a dreadful fire. Oh what Creature can ſtand before it! as *Aſaph* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 76. 7. *Thou, even thou art to be feared: and who may ſtand in thy ſight when once thou art angry?*

*Conſid.* 3. Conſider, thirdly, that all this while thou ſinneſt againſt Knowledge and Conviction: for did not thy Conſcience plainly convince thee, when imminent danger open'd its mouth, that the matter of thy neglected vow was a moſt neceſſary duty; If not, why didſt thou bind thy Soul to forſake ſuch practices, and to perform ſuch duties? Thou didſt ſo look upon them then; by which it appears, thy Conſcience is convinced of thy duty, but Luſt maſters and over-rules: And if ſo, poor ſinner, what a caſe art thou in, to go on from day to day ſinning againſt Light and Knowledge? Is not this a fearful rate of ſinning? and will not ſuch ſinners be plunged deeper into Hell than the poor *Indians* that never ſaw the evil of their ways, as thou doeſt? Ponder but two or three Scriptures in thy thoughts, and ſee what a dreadful way of ſinning this is: *Rom.* 2. 9. *Tribulation, anguiſh and wrath to every Soul of man that doth evil, to the* [*Jew firſt*] *and alſo to the Gentile.* To the *Jew* firſt ( *i. e.* ) to the *Jew* eſpecially and principally; he had a precedency in means and light, and ſo let him have in puniſhment. So *Jam.* 4. 17. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is ſin* ( *i. e.* ) Sin with a witneſs, horrid ſin, ſin that ſurpaſſes the deeds of the wicked. So *Luke* 12. 47. *And that ſervant that knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.* Which is a plain alluſion to the Cuſtom of the *Jews* in puniſhing an offender, who being convicted, the Judge was to ſee him bound faſt to a Pillar, his cloaths ſtript off, and an Executioner with a Scourge to beat him with ſo many ſtripes: But now thoſe ſtripes came but from the arm of a Creature; Theſe that the Text ſpeaks of, are ſet on by the omnipotent arm of God. Of the former there was a determinate number ſet down in their law, as forty ſtripes, and ſometimes they would remit one of that number too, in mercy to the offender, as you ſee in the example of *Paul*, 2 Cor. 11. 24. *Of the Jews I received forty ſtripes ſave one*, but in Hell no mitigation at all, nor allay of mercy. The arm of his power ſupports the Creature in its being, while the arm of his juſtice lays on eternally. Soul, conſider theſe things; do thou not perſiſt any longer then in ſuch a deſperate way of ſinning againſt the clear conviction of thine own Conſcience, which in this caſe muſt needs give teſtimony againſt thee.

Well then; go to God with the words of *David*, *Pſal.* 66. 13, 14. and ſay unto him, *I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered, and my tongue hath ſpoken when I was in trouble.* Pay it, Soul, and pay it ſpeedily unto God, elſe he will recover it by Juſtice, and fetch it out of thy bones in Hell. O trifle not any longer with God, and that in ſuch ſerious matters as theſe are

And now I have done my endeavour to give your former Mercies and Promiſes a Reſurrection in your Conſciences; O that you would ſit down and pauſe a while upon theſe things, and then reflect upon the paſt Mercies of your lives, and on what hath paſt betwixt God and your Souls, in your former ſtraights and troubles! let not theſe plain words work upon thy ſpleen, and make thee ſay, as the Widow of *Sarepțha* did to the Prophet *Elijah*, 2 Kings 17. 18. *What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come to call my ſin to remembrance?* But rather let it work kindly on thy heart, and make thee ſay as *David* to *Abigail*, 1 Sam. 25. 32, 33. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, which ſent thee this day to meet me, and bleſſed be thy advice.*

## V. CAUTION.

THE fifth and laſt danger I ſhall warn you of, is, Your contempt and ſlighting of Death. Ah how light a matter do many of you (at leaſt in words) make of it? It ſeems you have little reverential fear of this King of terrors; not onely that you ſpeak ſlightly of it, but alſo becauſe you make no more preparation for it, and are no more ſenſible of your preſervations and deliverances from it. Indeed, the heathen *Philoſophers* did many of them profeſs a Contempt of Death upon the account of Wiſdom and Fortitude; and they were accounted the braveſt men that moſt deſpiſed and ſlighted it: But alas, poor Souls, they ſaw not their enemy againſt whom they fought, but skirmiſht with their eyes ſhut. They ſaw indeed its pale face, but not its ſting and dart. There is alſo a lawful contempt of death: we freely grant, that in two Caſes a believer may contemn it; firſt, when it is propounded to them in a temptation, on purpoſe to ſcare them from Chriſt and duty, then they ſhould ſlight it; as *Rev.* 12. 11. *They loved not their lives to the death.* Secondly, When the natural evil of death is ſet in Competition with the enjoyment of God in Glory, then a believer ſhould deſpiſe it, as Chriſt is ſaid to do, *Heb.* 12. 2. though his was a ſhameful death. But upon all other accounts and conſiderations, it is the height of ſtupidity and ſecurity to deſpiſe it.

Now to the end that you might have right thoughts and apprehenſions of death, which may put you upon ſerious preparation for it; and that when ever your turn comes to conflict with this King of terrors, under whoſe hand the *Pompeys*, *Cæſars*, and *Alexanders* of the world, who have been the terrors of Nations, have bowed down themſelves; I ſay, that when your turn and time comes (as the Lord onely knows how ſoon it may be) you may eſcape the ſtroke of its dart and ſting, and taſte no other bitterneſs in death, than the natural evil of it; To this end I have drawn the following Queſtions and Anſwers, which, if you pleaſe, may be called *The Sea-man's Catechiſm.* And Oh that you might not dare to launch forth into the deeps, until you have ſeriouſly interrogated and examined your hearts upon thoſe particulars! Oh that you would reſolve, before you go forth, to withdraw your ſelves a while from all clamours and diſtractions, and calmly and ſeriouſly Catechiſe your own ſelves in this manner.

*Queſt.* 1. What may the iſſue of this Voyage be?

*Anſw. Death.* Prov. 27. 1. *Boaſt not thy ſelf of to morrow, for thou knoweſt not what a day may bring forth.* Jam. 4. 13, 14. *Go to now, ye that ſay, To day, or to morrow, we will go into ſuch a City, and continue there a year, and buy and ſell, and get gain: Whereas you know not what ſhall be on to morrow, for what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.*

*Queſt.* 2. What is Death?

*Anſ.* Death is a ſeparation of Soul and Body, till the Reſurrection, 2. Cor. 5. 1. *We know that if our earthly houſe of this Tabernacle be diſſolved.* Job 14. 10, 11, 12. Read the words.

*Queſt.* 3. Is Death to be deſpiſed and ſlighted if it be ſo?

*Anſ.* O no! It's one of the moſt weighty and ſerious things that ever a creature went about. So dreadful doth it appear to ſome, that the fear of it ſubjects them to Bondage all their lives, Hebr. 2. 15. *And to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lives ſubject to bondage.* And in Scripture it's called, *the King of terrors,* Job 18. 14. Or the black Prince, as ſome tranſlate. Never had any Prince ſuch a title before. To ſome it hath been ſo terrible, that none might mention its Name before them.

*Queſt.* 4. What makes it ſo terrible and affrighting to Men?

*Anſw.* Several things concur to make it terrible to the moſt of Men: As firſt, its Harbingers and Antecedents, which are ſtrong Pains, Conflicts, and Agonies. Secondly, its office and work it comes about, which is to tranſfer us into the other world. Hence *Rev.* 6. 8. it's ſet forth by a *Pale Horſe*: An horſe, for its uſe and office, to carry you away from hence into the upper or lower region of Eternity; and a pale horſe, for it's ghaſtlineſs and terror. Thirdly, But above all, it's terrible in regard of its conſequence; for it's the door of Eternity, the parting-point betwixt the preſent world and that to come; the utmoſt line and boundary of all temporal things. Hence Heb. 9. *It's appointed for all men once to die, and after that the Judgement.* Rev. 6. 8. *And I looked, and behold a pale Horſe, and his name that ſat on him was Death: and Hell followed him.* Ah! it makes a ſudden and ſtrange alteration upon mens conditions, to be pluckt out of houſe, and from among friends, and honours, and ſo many delights, and hurried in a moment into the Land of Darkneſs, to be cloathed with flames, and drink the pure wrath of the Almighty for ever. This is it that makes it terrible.

*Queſt.* 5. If Death be ſo weighty a matter, am I prepared to die?

*Anſw.* I doubt not; I am afraid I want many things that are neceſſary to a *due* preparation for it.

*Queſt.* 6. What are thoſe things wherein a due preparation for Death conſiſteth?

*Anſw.* Many things are neceſſary. Firſt, Special and Saving Union with Jeſus Chriſt. This is it that diſarms it of its ſting; *O Death, where is thy ſting? Thanks be to God who hath given* [ *us* ] *the victory through* [ *our* ] *Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56. So Joh. 11. 26. *Whoſoever* [ *liveth* ] *and* [ *believeth* ] *in me, ſhall never die.* Whoſoever liveth (*i. e.*) is quickned with a new ſpiritual Life and Principle, and ſo puts forth the principal act of that life, *viz.* Faith, he ſhall never die, (*i. e.*) eternally; This Hornet, Death, ſhall never leave its ſting in his ſides. Secondly, To entertain Death comfortably, the evidence and knowledge of this Union is neceſſary, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *For we* [ *know* ] *that if our earthly houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, &c.* And then he cannot only be content, but groan to be uncloathed, *ver.* 2. A miſtake in the former will coſt me my Soul; and a miſtake here will loſe me my peace and comfort. Thirdly, in order to this evidence, it's neceſſary that I keep a good conſcience in all things, both towards God and man, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *This is our rejoycing, even the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſincerity and godly ſimplicity, not in fleſhly wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world.* This good Conſcience reſpects all and every part of our work and duty to be done, and all and every ſin to be renounced and denied: So that he that is early united unto Chriſt by Faith, hath the clear evidence of that Union; and the evidence fairly gathered from the teſtimony of a good Conſcience, witneſſing his faithfulneſs as to all duties to be done, and ſins to be avoided, he is fit to die; Death can do him no harm: but alas, theſe things are not to be found in me.

*Queſt*. 7. But what if I die without ſuch a preparation as this is, what will the conſequence of that be?

*Anſw*. Very terrible; even the ſeparation of my Soul and Body from the Lord to all eternity, John 3. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life; and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life: but the wrath of God abideth on him. He ſhall not ſee life:* there's the privative part of his miſery, ſeparation from the bleſſed God. *And the* [ *wrath* ] mark it, not anger, but wrath; not the wrath of a man, but of [ *God* ] at whoſe rebukes the Mountains skip like frighted men, and the Hills tremble: The wrath of God not only flaſhes out upon him, as a tranſient flaſh of lightening, but [ *abideth* ] dwells, ſticks faſt, there is no power in the world can looſe the ſoul from it. [ *Upon him* ] not the body only, nor the ſoul only, but on [ *him* ] ( *i.e.* ) the whole perſon, the whole Man. Here is the principal poſitive part of that man's miſery.

*Queſt*. 8. Can I bear this miſery?

*Anſw*. No: My heart cannot endure, nor my hand be ſtrong, when God ſhall have to do with me upon this account. I cannot bear this wrath; Angels could not bear it: it hath ſunk them into the depths of miſery. Thoſe that feel but a few ſparks of it in their Conſciences here, are even diſtracted by it, *Pſal*. 88. 15. Chriſt himſelf had never born up under it, had he not been ſupported by the infinite power of the divine nature, *Iſa*. 42. 1. *Behold my ſervant whom I uphold.* How then ſhall I live when God doth this? what will be done to the dry tree? Oh! there is no abiding of it, it is inſufferable. *The ſinners in Zion are afraid, trembling ſurprizeth the hypocrite: who among us ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? who can endure the everlaſting burning? Iſa*. 33. 14.

*Queſt*. 9. If it cannot be born, is there any way to prevent it.

*Anſw*. Yes; there is hope in *Iſrael* concerning this thing. And herein I am in better caſe than the damned: I have the [ may-be's ] of mercy, and they have not. Oh what would they give for a poſſibility of Salvation! *Iſa*. 1. 16, 17, 18. *Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well, &c. Come now, let us reaſon together: and though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as ſnow.* Iſa 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Though my diſeaſe be dangerous, it is not deſperate, it doth not ſcorn a remedy. Oh there is Balm in *Gilead*, and a Phyſician there. There is yet a poſſibility, not only of recovering my Primitive glory, but to be ſet in a better caſe than ever *Adam* was.

*Queſt*. 10. How may that be?

*Anſw* By going to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. 8. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus.* Rom. 8. 33, 34. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth, Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen again.*

*Queſt*. 11. But what is it to go to Chriſt?

*Anſw*. To go to Chriſt, is to * embrace him in his *a* perſon, and *b* Offices, and to reſt *c* intirely and cloſely upon him for *d* pardon of ſin, and *e* eternal life; being deeply *f* ſenſible of the want and worth of him. Joh. 1. 12. *To as many as* [ *received* ] *him, he gave power to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believed on his Name.* John. 3. 36. *He that believeth* [ *on the Son* ] *hath life.* 1 Cor. 1. 30. *And of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption.* Acts. 4. 12. *Neither is there Salvation in any other, &c.* Acts 13. 39. *And by him all that believe are* [ *Juſtified from all things* ] *from which ye could not be Juſtified by the Law of Moſes.* Iſa. 45. 22. *Look unto me and be ye ſaved.* Acts 2. 37. *Now when they heard this, they were pricked to the heart, &c.*

* *John* 1. 12.
a *John* 3 36.
b 1 *Cor*. 1. 30.
c *Acts* 4 12.
d *Acts* 12. 29.
e *Iſa* 45. 22.
f *Acts* 2. 37.

*Queſt*. 12. But will Chriſt receive me, if I go unto him?

*Anſw*. Yes, Yes; He is more ready to receive thee, than thou art to come to him. Luk. 15. 20. *And he aroſe and came to his Father. But when he was yet a great way off, his Father ſaw him, and had compaſſion on him, and ran and fell on his neck and kiſſed him.* The Son doth but go, the Father ran: if he had but received him into the houſe, it had been much; but he fell on his neck, and kiſſed him. He beſpeaks him much after that rate he expreſt himſelf to returning *Ephraim*. *My bowels are troubled for him: I will ſurely have mercy on him,* Jerem. 31. 20. There is not the leaſt Parentheſis in all the pages of Free Grace, to exclude a Soul that is ſincerely willing to come to Chriſt.

*Queſt*. 13. But how may it appear that he is willing to receive me?

*Anſw*. Make trial of him thy ſelf. If thou did but know his heart to poor ſinners, you would not queſtion it. Believe what he ſaith in the Goſpel; there thou ſhalt find that he is a willing Saviour: for therein thou haſt, Firſt his moſt ſerious invitations, *Matth*. 11. 28. *Come unto me ye that are weary and heavy laden.* Iſa. 55. 1. *Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters.* Theſe ſerious invitations are, Secondly, backt and confirmed with his Oath, *Ezek*. 35. 11. *As I live I deſire not the death of a ſinner.* Thirdly, ampliſied with pathetical wiſhes, ſighs and groans, *Matth*. 23. 29 *Oh that thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day.* Fourthly, Yea, delivered to them in undiſſembled tears, *Matth*. 23. 37, 38. *He wept over it, and ſaid, O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem.* Fifthly, Nay, he hath ſhed not only tears, but blood to convince thee of his willingneſs. View him in his dying poſture upon the Croſs, ſtretching out his dying arms to gather thee, hanging down his bleſſed head to kiſs thee: every one of his wounds was a mouth opened to convince thee of the abundant willingneſs of Chriſt to receive thee.

*Queſt*. 14. But my ſins are died in grain: I am a ſinner of the blackeſt hue; will he receive and pardon ſuch an one?

*Anſw*. Yea, Soul, if thou be willing to commit thy ſelf to him, Iſa. 1. 18. *Come, now let us reaſon together: Though your ſins be as ſcarlet, I will make them as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, I will make them as wool.*

*Queſt*. 15. This is comfortable news: but may I not delay my cloſing with him for a while, and yet not hazard my eternal happineſs, ſeeing I reſolve to come to him at laſt?

*Anſw.* No, There muſt be no delays in this caſe Pſ. 119. 60. *I made haſte and delayed not to keep thy commandments*

*Queſt.* 16. Why may I not defer it, at leaſt for a little while?

*Anſw.* For many weighty reaſons this work can bear no delays. Firſt, the offers of Grace are made to the preſent time, Heb. 3. 15. *While it's ſaid, to day, harden not your heart.* There may be a few more days of God's patience, but that is unknown to thee. Secondly, Your Life is immediate uncertain; how many thouſands are gone into Eternity ſince the laſt Night? If you can ſay to ſickneſs when it comes, Go, and come again another time, it were ſomewhat. Thirdly, Sin is not a thing to be dallied with. Oh! who would be willing to lie down one Night under the guilt of all his ſins? Fourthly, delays increaſe the difficulty of Converſion: Sin ſtill roots it ſelf deeper, habits are the more ſtrengthned, and the heart ſtill more hardned. Fifthly, There be thouſands now in Hell, that periſh through delays: Their Conſciences often urged and preſt hard upon them, and many reſolutions they had, as thou haſt now; but they were never perfected by anſwerable executions, and ſo they periſht. Sixthly, Thy way of ſinning now is deſperate; for every moment thou art acting againſt clear light and conviction; and that is a dreadful way of ſinning. Seventhly, There can be no ſolid reaſon for one hours delay; for thou canſt not be happy too ſoon: And be ſure of it, if ever thou come to taſt the ſweetneſs of a Chriſtian Life, nothing will more pierce and grieve thee than this, that thou enjoyedſt it no ſooner.

*Qu.* 17. Oh, but the pleaſures of ſin engage me to it, how ſhall I break theſe cords and ſnares?

*Anſ.* That ſnare may be broken by conſidering ſolemnly theſe five things. Firſt, that to take pleaſure in ſin, is an argument of a moſt deplorable and wretched ſtate of Soul. What a poyſonful nature doth it argue in a Toad, that is ſucking in nothing but poyſon and filth whereever he crawls! Oh what an heart haſt thou! haſt thou nothing to find pleaſure in, but that which makes the Spirit of Chriſt ſad, and the hearts of Saints ake and groan; which digged Hell, and let in endleſs miſeries upon the world? Secondly, think that the miſery it involves thee in, infinitely beyond the delights it tempts thee by: doth but delight the ſenſual part, and that but with brutiſh pleaſure; but will torment thy immortal ſoul, and that for ever. The pleaſure will quickly o off, but the ſting will remain behind. *I taſted but little honey on the top of my rod* (ſaid *Jonathan*) *and muſt die,* 1 Sam. 14. 43. Thirdly, Nay, that's not ll; but the Lord proportions wrath according to the leaſures ſouls have had in ſin, *Rev.* 18. 7. *How uch ſhe hath lived deliciouſly, ſo much torment and ſorrow ve unto her.* Fourthly, what doſt thou pay, or, leaſt, pawn for this pleaſure? Thy ſoul, thy preious ſoul, is laid to ſtake for it: and in effect thus ou ſayeſt, when thou deferreſt the cloſing with hriſt upon the account of enjoying the pleaſures of a little longer: Here, Devil, take my Soul into y poſſeſſion and power; if I repent, I will have it ain; if not, it is thine for ever. Oh dear-bought leaſures!

*What is the world? A great exchange of ware,*
*herein all Sorts and Sexes cheapning are:*
*e Fleſh, the Devils, ſit and cry, what lack ye?*
*hen moſt they fawn, they moſt intend to rack ye.*
*e wares are cups of joy, and beds of pleaſure;*
*ere's goodly choice, down weight, and flowing meaſure.*

*A Soul's the price, but they give time to pay*
*Upon the Death-bed, or the Dying-day.*
*Hard is the bargain, and unjuſt the meaſure,*
*When as the price ſo much outlaſts the pleaſure.*

Quarles.

Laſtly, It's thy groſs miſtake to think thou ſhalt be bereaven of all delights and pleaſures, by coming under the government of Chriſt: For one of thoſe things in which his Kingdom conſiſts, is joy in the Holy Ghoſt, *Rom.* 14. 17. Indeed, it allows no ſinful pleaſures to the ſubjects of it, nor do they need it; but from the day thou cloſeſt in with Chriſt, all thy pure, real, and eternal pleaſures and delights begin and bear date. When the Prodigal was return'd to his Father, then, ſaith the Text, *They began to be merry,* Luke 15. 24. See *Acts* 8. 5, 6. No, no, Soul, thou ſhalt want no joy; for the Scripture ſaith, *They ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thy houſe, and thou ſhalt make them drink the rivers of thy pleaſures; for with thee is the fountain of light,* &c. Pſal. 36. 8, 9.

*Qu.* 18. But how ſhall I be able to undergo the ſeverities of Religion? There are difficult Duties to be done, and an heavy croſs to be taken up; theſe be the things that daunt me.

*Anſ.* If Pain and Suffering daunt thee, how is it thou art not more out of love with ſin than with Religion? For it is moſt certain, that the Sufferings for Chriſt are nothing to Hell, the juſt reward and certain iſſue of ſin: the pains of Mortification are nothing to the pains of Damnation. There is no compare betwixt ſuffering for Chriſt, and ſuffering from Chriſt, Matth. 5. 29. *If thy right hand or eye offend thee, cut it off, and pluck it out: It is profitable for thee that one member ſuffer, than that the whole body be caſt into Hell.* Secondly, Thou ſeeſt the worſt, but not the beſt of Chriſt. There be Joys and Comforts in thoſe difficult Duties and Sufferings, that thou ſeeſt not. Col. 1. 24. *Who now rejoice in my ſufferings.* Jam. 1. 2. *My Brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations,* &c. Thirdly, Great ſhall be thy aſſiſtance from Chriſt, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things through him that ſtrengthens me. The Spirit helps our infirmities,* takes the other end of the burden, *Rom.* 8. 26. What meaneſt thou to ſtand upon ſuch terms, when it is Heaven or Hell, eternal Life or Death, that lie before thee?

*Qu.* 19. But to what purpoſe will all my endeavours to come to Chriſt be? unleſs I be elected, all will be to no purpoſe.

*Anſ.* True: If thou be not elected, thou canſt not obtain him, or happineſs by him: But yet, that is no diſcouragement to ſtrive. For in thy unconverted ſtate, thy Election or Non-election is a ſecret to thee; the only way to make it ſure, is by ſtriving and giving all diligence in the way of duty, 2 Pet. 1. 10. And if you ponder the text well, you will find, that Election is not only made ſure in the way of diligence and ſtriving; but Calling is put before it, and lies in order to it. Firſt ſecure thy effectual Calling, and then thine Election.

*Qu.* 20. But I have no ſtrength of my own to come to Chriſt by; and is it not abſurd to urge me upon Impoſſibilities in order to my Salvation?

*Anſ.* Firſt, Certainly you are more abſurd in pleading and pretending your impotence againſt your duty: for you do think you have a power to come to Chriſt, elſe how do you quiet your Conſcience with Promiſes and Solves of Converſion hereafter? Secondly, Though it be true, that no ſaving Act can be done without the concurrence of ſpecial Grace;

yet this is as true, that thy inability to do what is above thy power, doth not excuſe thee from doing what is in thy power to do. Canſt thou not forbear, at leaſt, many external acts of ſin? And canſt thou not perform, at leaſt, the external acts of duty? Oh, if thou canſt not come to Chriſt, yet, as the blind man, lie in the way of Chriſt; do what thou canſt do, and confeſs and bewail thine impotency that thou canſt do no more. Canſt thou not take thy Soul aſide in ſecret, and thus bemoan it; My poor Soul, what wilt thou do? Oh what will become of thee, thou art Chriſtleſs, Covenantleſs, Hopeleſs, and, which is moſt ſad, ſenſeleſs and bowelleſs. O! thou canſt not bear the infinite Wrath of the Eternal God, whoſe Almighty Power will be ſet on work to torment ſuch as thou art, and yet thou takeſt no courſe to prevent it. Thou ſeeſt the buſie diligence of all others, and how the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers violence by them; and art not thou as deeply engaged to look to thy own happineſs, as any in the world? Will Hell be more tolerable to thee than others? Oh what a compoſition of ſtupidity and ſloth art thou? Thou liveſt after ſuch a rate, as if there were neither Fire in Hell to torment thee, nor Glory in Heaven to reward thee. If God and Chriſt, Heaven and Hell, were but dreams and fables, thou couldſt not be leſs affected with them. Ah, my Soul! my Soul! my precious Soul! Is it eaſie to periſh? Wilt thou die as a fool dieth? Oh that men would but do thus, if they can do no more!

And now, Soul, you ſee what death is, that you have made ſo ſlight of; and what is the only way that we, poor Sons of Death, have to eſcape its ſting. You have here ſeen the vanity of all your pleas and pretences againſt Converſion, and the way to Chriſt prepared and caſt up for you. Now, Sirs, I beg you in the name of God that made you, and as if I made this requeſt upon my bended Knees to you, that you will now, without any more delays, yield your ſelves to the Lord. Soul! I beſeech thee, haſte thee into thy Chamber, ſhut thy door, and beſpeak the Lord after ſome ſuch manner as this, before thou dareſt to launch out into the Deeps again:

O dreadful and glorious Majeſty! thou haſt bowels of mercy, as well as beams of glory: I have heard, the ſounding of theſe bowels for me this day. Lord, I have now heard a repreſentation of the grim and ghaſtly face of Death! Ah! I have now ſeen it as the King of Terrors, as the door of Eternity, as the Parting-point, where ſinners take their eternal farewel of all their delights. I have ſeen this black Prince mounted on his pale Horſe, and Hell following him. I have been convinced this day, that if he ſhould come and fetch away my Soul in that condition it is, Hell would follow him indeed. Lord! I have now heard of the Prince of Life alſo, in whoſe bleeding ſide Death hath left and loſt its envenomed ſting; ſo that though it may kill, yet it cannot hurt any of his Members. To this glorious Redeemer I have now been invited; all my pretences againſt him have been confuted, and my Soul in his Name aſſured of welcome, if I come unto him, and caſt my ſelf upon him. And now, Lord, I come, I come, upon thy call and invitation; I am unfeignedly willing to avouch thee, this day to be my God, and to take thee for my portion. Lord *Jeſus*, I come unto thee; thy Clay, thy Creature moves towards the Fountain of pity, look hitherto: Behold a ſpectacle of miſery. Bowels of mercy, hear, behold my naked Soul, not a rag of righteouſneſs to cover it; behold my ſtarving Soul not a bit of bread for you to eat; ah! it has fed upon wind and vanity hitherto: Behold my wounded Soul bleeding at thy foot; every part, Head and Heart, Will and Affections, all wounded by ſin. O thou compaſſionate *Samaritan*, turn aſide, and pour thy Sovereign blood into theſe bleeding wounds, which like ſo many opened mouths plead for pity. Behold a returning ſubmitting Rebel, willing to lay down the weapons of unrighteouſneſs, and to come upon the knee for a pardon. Oh I am weary of the ſervice of ſin; I can endure it no longer. Lord *Jeſus*, thou waſt anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, and to proclaim liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Priſon to them that are bound. Come now, and knock off thoſe fetters of unbelief; Oh ſet my Soul at liberty that it may praiſe thee! For ſo many years Satan hath cruelly tyrannized over me, oh that this might be the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of the ſalvation of my God! Lord, thou waſt lifted up to draw Men unto thee; and indeed thou art a drawing Saviour, a lovely Jeſus. I have hitherto ſlighted thee, but it was becauſe I did not know thee: mine eyes have been held by unbelief, when thou waſt opened in the Goſpel; but now I ſee thee as the chiefeſt of ten thouſands. Thou art the glory of Heaven, the glory of Earth, the glory of *Sion*; and oh that thou wouldſt be the glory of my Soul. I confeſs, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt look upon me; I may much rather expect to be trampled under the feet of Juſtice, than to be embraced in thine arms of Mercy; and that thou ſhouldſt rather ſhed my polluted blood, than ſprinkle thine own upon me. But Lord, what profit is there in my blood? Wilt thou purſue a dryed leaf? Shall it ever be ſaid, that the merciful King of Heaven hang'd up a poor ſoul that put the rope about its own neck, and ſo came ſelf-condemningly to him for mercy? O my Lord! I am willing to ſubmit to any terms, be they never ſo hard and ungrateful to the fleſh. I am ſure whatever I ſhall ſuffer in thy ſervice, cannot be like to what I have ſuffer'd, or am like to ſuffer by ſin: henceforth be thou my Lord and Maſter; thy ſervice is perfect freedom; be thou my Prieſt and Prophet, my Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs. I reſign up my ſelf unto thee: my poor Soul with all its faculties, my body with all its members, to be living inſtruments of thy glory. Let *Holineſs to the Lord* be now written upon them all; let my tongue henceforth plead for thee, my hands be lifted up unto thy teſtimonies, my feet walk in thy ways. O let all my affections, as willing ſervants, wait upon thee, and be active for thee. Whatever I am, let me be for thee; whatever I have, let it be thine; whatever I can do, let me do for thee; whatever I can ſuffer, let me ſuffer for thee. O that I might ſay before I go hence, My beloved is mine, and I am his! Oh that what I have begged on Earth might be ratified in Heaven! My Spirit within me ſaith, *Amen*. Lord Jeſus, ſay thou, *Amen*.

# THE

# Seaman's Companion:

WHEREIN

The Myſteries of Providence relating to Seamen, are opened; Their Sins and Dangers diſcovered; their Duties preſſed; and their ſeveral Troubles and Burdens relieved: In Six Practical and Suitable Sermons.

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## To all Maſters, Mariners, and Seamen, eſpecially ſuch as belong to the Port of *Dartmouth*, and the Adjacent Parts.

SIRS,

*Your ready acceptation of my former Labours for you, hath encouraged this ſecond and laſt endeavour of mine this way to ſerve you. I have for many years been convinced of the great uſe and need you have of the following Diſcourſes: But the Motives that quickned me to their Publication at this time, were eſpecially theſe two.*

*Firſt, The hand of the Lord hath gone forth with terror gainſt you, this Winter, many of your Companions are one down to the bottom. Such a doleful account of Shipwracks from every Coaſt, and ſuch ſad lamentati ns as have been heard in almoſt every Maritine Town, annot but deeply affect every Heart with Sorrow and Compaſſion, and hath engaged me in this Service for the emnant that is left.*

*Secondly, The ſeaſonable and prudent care* His Majeſty *ath at this time manifeſted for the regulation and pre rvation of your* Newland *Trade, and encouragement of our honeſt induſtry therein; hath alſo provoked me to aſten this deſign, for the regulation of your lives and anners, without which, all external means will ſignifie ut little to your true proſperity.*

*This little Manual contains the ſum of your duty in e ſeveral parts of your employments, and faithfully diſ vers the Temptations and Dangers attending you in them ll. Upon which Conſideration it is fitly intituled,* The eaman's Companion.

*As* God *hath caſt my lot among you, ſo he hath inclined y heart ſtudiouſly to promote your welfare. I have been long obſervation convinced, that one principal cauſe of ur miſcarriages, is the neglect of* God *in your outſets. id you pray more, you might expect to proſper better. ndeed, if that* Epicurean *doctrine were true, That God ncerns not himſelf about the affairs of this lower World, but leaves all things to be ſwayed by the power of Natural cauſes, your neglect of prayer might be more excuſable: But whilſt Succeſſes and Diſappointments depend upon his pleaſure, it cannot but be the moſt direct courſe you can ſteer to ruin all, to forget and neglect* God *in your enterpriſes. To cure this evil, and prevent the manifold miſchiefs that follow it, the* Firſt Sermon *is deſigned. And if the Lord ſhall bleſs it to your Conviction and Reformation, I may then comfortably apply the words of* Moſes *to you,* Deut. 33. 18 Rejoice *Zebulun* in thy going out.

*You often hear the terrible voice of* God *in the Storms; and are at your wits end; not knowing what courſe to take, nor which way to turn for ſafety and comfort: And yet, how ſoon are all thoſe Impreſſions worn off? And thoſe Mercies which (whilſt new) were ſo affecting; after a few days become ſtale and common. I have therefore in the* Second Sermon *laboured not only to direct and ſupport you in thoſe ſtraights, but have alſo endeavoured to fix the Senſe of thoſe Providences upon your Hearts, and inſtruct you how to make due Improvements of them, by anſwering the ſeveral aims and deſigns of them.*

*It hath been much upon my Heart, to what and how many Temptations to ſin you are expoſed in Foreign Countries, where lawful Remedies are abſent, alluring Objects preſent, and Temptations exceedingly ſtrengthned upon you, by hopes of ſecrecy and concealment: And indeed for a Man whoſe Heart is not throughly ſeaſoned with Religion, and awed by the fear of God, to converſe in ſuch places, and with ſuch Company, and not be polluted with their ſins, is upon the matter as great a Miracle, as for the three Children to come out of the Fiery Furnace without an Hair ſinged, or the ſmell of Fire upon their Garments. I have therefore prepared for you the beſt preſervative from theſe Temptations in the* Third Sermon, *which the*

*Lord make an effectual Antidote to your Souls againſt the Corruptions that are in the World through Luſt.*

*I have frequently obſerved the miſchievous influence that Succeſs and Proſperity have had upon ſome of you. How the God of your Mercies hath been forgotten, and his Mercies made inſtruments of ſin againſt him. How apt are Men to aſcribe all to their own wiſdom, care, and induſtry, as if God had no hand in it?* The **Fourth Sermon** *therefore leads up your thoughts to the Fountain of all your good, and drops many very ſeaſonable and neceſſary Cautions upon you, to keep you humble and thankful under Proſperity.*

*And becauſe Men will not own God in their Succeſs, but ſacrifice to their own Net: God often teaches them the evil of it by ſad Loſſes and Diſappointments. Yea, Diſappointments ſometimes follow the beſt of Men, and that in the moſt juſt and honeſt Employments. To caution the former ſort, and ſupport the latter, in ſuch a caſe, I recommend the* **Fifth Sermon** *to your ſerious conſideration, not doubting, if the Bleſſing of God go forth with it, but it may prove a very ſeaſonable and uſeful diſcourſe to you in that condition.*

*And laſtly, Becauſe it is ſo common for Seamen to forget the many Mercies they have received in a voyage, when it is over, and God hath brought them to the Havens of Deſire, and among their Relations, I have in the laſt* **Sermon** *inſtructed them in their duty, and laboured to work in ſuch a Senſe of Mercies upon their Hearts, as may engage them to a due and thankful acknowledgment of God in all.*

*You ſee by this brief account, how honeſt the deſign is in which I have engaged for you. But I am ſenſible, that the management is very defective, it being diſpatched in haſte, and when my hands were filled with other work, and my body clogged with many infirmities. But ſuch as it is, I heartily devote it to the ſpecial ſervice of your Souls, and remain*

Yours,

In all Chriſtian Service,

Dartmouth,
Jan. 21.
1675.

John Flavell.

# THE SEAMAN's Farewel.

## SERMON I.

### Acts XXI. 5, 6.

*And we kneeled down on the ſhore, and prayed; and when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ſhip, and they returned home again.*

THIS Scripture gives us an account of the manner of *Paul*'s imbarking at *Tyre*, in his voyage for *Jeruſalem*; and therein an excellent pattern for all that go down into the Seas, to do buſineſs in the great Waters. It is true, his buſineſs in that voyage, was not to get an Eſtate, but to witneſs to the Truths of Jeſus Chriſt, with the hazard of his life. Many diſcouragements he met with in this Voyage, and not the leaſt at *Tyre*, where he met with certain Diſciples that ſaid to him by the Spirit, That he ſhould not go to *Jeruſalem*, though, in that they followed their own ſpirit; but he is not to be diſſwaded: Like that noble *Roman*, and upon a more noble account, he judged it neceſſary to go, but not to live. The Diſciples ſeeing his unalterable reſolution, expreſs their affections to him at parting, by bringing him to the Ship, and that with their whole Families, Wives and Children, *Verſe* 5. therein giving him the laſt mark of their dear Reſpects.

*Neceſſe eſt ut eam, non ut vivam.* Cæſar.

In this Farewel, their Chriſtian Affections are mutually manifeſted by two ſorts of Actions,

*Viz.* Sacred and Civil in Prayers and Salutations.

1. Prayers; the beſt office one Chriſtian can do another. As Prayer is the beſt Preface, ſo cer- ly it is the beſt Cloſe to any buſineſs or injoyment. which Prayer we may note the place, poſture, matter or ſcope.

irſt, The place, it was upon the *Shore*, the part- place near to which the Ship rode, waiting for *Paul*; And this was no unuſual thing among them in thoſe days. *Tertullian* tells us, They ſent their Prayers to Heaven from every Shore; and elſewhere he calls them *iones littorales*, *Shore-Prayers.* So cuſtomary it was holy Men in thoſe days, to be taken into the or Boat from their Knees, not from the Tavern le-houſe.

*omne littus pre- ad cælum mit-* Tertul. de Je-

condly, The *poſture, they kneeled down.* As all es, ſo all poſtures have been uſed in Prayer. Some have uſed one poſture, and ſome another; but this is the common and ordinary poſture. Knees when they can (as an ingenious Author ſpeaks) then they muſt be bowed.

Thirdly, The matter and ſcope of the Prayer, which though it be not expreſſed, yet may with great probability be argued from the place and occaſion, to be, as *Eraſmus* ſpeaks, *Pro fauſta Navigatione*, for a proſperous voyage, and Divine protection. He knew to what, and how many hazards of life they are hourly expoſed, that border ſo near unto death, as Mariners and Paſſengers at Sea do; and therefore would not commit himſelf to the Sea, till firſt he had ſolemnly committed himſelf to God, whoſe voice the Winds and Seas obey. Nor was he willing to take his leave of his dear Friends, until he had poured out his heart to God with them, and for them, whoſe faces he might never ſee again in this World, and engaged their Prayers alſo for him.

2. As their Affections were mutually manifeſted by this *Sacred* action, *Prayer*; ſo by *Civil* ones too, affectionate Embraces and *Salutations. When we had taken our leave one of another.* Salutations were uſed among the *Jews*, both at their meeting and parting. This latter conſiſted in words and geſtures; the uſual words were, *The Lord bleſs you*, Ruth 2. 4. *Peace be unto thee. Grace be with you, &c.* The geſtures were kiſſing each other. Theſe were kiſſes which a *Cato* might give, and a *Veſtal* receive. In both theſe, *viz.* Their Prayers for, and Salutations of each other, they manifeſted their Chriſtian Affections mutually, but eſpecially by their Prayers at parting. Hence note,

Doctr. *Thoſe that undertake Voyages by Sea, had need not only to pray earneſtly themſelves; but alſo to engage the Prayers of other Chriſtians for them.*

They that part praying, may hope to meet again rejoycing; and thoſe deſigns which are not prefaced with Prayer, cannot wind up with a Bleſſing. There are two ſorts of Prayer, *ſtated*, and *occaſional*.

*Stated* Prayer is our converſing with God, either publickly, privately, or ſecretly, at the conſtant ſeaſons allotted for it, in the returns of every week and day.

*Occaſional*, is the Chriſtians addreſs to God at any time upon extraordinary emergencies, and calls of Providence; or, when we undertake any ſolemn buſineſs (and what more ſolemn than this?) and then the chief matter and ſcope of Prayer is to be ſuited to the preſent occaſion, and deſign in hand; of this ſort is that I am here to ſpeak. Now in opening the Point, I will ſhew,

(1.) What thoſe ſpecial Mercies are that Seamen ſhould pray for, when they are to undertake a voyage.

(2.) What influence Prayer hath upon thoſe Mercies, and how it muſt be qualified for that end.

(3.) What aid and aſſiſtance the Prayers of other Chriſtians may contribute to the procurement of them.

And then make application of all.

(1.) We will inform the Seaman, what thoſe ſpecial Mercies are, he ſhould earneſtly pray for, when he undertakes a voyage.

And amongſt thoſe Mercies to be earneſtly requeſted of God by him; the firſt and principal is, *The pardon of ſin.* A Mercy which muſt make a part of every Prayer; and at this time to be earneſtly ſued for. Guilt is that *Jonah* in the Ship for whoſe ſake ſtorms, ſhipwracks, and ruin purſue it. It is ſaid *Pſal.* 148. 8. *That the ſtormy winds fulfil God's word.* If the word there ſpoken of, be the word of God's threatning againſt ſin, as ſome expound it; then the ſtormy Winds, and lofty Waves, are God's *Serjeants* ſent out with commiſſion to arreſt Sinners upon the Sea, his Water-Bailiffs to execute the Threatnings of God upon them in the great Deeps. Hence thoſe expreſſions of Scripture, *Numb.* 32. 23. *Be ſure your ſin will find you out*; and *Gen.* 4. 7. *Sin lieth at the door.* In both which places, the Spirit of God compares a Mans guilt to a Blood-hound, that purſues and follows upon the ſcent whereever a Man goes. And indeed our ſins are called *debts*, *Matth.* 6. 12. Not that we owe them to God, or ought to ſin againſt him; but *metonymically*, becauſe as pecuniary debts oblige him to ſuffer that hath not wherewith to pay, and expoſe him to the danger of Serjeants and Bailiffs whereever he ſhall be found; ſo do our ſins in reference to God, who hath reckoned with many thouſands of Sinners upon the Sea, there arreſted them by his Winds and Waves which he ſent out after them, and laid their Bodies in the bottom of the Sea, and their Souls in the bottom of Hell. O, that is a diſmal Storm that is ſent after a Man, to drive Soul and Body to deſtruction! With what heart or courage can that Man go down into the Deeps, and expoſe himſelf among the raging Waves, and roaring Winds, that knows God hath a controverſie with him; and for ought he knows, the next Storm may be ſent to hurry him to the Judgment-Seat of the great and terrible God? Certainly, Friends, it is your great concern to get a Pardon, and be at peace with God; a thing ſo indiſpenſible, that you cannot have leſs; and ſo comprehenſive, that you cannot deſire more. If ſin be pardoned you are ſafe, you need fear no Storms within, whatever you find without: But wo to him that finds at once a raging Sea, and a roaring Conſcience; trouble without, and terror within; Ship and Hope ſinking together. You are privy to all the evils and wickedneſs of your hearts and lives. You know what treaſures of guilt you have been heaping up all your days; and think you when diſtreſſes and extremities come upon you, Conſcience will be as quiet and ſtill, as it is now? No, no, guilt will flie in your faces then, and ſtop your mouths. O therefore humble your ſelves at the feet of God for all your iniquities; apply your ſelves to the Blood of Sprinkling; pray, and plead with God for remiſſion of ſin: Without which you are in a woful caſe to adventure your ſelves at Sea, to thoſe eminent perils of life.

(2.) Another Mercy you are earneſtly to pray for, is, That the *preſence* of God may go with you, I mean not his *general preſence*, which fills the World: That will be with you, whether you pray for it, or no: But his *gracious ſpecial preſence*, which was that *Moſes* ſo earneſtly ſued for in *Exod.* 33. 15. *If thy preſence go not with me, carry us not hence.* He and the people were now in a waſte howling Wilderneſs, but bound for *Canaan*, that Earthly Paradiſe; yet you ſee, he chuſes rather to be in a *Wilderneſs* with God, than in a *Canaan* without him: And no wonder, for this gracious preſence of God, as to *comfort*, is all that a gracious Soul hath, or deſires to have in this World: And as to *ſecurity* and protection from dangers, it is the only *Aſylum*, Sanctuary and Refuge in the day of trouble. If the preſence of God be graciouſly with us, it will guard the heart againſt terror in the moſt eminent diſtreſs, as you ſee *Pſal.* 23. 4. *Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the ſhadow of Death* (that is, through the moſt apparent and eminent dangers of death) *yet will I fear no evil, for thou art with me.* And indeed there is no room for fear; for with whomſoever God is in a gracious and ſpecial manner preſent, theſe three matchleſs Mercies are ſecured to that Man.

*Quamvis in ſumma mortis ipſius periculis incurram.* Gloſs. Pſal. Sacr.

Firſt, That God's ſpecial providence ſhall watch over him in all dangers. *Pſal.* 91. 1. & 4. *He ſhall abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty; he ſhall cover thee with his Feathers, and under his Wings ſhalt thou truſt.* As the Hen gathers her brood under her Wings, not only to cheriſh, but to defend them from all danger. So God takes his people under his Providential Wings for their ſecurity.

Secondly, He appoints for them a guard of Angels, whoſe office is to watch over and miniſter to them in all their ſtraits. So we read *Pſal.* 91. 11. *He ſhall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.* Many inviſible ſervices they do for us. *Luther* tells us the Angels have two offices, *Superius canere, & inferius vigilare*: To ſing above, and watch below. Theſe are as a Lifeguard to that Man with whom the Lord is.

Thirdly, He readily hears their cries in a day of diſtreſs, and is with them to ſave and deliver them. So *Verſ.* 15. *He ſhall call upon me, and I will anſw him, I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver and honour him.* O, what a matchleſs Mercy is th How many times, when poor Seamen have ſe death apparently before their eyes, have they cri *Mercy! Mercy!* how ordinary is it for their eyes (o ſuch occaſions) to add Salt water, where alas, the was too much before! But now to have God wi you in ſuch an hour of ſtraits, to hear, ſuppo and deliver you; O, you cannot eſtimate the wo of ſuch a Mercy. Pray therefore, for it is a Mer indiſpenſably neceſſary for you; and ſay to him, *Moſes, Lord if thy preſence may not go with us, carry not hence.*

(3.) A third Mercy you are ſpecially concern to beg of God, is, That you may be kept from temptations to ſin, you will meet with, when y are abroad in the World. The whole World lies in wickedneſs, 1 *John* 5. 19. Every place, every employment, every company hath its ſnares and temptations attending it. And you know you have corrupt natures, as much diſpoſed to cloſe with temptations, as Tinder is to catch Fire: So that unleſs the preventing, reſtraining, and mortifying Grace of God be with you, they will but touch and take. If there were no Devil to tempt you externally; yet ſuch a corrupt heart meeting with a ſuitable temptation and occaſion, is enough to overcome you. *Jam.* 1. 14. *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſts and enticed.* Alas, you know not what hearts you have till temptations prove them; and what comfort can you take in the ſucceſs and proſperity of your affairs, be it never ſo great, if you return with Conſciences polluted and wounded with ſin? He that brings home a pack of fine cloaths, infected with the Plague, hath no ſuch great bargain of it, how cheap ſoever he purchaſed them. O therefore beg earneſtly of God, you may be kept from ſin, pray that you be not led into temptation.

(4.) Pray for *Divine Protection* in all the dangers and hazards to which you ſhall be expoſed. You know not how ſoon your life and eſtate ſhall be in jeopardy. This night you may ſleep quietly in your Cabin, to morrow you may be tugging at the Pump, and the next night take up your lodging upon a cold Rock. How ſmartly doth the Apoſtle *James* reprehend the ſecurity of Trading Perſons. *Jam.* 4. 13, 14. *Go to now ye that ſay, to day or to morrow we will go to ſuch a City, and continue there a year, and buy, and ſell, and get gain; whereas you know not what ſhall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appears for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.* How eaſily can God daſh all your deſigns, and hopeful projects in one hour! You know you are every moment as near death, as you are near the Water, which is but a remove of one or two inches. How poor a defence is the ſtrongeſt Ship againſt the lofty Seas, and lurking Rocks! How innumerable are the accidents and contingencies in a voyage, which the moſt skilful Navigator cannot foreſee or prevent!

*Rector in incerto eſt, nec quid fugiatve, petatve*
*Invenit: Ambiguis ars ſtupet ipſa malis.* Ovid.

They are as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, at their wits end, *ſal.* 107. 26 But, O how ſecure and ſafe, amidſt ll dangers, is that Man whom the Lord takes into s ſpecial protection? And he will not ſhut out hoſe that ſincerely commit themſelves to him: The Winds and Seas obey his voice; he can with a word rn the Storm into a Calm, *Pſal.* 107. 29. Or or-r means for your preſervation, when you ſeem ſt to the eye of Senſe and Reaſon. I have read a young Man, that being in a great Storm at Sea, as obſerved to be very chearful, when all the reſt ere as dead men: And being asked the reaſon of s chearfulneſs, in a caſe of ſo much danger; he plied, *Truly I have no cauſe to fear; for the Pilot of Ship is my Father.* O, it is an unſpeakable comt when a Man hath committed himſelf into the nds of God, as a Father, and truſted him over

(5.) Pray for Counſel and Direction in all your irs, and undertakements, and lean not to your n underſtandings. *I know, O Lord,* (ſaith the Prot) *that the way of man is not in himſelf; neither is him that walks to direct his own ſteps, Jer.* 10.23. Undertake nothing without asking God's leave, and counſel. How many that have ſtronger heads than you, have miſerably ruined themſelves and their deſigns, by truſting to their own prudence? *A man's heart* (ſaith *Solomon*) *deviſeth his way; but the Lord directeth his ſteps. Prov.* 16. 9. We muſt ſtill reſerve the power of Gods Providence (ſaith one). God would not have us too carnally confident. The Lord can blaſt your enterprize, though managed with never ſo much wiſdom and contrivance. You are not only to look to God as the *Author* of *Succeſs*; but as the *Director* and *Guider* of the *Action*: It is by his Conduct and Bleſſing, that all things come to paſs. If your deſigns ſucceed not, you are preſently ready to aſcribe it to ill fortune, and ſay, you had bad luck; when indeed you ruined it your ſelves in the firſt moulding of it, by undertaking of it without asking counſel of God. *In all thy ways acknowledge him, Prov.* 3. 5.

*Manton* on *Jude*. It is robbery to uſe goods without the Owners leave. We forget to bid our ſelves good-ſpeed, when we do not acknowledge God's Dominion. This is but a piece of Religious manners.

(6.) Pray for Succeſs upon your lawful employments and deſigns, and own it to be from the Lord. You have an excellent pattern in *Abraham*'s Servant. *Gen.* 24. 12. *O Lord God of Abraham thy ſervant, ſend me good ſpeed this day.* He reverences the ſoveraignty of Providence, and acknowledges Succeſs to be a flower of the Imperial Crown of Heaven, and the Bridle that God hath upon the reaſonable Creature, to diſpoſe of the Succeſs of Human Affairs. I look on that buſineſs or deſign in a fair and hopeful way to proſper, wherein we have engaged God to be with us, by asking his counſel, and recommending the Succeſs to his Bleſſing. Theſe are the Mercies you are to pray for.

Secondly, Next I will ſhew you what influence Prayer hath into thoſe Mercies you are to pray for; and it hath much every way: To be ſhort, it hath a threefold influence into them.

(1.) It is a proper and effectual means to obtain and procure them. God will have every thing fetched out by Prayer, *Ezek.* 36. 37. *I will yet for this be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael, to do it for them.* God gives not our Mercies for our Prayers, nor will he give them without our Prayers. This is the ſtated method in which our Mercies are conveyed to us; and therein the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God are eminently diſcovered. His *Wiſdom* in making us to ſee the *Author* of every Mercy in the way of receiving it, and ſecuring his own glory in the diſpenſing of every Mercy: His *Goodneſs* to us, in ſweetening every Mercy this way to us, and raiſing its value in our eſtimation. Prayer coming between our wants and ſupplies, is a ſingular means to raiſe the price of Mrecies with us, and engage us to due improvements of them. So that it is an idle pretence for any to ſay, God knows our wants, whether we pray or no; and if Mercies be decreed for us, we ſhall have them, though we ask them not: For though God knows our wants, yet he will have us know them too, and ſenſibly to feel the need of Mercy. And though Prayer be altogether needleſs to his *Information*, yet it is very neceſſary to teſtifie our ſubmiſſion: And though it is true, if God have decreed Mercy for us, we ſhall have it; yet it is not true, that therefore we need not pray for it: For Decrees exclude not the ſecond Means, nor render the Creatures duty unneceſſary. *I know the thoughts, that I think, towards you, ſaith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end; then ſhall you* *call upon me, and you ſhall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you, Jer.* 29. 11, 12. So that it is plain, Mercies muſt be expected in the way of Prayer, that being God's appointed way, and ſtated method in the diſpenſing of them.

(2.) As Prayer hath an influence into the procuring of our Mercies, ſo it hath a ſingular influence into the ſweetning of them: No Mercies ſo ſweet as thoſe that are received upon the knee. There is a twofold ſweetneſs Men taſte in their Earthly enjoyments: One is *natural*, and that thoſe that never eye God in them, may reliſh as much as others; the other is *ſpiritual*, and ſupernatural, reſulting from the conſideration of the way in which, and the end for which they are given. And I am confident, ſuch is the refreſhing ſweetneſs of Mercies coming in the way of Prayer, that they derive a thouſand times more ſweetneſs from the Channel, through which they come, than they have in their own natures. So that it was rightly obſerved by him that ſaid, *A believer taſtes more ſweetneſs in the common Bread he eats at his own Table, than another can do in the Conſecrated Bread he eats at the Lord's Table.* And then

(3.) Prayer hath a ſanctifying influence upon all our enjoyments; and therefore no wonder it makes them ſo ſweet. What you obtain this way, you obtain with a Bleſſing, and that is the ſweeteſt and beſt part of any enjoyment. So you find, 1 *Tim.* 4. 5. every Creature is ſanctified by the Word of God and Prayer. One Mercy of this kind is better than Ten thouſand promiſcuouſly diſpenſed in the way of common Providence. By theſe no Man knows love or hatred; but theſe ſurely come from God's love to us, and end in the increaſe of our love to him. So that you ſee Prayer hath a manifold influence upon our Mercies. But it is not any kind of Prayer that doth thus procure, ſweeten, and ſanctifie our Mercies to us. Some Mens Prayers rather obſtruct than farther their Mercies; but if it be the fervent Prayer of a righteous Man, directed by the Rule of the Word, to the Glory of God; we may ſay of ſuch Prayer as *David* ſaid of *Saul*'s Sword, and *Jonathan*'s Bow, It never returns empty.

*Si bonum petant boni, bene, ad bonum.*

Thirdly, I ſhall ſhew you what aid and aſſiſtance the Prayers of others may give to the procurement of the Mercies we deſire: For you ſee this inſtance in the Text, it was the united Joint-Prayers of the *Diſciples* with *Paul*, that on this occaſion was judged neceſſary.

Now conſidering Prayer according to its uſe, and end, as a means of obtaining Mercy from the Lord; the more diſpoſed, apt, and vigorous the means are, the more *ſurely* and *eaſily* the Mercies are obtained which we pray for. There may be much zeal, fervency, and ſtrength in the Prayer of a ſingle Saint. *Jacob* alone may wreſtle with God, and as a Prince prevail; but much more in the joint united force of many *Jacobs*. *Vis unita fortior*: If one can do much, many can do more. O what may not a bleſſed combination of holy and humble Spirits obtain from the Lord? If one Man's heart be dead and out of tune, another's may be lively and full of affection. Beſides, God delights in thoſe Acts of mercy moſt, by which many are refreſhed and comforted; and where there is a common ſtock of Prayers going, like a common Adventure in one Ship, there the return of Prayer, like the return of ſuch a Ship, makes many glad hearts. Certainly it is of great advantage for the people of God, to ingage as many as they can to pray for them. When *Daniel* was to obtain that ſecret from the God of Heaven, *Dan.* 1. 17, 18. he makes uſe of his three friends to improve their acquaintance with God, and intereſt in God for him upon that occaſion. *Then* Daniel *went to his houſe, and made the thing known to* Hananiah, Michael, *and* Azariah, *his companions; that they would deſire mercies of the God of Heaven, concerning this ſecret.* Some Chriſtians have greater intimacies with God than others, they are ſpecial favourites in the Court of Heaven; and what an advantage it is to be upon their hearts, when they are with God, judge ye. I remember, S. *Bernard* having ſpoken of the due frames and tempers that Chriſtians ſhould ſtrive to work their hearts into, when they are engaged in this work of Prayer, concludes with this requeſt, *Et quum talis fueris, memento mei. And when thy heart* (ſaith he) *is in this temper, then remember me.* O, it is a ſingular Mercy to be intereſted in their Prayers that are in ſpecial favour with God. It is true, Jeſus Chriſt is the great Favourite, for whoſe ſake all Prayers are heard; and without his interceſſion, the interceſſions of an *Abraham*, a *Moſes*, a *Jacob*, ſignifie nothing; but in the virtue of his interceſſion, the interceſſions of others may be ſingularly advantagious to us. *Job*'s friends were good Men, but yet they muſt go to *Job*, and get his Prayers for them, before God would be intreated for them. *Job* 42. 8.

And indeed, upon the contrary, it is a ſad ſign that God deſigns not to give us that Mercy which he takes off our own heart, or the hearts of others from praying for. When he ſaith, Pray not for ſuch a Man, or for ſuch a Mercy for him, the caſe then becomes hopeleſs, the Mercy is ſet, and there is no moving it, *Jer.* 14. 11. But if once a Spirit of Prayer be poured upon you, and upon others too, in your behalf, you may look upon the Mercy as even at the door, and count it as good as if it were in your hand. And thus you ſee what the Mercies are you ſhould pray for, what influence Prayer hath upon them, and what aſſiſtance the Prayers of other Chriſtians may contribute to the obtaining of them; that ſo your hearts may be excited and encouraged, not only to pray for your ſelves, but to engage as many as you can, to ſeek the Lord for you, as you ſee *Paul* here did, when he was undertaking his dangerous voyage. In the next place I ſhall apply it.

*Uſe* 1. And firſt, this may ſerve ſharply to reprove the *generality* of our Seamen, who mind every thing neceſſary to their voyage, except Prayer, the principal thing; who go out in voyages without asking God's leave or bleſſing. And here three ſorts of perſons fall under conviction, and juſt rebuke.

Firſt, Such as do but mock God, and delude themſelves by heartleſs, dead, and empty Formalities. Some there be, that dare not altogether ſlight and neglect Prayers, but, *pro forma*, they will do ſomething themſelves; and it may be as a complement, or, at moſt, as a cuſtomary thing, will deſire the Prayers of others: But alas! There is no heartine or ſincerity in theſe things. They are no way affecte with the ſenſe of their own wants, ſins, or, dangers; they never underſtood the uſe, nature, or end of Pra er. We blame the blind Papiſts, and that juſtly, fo their blind Devotions, who reckon their Prayers b number, and not by weight; and truly, there is b little difference betwixt theirs, and ſome of our Devotions. It is S. *Auguſtines* counſel, *Do you learn to have in your hearts what every one hath in his lips.* O that you would once

*Diſcite habe corde, quod ip homo habet in gua.* Aug. in Pſ.

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learn to be in earneſt with God, to pray as Men that underſt and with whom you have to do ; and what great things you have to tranſact with God ! Ah my Friends, you may believe it, that if ever you had felt the weight of ſin upon your Conſciences, and had had ſuch ſick days and nights for it, as ſome have had, you would not ask a pardon ſo coldly and indifferently, as you do. If you did but know the benefits of Gods preſence with you in troubles, how ſweet it is ; or could but apprehend how terrible a thing it is to be left of God ( as *Saul* was ) in a day of diſtreſs ; you would weep and make ſupplication for his Gracious preſence to go forth with you, and would ſay with *Moſes*, *If thy preſence may not go with me, then carry me not hence.* But alas , theſe things appear not to you in their reality and importance. And hence is all that wretched formality, and deadneſs of ſpirit.

Secondly, It rebukes much more ſuch as wholly ſlight and neglect Prayer, as a uſeleſs and vain thing ; who undertake deſigns without Prayer, not at all acknowledging God in any of their ways. And it is juſtly to be ſuſpected, there are multitudes of ſuch practical Atheiſts among Sea-men, as well as other orders of Men. Poor Men ! My heart mourneth over you ; you are certainly a forlorn ſort of men, who live without God in the World.

*Qui neſcit*
*rare, diſcat*
*Navigare.*

It was anciently ſaid, *He that would learn to pray, let him go to Sea :* But now how long may a Man be at Sea, before he hear a praying Sea-man ? Let your Families , from which you part, witneſs what conſcience you have made to ſeek God ( as you have been here directed ) before your out-ſet ; It is ſaid, *Deut.* 33. 18. to the Tribe of Sea-men, *Rejoice* Zebulun *in thy goings out* ; but in this caſe we may invert the words, and ſay, *Mourn, O ye Sea-men, for your going out.* How deplorable a caſe is this? Let your Cabbins witneſs what Conſcience you make of the duty of Prayer ? You can talk and ſleep there? but when did you pray there? You there hear the oice of God in the roaring Seas ; but when did God hear your voice in Prayer ? You ſee the wonders of God in the Deeps, wonders of *Creation*, and wonders of *Preſervation*, but mean time you your ſelves are the greateſt wonders that are to be ſeen in the Sea. Men immediately depending upon God for their lives, liberties, and eſtates, every moment, and not once owning or acknowledging him by Prayer.

Ἀλλὰ πῶς χρὴ
γειν, *Cui reſpon-*
t Socrates.
Ὅτι ἐὰν Θεὸς
ἐλῃ. Plato *in*
imeo.

The very *Heathens* will riſe up in judgment againſt you, and condemn you. I remember *Plato* brings in *Alcibiades* asking *Socrates*, How he ought to expreſs his reſolutions and purpoſes ; to whom he thus anſwereth, *Before every undertakement thou muſt ſay, If God* ill. And we know the *Eaſtern* Nations would undertake nothing of moment, without firſt acknowledging God by Prayer. The *Greeks* σὺν Θεῷ, by e leave or bleſſing of God is known to all. The rks will condemn ſuch as you are, for they fail t to pray five times a day, how urgent ſoever eir buſineſs be. The blind and ſuperſtitious *Pa*ſts will condemn you, with whom it is a Proverb, *aſs and Meat hinder no man.* O, whither will you rn ? And, who ſhall comfort you, when trouble mes upon you ? Wonder not at croſſes and diſappointments in your buſineſs ? how can you expect it uld be otherwiſe, as long as God is neglected, a, diſowned ? Say not, this is the fruit of *ill-luck*, t of your prophane neglects. If the Succeſs of all your buſineſs depends upon God, ( as none but Atheiſts dare deny) then certainly the directeſt and readieſt courſe a man can take to deſtroy all, is to diſingage God by a ſinful neglect of him. The moſt compendious way to ruin , is to forget God, and caſt off Prayer. *Pour out thy fury* ( ſaith the Prophet) *upon the Heathen that know thee not, and upon the Families that call not upon thy name. Jer.* 10. 25. Will nothing leſs than extremity make you cry to God ? Wonder not then, if God bring you into that extremity which your prophaneneſs makes neceſſary for your awakening.

Thirdly and laſtly, How much ſadder, and more deplorable is the caſe of thoſe that not only neglect to call upon the Name of God by prayer, but do alſo wound his Name through and through by their curſed Oaths and Blaſphemies, who inſtead of going on board praying, as *Paul* here did, go on board curſing, ſwearing, and Blaſpheming his great and dreadful Name ; not going from their *bended knees*, but drunken *Ale-benches* to the Ship.

O the admirable patience of God ! O the power of his long-ſuffering ! That ever that Ship ſhould ſwim one hour above Water, that carries ſuch loads of ſin and guilt within it. It is noted in *Gen.* 4. 26. in the days of *Seth* , *That then men began to call upon the Name of the Lord.* Some tranſlate the word לִקְרֹא *Invocation*, or Prayer, and ſome prophanation ; then began prophaneneſs in callling upon the Name of the Lord. In a mournful feeling of this diſhonour done to God by it, *Seth* calls the ſon that was born to him in thoſe times, *Enoſh* , or *Sorrowful.* Sure I am , however the word be here to be tranſlated, there is a vile generation in our days, that inſtead of calling upon the Name of the Lord by Prayer, do call upon it prophanely, rending and tearing that great and terrible Name with the language of Hell. Poor Man ! With what hope or incouragement can thoſe lips of thine, in the day of thy extremity, cry , *Mercy* ! *Mercy* ! that have ſtruck through the ſacred Name of God ſo many times with Blaſphemy ? O that you would lay it to heart : O that this day God would ſet your ſins in order before you.

Is this a beginning that promiſes a comfortable iſſue ? Do you thus prepare your ſelves to meet death, and danger ? O my Soul, come not thou into their ſecrets. O let God rather ſtrike me perfectly dead whilſt I live, than afflict my Soul through my ears with theſe dreadful Dialects of the damned.

*Uſe.* 2. In the next place this point is exceeding uſeful by way of *Exhortation*, to perſwade all men, and particularly Sea-men to be men of Prayer ; to imitate that noble pattern in the Text, and no longer to live in the neglect of a duty ſo neceſſary, ſo ſweet, and ſo beneficial to them, as the duty of Prayer is. O that you did but know the excellency of this duty ! How would you give your ſelves unto Prayer ! As *David* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 109. 4. Now to perſwade you to be praying men, and no longer to live in the neglect of ſo excellent a duty, I will offer theſe Motives to your conſideration.

*Motive* 1. *God hath ſtiled himſelf a God hearing Prayer.* For your incouragement to this duty, he hath aſſumed this title to himſelf, *Pſal.* 65. 2. *O thou that heareſt Prayer, unto thee ſhall all fleſh come.* You cry not as the Heathens do, to ſtocks and ſtones, that cannot help or hear them that ſeek to them, but to the living and true God ; by whom never did any upright Soul loſe a Prayer. And to come home to your caſe more fully, he is a God that hears the Prayers of poor diſtreſſed men upon the

Sea, when all hope and human help hath utterly failed them, So you read in *Pſal.* 107. 23. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. *They that go down into the Sea in Ships, that do buſineſs in great Waters; theſe ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the Deep: For he commandeth, and raiſeth the ſtormy Wind which lifteth up the Waves thereof. They mount up to Heaven, they go down again to the depths; their Soul is melted, becauſe of trouble. They reel to and fro and ſtagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their diſtreſs.* So that what the *Pſalmiſt* elſewhere ſpeaks of the myſtical depths of trouble, is true here, even in a proper literal ſenſe *Out of the depths have I cryed unto thee, O Lord, hear my voice. Pſal.* 130. 1, 2. Many a Prayer hath been heard, and miraculouſly anſwered upon the Sea. There have men been convinced and fully ſatisfied, that it is not in vain to cry to the Lord, So evident and clear have been the appearances of God at the cry of the poor diſtreſſed Creatures, that they have ſenſibly and thankfully acknowledged him according to his name, *The hope of the ends of the Earth, and the confidence of them that are afar off upon the Sea*, *Pſal.* 65. 5. Who is there among you, that hath not either heard of, or himſelf been an example, and inſtance of this Truth? I might here inſert many famous examples to confirm it, but the caſe is too plain to need them, and it would be too great a digreſſion.

*Motive* 2. *Prayer is certainly the beſt relief to the diſtreſſed.* We may ſay of it, as *David* ſaid of the Sword of *Goliah*; give me that, for there is none like it. You that are Seamen, know what the uſe of the *Pump* is, when the Waters leak into your Ship, and of what uſe the Scupper-holes are to you, when Waves break and waſh over your Decks: Why of the ſame uſe is Prayer, when ſorrow leaks into your hearts, and diſtreſſes are ready to overwhelm your Souls. This gives a vent to that which elſe would quickly ſink you. *Your heart ſhall live, that ſeek the Lord Pſal.* 69. 32. Prayer will buoy up your fainting ſpirits; it will ſenſibly eaſe an oppreſſed heart. No fear of fainting, while a man continues praying. *Luther* was wont to call Prayers the Leaches of his cares and troubles. O but if troubles come in upon a man every way, and he have no vent, no outlet for them; when the ordinary vents of Reaſon, Courage, and Reſolution, are all choaked (as ſometimes they are) and there is no ſuccour or relief coming in from Heaven: What a wretched forlorn condition is ſuch a poor creature in? O therefore get acquaintance with this excellent duty.

*Motive* 3. *All ſecondary means of deliverance and comfort, neceſſarily depend upon the will and pleaſure of God, and ſignify nothing without him.* What the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith of an Horſe, I may ſay of a Ship. *Pſal.* 33. 17. That it is a vain thing for ſafety. Alas! What a poor defence is it againſt thoſe giant-like Waves of the Sea? and that men (eſpecially Seamen) may be convinced of this, God hath many times cauſed thoſe ſtately and ſtrong built Ships to periſh, and be daſhed all to pieces, and preſerved thoſe that were not ſafe in them, upon a Plank or broken piece of the Ship, *Acts.* 27. 44. which have carried them more ſafely to the ſhore than it could do. And will you not yet ſee that means ſignifie nothing without God, and that your dependance upon him, is neceſſary in every condition, and the acknowledgment thereof ſo too? I am perſwaded there would not be half ſo many Shipwrecks, and diſappointments as there are, if your carnal confidence in the means were leſs, and your relyance upon the Lord more. Therefore it is, you ſo often receive the ſentence of death in your ſelves, that you may learn not to truſt in your ſelves, but in God. O were but your Sails filled by Prayer, how proſperous would your deſigns be?

*Motive* 4. *Whatever deliverances from dangers, or ſucceſs in buſineſs, you receive out of the way of Prayer, can yield you but little comfort, for they are not ſanctified to you.* You may be delivered, though you pray not; and Succeſs may follow thoſe that ſeek not God for it; but that which you call Deliverance, is rather a reſervation to future miſery; and that you call Succeſs, is but a ſnare to your Souls. You have the things, but not the comfort and bleſſing of them. God may give your deſire to your ruin: Your lives may be reſcued for a time from death, that you may fill up the meaſure of your iniquities. Your affairs may proſper, and that proſperity may deſtroy you. *Prov.* 1.32. At beſt it is but an effect of common providence; and of ſuch Deliverances you can never ſay as *Hezekiah* ſaid of his; and every one that receives the like Mercy in the way of Prayer, may ſay of his. *Iſa.* 38. 17. *But thou haſt in love to my ſoul, delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou haſt caſt all my ſins behind thy back.* I deny not, but a Deliverance by the hand of common Providence, is a Mercy in it ſelf; and it may prove a very great Mercy to you in the event, if time thereby added to your life be a ſpace of Repentance; elſe it is but a ſhort reprieval of your damnation, and leaves you to periſh under greater guilt, then was upon you before. But on the contrary, how ſweet are thoſe Mercies, that come in the way of Prayer, that diſcover God's love to you, and inflame yours to him? One ſuch Mercy is worth a thouſand of the former.

*Motive* 5. *Conſider all you that go out without Prayer, how ſoon you may be out of a capacity of Prayer.* Now you will not, and ſhortly you may not, have one opportunity to pray for evermore: Now unbelief ſhuts your Mouths, and ſhortly death may do it. How ſoon may you be paſt Prayers, both your own and others; and be fixed by death in your unalterable condition? O ſeek the Lord therefore whilſt he may be found, call upon him whilſt he is yet near! Now is your praying ſeaſon; hereafter there will be no uſe of Prayer. *For this* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) *ſhall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayeſt be found: Surely in the Floods of great Waters they ſhall not come nigh unto him. Pſal.* 32. 6. (*i.e.*) Saith *Deodate* upon the place, In the time of the general deſtruction of ſinners, as it was in the Deluge; then there is no coming nigh to God by Prayer, nor canſt thou come nigh him in the day of thy particular deſtruction, by the Floods of great Waters. O therefore live not a day longer in the prophane and ſinful neglect of this great duty of Prayer.

Object. *Why, but I obſerve thoſe that pray not, generally eſcape as well as they that do.*

*Anſw.* This Objection was once made by a Soldier in the time of fight, when he was preſſed by his companion to pray; and God quickly ſtopt his Blaſpheming mouth with a mortal bullet. Have a care of ſuch bold Atheiſtical pleas; they greatly provoke the Lord againſt you: I had rather die praying, than live prayerleſs.

Object. *But to what purpoſe is it for me to pray, if I am unregenerate? God hears not ſuch Prayers, if I make them; and beſides, the Prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

*Anſw.* Labour therefore to get into a regenerate ſtate, and be not perſwaded to reſt a day longer in ſo ſad a condition. However in the mean time, you muſt know, that Prayer being a part of Natural Worſhip, all Men, even the unregenerate, are obliged to it by the Light and Law of Nature; otherwiſe, the neglect of it could not be their ſin

Object. *But many pray, and receive not: I my ſelf have often done ſo.*

Anſw. *You ask and receive not, becauſe you ask amiſs,* *Jam.* 4. 3. If we were diſpoſed to receive, as God is to give, we ſhould not be long without the anſwer of our Prayers.

If (1.) your perſons were accepted through Chriſt, your Prayers ſhould be accepted too. *Gen.* 4. 4. But you are in a ſtate of Nature, deſtitute of the Spirit, *Job.* 15. 7. And ſo your voice is to God not the voice of a Child, but a ſtranger.

(2) If your Prayers were regulated by the Will of God, they could not miſs of the deſired Succeſs. 1 *Joh.* 5. 14 If we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us.

(3.) If your Prayers had more faith and fervency, they would not return empty. See *Jam.* 1. 6. & 5. 16. Well then, object no more againſt your duty; but in the fear of God apply your ſelves to it; and dare not to go forth in any deſign, until thou haſt by Prayer recommended thy ſelf, and thy affairs to God. Go alone, my Friends, retire from the World; and ſay not, you cannot ſpare time for prayer: Better any thing elſe were neglected than this. Tell the Lord, thou art now launching forth into the Ocean, and knoweſt not what this voyage may bring forth. Poſſibly thou mayeſt never return to the Land of thy Nativity any more; but however it ſhall pleaſe him to diſpoſe the event, beſeech him with all earneſtneſs, that thou mayeſt have the pardon of ſin ſealed to thee before thou go. O beg him to ſeparate guilt from thy perſon, before thou be ſeparated from thy Habitation and Relations; leſt that ſtroke that ſhall ſeparate thy Soul from thy Body, ſhould eternally ſeparate both Soul and Body from God.

Deſire of the Lord that his preſence may go with thee where-ever thou ſhalt go. Tell him, it is the Fountain, both of thy ſafety and comfort; Deſire him, if his preſence may not go with thee, not to carry thee thence. All the relief thou haſt againſt trouble, is wrapt up in that promiſe of his, *I will be with him in trouble.* Tell him, thoſe will be taſtleſs comforts, and ſuccourleſs troubles, in which he is not.

Intreat the Lord with all inportunity, to keep thee by his fear from the ſins and temptations that are in the World. Tell him, thou art ſenſibly affected with the danger, which thy own corrupt heart will every where expoſe thee to: Sins in Buying and Selling, into which thou mayeſt eaſily be drawn by an earthly covetous heart; Sins in Drinking, wherein thou mayeſt be intangled (except he keep thee) by evil company and an irregular appetite: Sins of Uncleanneſs, by which thou mayeſt be overcome in the abſence of lawful Remedies, and preſence of alluring objects, except his fear quench the temptation, and break the ſnare.

Be earneſt alſo with the Lord for his gracious protection of thee in all thy dangers. Tell him, thou canſt not be in ſafety any where, but under the ſhadow of his wings. Tell him, *at what time thou art afraid, thou wilt truſt in him*; and beſeech him, that when thy heart ſhall be overwhelmed with fears and troubles, he will lead thee to the Rock that is higher than thee. Beſeech him alſo to give thee counſel in all thy ſtreights and difficulties, that thou mayeſt not lean to thine own underſtanding; but that he will make thy way plain before thee.

And if it be his good pleaſure, that he would bleſs thy juſt and honeſt enterpriſes with Succeſs and Proſperity. Which if he ſhall do, tell him, it is thy deſire, and beg the aſſiſtance of his Grace, that thou mayeſt improve all thy Mercies to his praiſe. If thus you ſet forth in the fear of God, you may expect a ſweet Succeſs, and happy Iſſue.

# THE SEAMAN in a Storm.

## SERMON II.

### PSAL. CVII. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

*They that go down to the Sea in Ships, that do buſineſs in great Waters: Theſe ſee the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep. For he commandeth and raiſeth the Stormy Wind which lifteth up the Waves thereof. They mount up to Heaven, they go down again to the Depths; their Soul is melted, becauſe of trouble. They reel to and fro, and ſtagger like a drunken Man, and are at their wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he brings them out of their diſtreſs.*

THIS *Pſalm* contains an excellent account of the myſterious and admirable effects of Providence. And this *Paragraph* contains that Vein or Branch of *Divine Providence* which reſpects Sea-men; a ſort of Men more immediately depending upon the favour of Providence than any Men in the World; though all do neceſſarily, and continually depend upon it.

In theſe Verſes we have a deſcription, both (1) of the perſons, (2) of the danger, (3) of the deliverance; by the wonderful working of *Divine Providence* for them.

Firſt, a deſcription of the perſons about whom this wonderful Providence is exerciſed. *They that go down to the Sea in Ships; that do buſineſs in great Waters*; the Periphraſis of a *Seaman.* Theſe are ſaid *to go down to the Sea in Ships*, not becauſe the Sea is lower than the Land, but becauſe it is lower than the Shore, which is the Rampire raiſed by Providence againſt its Inundations. And their end or deſign in going down into the Sea, is not pleaſure and recreation; but to do buſineſs, (*i. e.*) to Export and Import ſuch Wares and Commodities as are neceſſary, if not to the Being, at leaſt, to the well-being of the ſeveral Kingdoms and Countries of the World. Theſe are the Men here ſpoken of, who *ſee* (more than any) *the Works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deeps.* Works and Wonders by an ἓν διὰ δυοῖν, uſual Figure, is as much as his wonderful Works; namely, of *Creation*, in the ſtrange and monſtrous productions of the Sea, and of *Preſervation*, with reſpect to themſelves, in the dreadful dangers they there encounter. Thus the Perſon or Subject is deſcribed.

Secondly, The danger is likewiſe deſcribed, in which theſe Seafaring-men are ſometimes involved: And indeed the *Pſalmiſt* here gives us a very rhetorical and elegant deſcription of their condition in the Stormy Sea; and ſhews us how deplorable their ſtate and condition is at ſuch a time. Where we are to note both the Cauſes and Effects of theſe Tempeſts.

1. The Cauſes, and they are twofold.

Firſt, The principal cauſe, the will and pleaſure of God. He commandeth and raiſeth the Stormy Wind. This is God's Prerogative, none can raiſe Winds, but himſelf; and if *Devils* or *Witches* do it at any time; yet it is ſtill by his permiſſion, as you ſee in *Job* 1. 12, 19. The Lord is ſaid to hold the Wind in his Fiſts. *Prov.* 30. 4. As a Man holds a wild fierce Beaſt in a Chain, or by a Collar: And when they blow *he brings them out of his treaſuries*, *Pſal.* 135. 7. There is indeed a Natural Cauſe of Winds, of which Philoſophers give us this rational account. *That it is a hot, and dry exhalation raiſed from the Earth, by the power of the Heavenly Bodies, which being repelled or forced back by the coldneſs of the middle Region, moves obliquely or ſlantingly, and ſometimes very violently through the Air.* But though this be the Natural Cauſe of the Wind; yet this doth not at all reſtrain the abſolute Soveraignty of God over them. It is he *that commands and raiſeth them*, as the Text ſpeaks; and though it be ſaid *Job* 3. 8. *The Wind blows where it liſteth*; yet that expreſſion makes it not an arbitrary creature: But the meaning is either thus, It blows where it liſteth, for any oppoſiition that Man can make to it, though it cannot blow where it liſteth with reſpect to God. Or thus, Such is the great variableneſs and inſtability of the Winds, blowing now this way, now that, that it ſeems to move with a kind of ſpontaneity, as a Bird doth in the Air; though indeed it doth but ſeem ſo, for all its motions are ordered of the Lord. And you cannot ſay in this ſenſe, as 1 *Kings* 9. 11. *That God is not in the Wind.* Now when it pleaſeth the Lord to ſhew his power upon the great Deeps, he ſends forth theſe Winds out of his Treaſure. This is the principal Cauſe. Then next,

2. We have the inſtrumental ſubordinate and next Cauſe of the Storm; and that is, the *Winds lifting up the Waves of the Ocean.* There is naturally in the Sea a continual agitation, and rolling of its Waters hither and thither; it *cannot reſt*, as the Prophet ſpeaks; but when a violent Wind blows upon it, the Ocean is incenſed and inraged; and the Winds roul, moving Mountains of Water before them. Then like Wild Beaſts, the Waves ſeem to brea

break looſe and rage, not only to be *latrantes undas*, as *Virgil* calls them, *barking Waves*; but κύματα ἄγρια, *raging Waves*, as *Jude* ſpeaks *Verſe* 13. Yea, *roaring Waves*, as our Saviour ſtiles them, Thus of the Cauſes of the Storm Principal and Subordinate. Next we have

*Undæ maris efferatæ.* Beza.

*Fluctus truces.*

*Luke* 21. 25.

Secondly, The terrible Effects of the Tempeſts, and that upon both their Bodies and their Minds.

(1.) External upon their Bodies; it toſſes them up and down in a dreadful manner, which the *Pſalmiſt* elegantly expreſſes in the Text. *They mount up to Heaven, they go down to the Depths*, a lofty hyperbolical expreſſion; very near unto it is that of *Virgil*.

*Tollimur in cœlum, curvato gurgite; & iidem.*
*Subducta, ad manes imos deſcendimus, unda!*
Æn. 3.

They ſeem to mix with the very Clouds; and then, open deep Graves for them in the bottom Sands. Yea, it moves them not only *perpendicularly*, lifting them up, and caſting them down, but *obliquely* and *circularly* alſo. They reel to and fro, and ſtagger like a drunken man, or as ſome tranſlate, *agitantur in gyrum*, they run round: They are indeed moved according to the unſtable motion of the Waves, on whoſe proud backs they are mounted. This is the External Effect of the *Storm* upon their Bodies.

(2.) The Internal Effect of it upon their Minds, which is far more terrible. For it is ſaid here, *Their Soul is melted becauſe of Trouble, and they are at their wits end.* Both which expreſſions do import a greater commotion, and ſtorm in the Paſſions of the Mind, than that is in the Waves of the Sea. The ſtouteſt ſpirit quails and melts when it comes to this; and the wiſeſt Artiſt is at his wits end. Thus you have the deſcription of the perſons, and of their danger, both in the Cauſe and Effects upon the Body and Mind. Next

(3.) We have their deliverance by the wonderful hand of Divine Providence, in *Verſ.* 27. *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he brings them out of their diſtreſs.* Their uſual cry in ſuch extraordinary exigencies is *Mercy! Mercy!* Now they can pray, that could not pray before. Extremity drives them to their knees, not only with *cries*, but *vows* to the Lord. And he delivers them out of their diſtreſs: Some delivered one way, and ſome another, but all in a ſtupendious way, which cannot but aſtoniſh them that are ſo delivered, and make them acknowledge the Finger of God was in it.

From all this we obſerve,

Doctr. *That the Preſervations and Deliverances of Seamen in the dreadful Storms and Tempeſts at Sea, is the wonderful Work of Divine Providence.*

The Works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all them that have pleaſure therein. *Pſal.* 111. 2. And among his Providential Works none greater, and more admirable, than thoſe which Seamen daily behold in their marvellous Protections upon the Sea.

Now the Glory of Divine Providence towards Seamen, ſhines and diſplays it ſelf in three things. Eſpecially firſt, in making the Ocean navigable for them at any time. Secondly, In preſerving them from Shipwracks in the fury and ſtreſs of Weather. Thirdly, In finding out ways, and ſtrangely providing means of ſafety when their Ships are loſt, and broken upon the Sea.

1. It is a wonderful providence of God, to make the Ocean navigable for Men at any time; that ſuch a fluid Body as Water is, which cannot ſupport a Stone or Bullet of an ounce weight, ſhould yet by reaſon of its own Saltneſs, and the innate property of Timber, be able to ſupport ſhips of ſuch vaſt burthen, which are carried daily from place to place, being mounted on the backs of its proud Waves. Who can but acknowledge a moſt wiſe Providence, in gratifying the Natural wit and deſire of Man, which fits him for Converſe and Traffick with Foreign Nations, with inſtruments and materials ſo fit for his purpoſe; as Timber, Iron, Hemp, Pitch, the Loadſtone, and whatever elſe is neceſſary for his purpoſe? I cannot open the Wiſdom of God's Providence in this reſpect, to better advantage than I find it done by the Learned Pen of Dr. *More* in his *Antidote againſt Atheiſm.* Pag. 58. *Navigation* (ſaith he) *being of ſo great conſequence to the delight, and convenience of Humane life; and there being both wit and courage in Man to attempt the Seas, were he but fitted with right Materials, and other advantages requiſite; when we ſee there is ſo pat a proviſion made for him to this purpoſe, in large Timber for the building of his Ship, a thick Sea-water to bear the Ships burthen; in the* Magnet *or Loadſtone for his Compaſs; in the ſteddy and parallel Direction of the Axis of the Earth for his* Cynoſura: *And then obſerving his natural wit and courage to make uſe of them, and how that ingenite deſire of knowledge and converſe, and of the improving of his own parts, and happineſs, ſtir him up to ſo notable a deſign. We cannot but conclude from ſuch a train of Cauſes, ſo fitly and congruouſly complying together, that it was really the counſel of an Univerſal and Eternal Mind, that hath the over-ſeeing and guidance of it, &c.*

2. But (to come home to the caſe before us) that men ſhould be preſerved at Sea from immediate ruin in the dreadful Tempeſts that befal them there, this is a myſterious, and admirable Work of God; that a poor Ship ſhould not be ſwallowed up by the furious Ocean, when Mountains of Water come rolling towards it with an horrid noiſe, and give it ſuch dreadful ſtripes; when Seas roll over it, and ſo cover it with the Waves, that for a time they know not whether they ſink or ſwim; to ſee it emerge out of ſuch fatal dangers, keep up its head, and mount upon the backs of thoſe lofty Seas that threaten immediately to overwhelm it. O how great is the power and care of Providence in ſuch a caſe! eſpecially, if you conſider theſe following particulars, among many others, which threaten ruin on every ſide: And ſhould but one of theſe many contingencies befall them, in the eye of Reaſon they are loſt Men.

1. Of how many parts comparted together, doth a Ship conſiſt? Theſe parts indeed are faſtened together with Bolts of Iron; but being in ſo many Planks, what a wonder is it that none Springs, that no Bolt gives way, or Seams open, whilſt every part works with ſuch violence, and ſo great a ſtreſs of Weather lies upon it. Should ſuch a thing fall out (as it is a wonder it ſhould not) how ſoon would the Ship ſwim within as well as without?

2. How often are they put from their courſe by ſtreſs of Weather, and know not where they are; not being able for many days to take any obſervation? So that they muſt go whither Winds and Waves will drive them? For there is no dropping Anchors in the Main, nor reſiſting the courſe of the Seas, to which they can make no more reſiſtance than a Child to a Giant. And how is it they are not daſhed upon the Rocks, or foundered in the Sands, ſeeing the Winds ſhape their Courſe, and not Art? But there is a God that ſteers your courſe for you, when you cannot.

3. How often are you even fallen upon Rocks and Shores before you ſee them, and are almoſt paſt *hope* before you begin to *fear* ? Sometimes almoſt imbayed, and as much as ever you can do to weather a Rock, or Head-Land, which you diſcern'd not till it was almoſt too late ?

I remember Doctor *Johnſon*, in that ingenious and wonderful Narrative of his Voyage to the *Sound*, when he had ſurvived two Shipwracks, and was imbarked in the Third Ship; *We had not* (ſaith he) *been above two or three hours at Sea, but there was a ſad diſtraction amongſt us in the Ship, and the Mariners crying* Mercy! Mercy! *for we had almoſt fallen foul on a Rock, which lay ſo cunning in the Water, that we did not eſpy it till we were upon it; but by the goodneſs of God, we ſailed cloſe by it, and ſo eſcaped it : The leaſt touch of it had been our ruin.*

4. How often do you ride at Anchor in furious Weather, near Rocks and Shores ? Your Lives, under God, every moment depending upon a Cable and Anchor ; if the one break, or the other come home, you are loſt Men. And how wonderful is it they do not ! What is a Cable in a Storm ? But as the new Cords with which the *Philiſtines* bound *Sampſon*, and as eaſily would they be ſnapt aſunder like a Thread of Tow, were it not for the care of Providence over you? Theſe, and an hundred other Accidents, which hourly threaten you, might, and would ſend you down to the Bottom, but that the Lord permits it not ſo to be.

3. And yet more wonderful than all this, how often doth God ſuffer Ships to founder and ſink under you, and to be daſhed to pieces againſt the Rocks, and yet preſerve you when the Ordinary Means of Preſervation are cut off and gone? Who like theſe ſee the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep ?

For *Firſt*, Sometimes a ſmall Boat ſhall ſave them, when a ſtout Ship could not. Thus many of them have been wonderfully preſerved; and thus the forementioned Author relates the manner of his wonderful Preſervation ; *Our Ship* (ſaith he) *had ſprung a Leak, or rather a Plank, and was ready to ſink*; O, *how the Face of every Man was changed at this Affrightment! One was at his Prayers, another wringing his Hands, a third ſhedding Tears, when we had no need of more Salt-Water. After this Fit they fell to work, and (as it is uſual in ſuch Extreams) we were all buſy in doing of nothing, and did we knew not what. The Maſter's Mate whom we ſent down to ſearch out the Leak, quickly return'd to us with a Sad Countenance, Trembling Hands, and gnaſhing of Teeth, a Quivering Tongue, and Words half ſpoken, ſignifying unto us, that the Wound was incurable. Here was now no room for Counſel, neither had we time to ask one another, what was beſt to be done ; but we preſently caſt out our Long-Boat, and ſhot off Eight or Nine Guns, which ſeem'd to me to be ſo many Tolls of a Paſſing-Bell before our Death. I leaped into the Boat, but leaped ſhort ; one Leg in the Boat,* Alterum in Charontis cymba. *Now were we left in the North Seas, which ſeldom wear a ſmooth Brow ; but at this time contending with the Wind, ſwelled into Prodigious Mountains. It blew half a Storm, and we were now in a Small Veſſel: What credit could we give to our Safety in a ſmall and open Shalop, when ſo ſtately a Caſtle of Wood, which we but now loſt, cou'd not defend it ſelf againſt the inſolency of the Waves ? We were many Leagues from any Shore, having no Compaſs to guide us, nor Proviſions to ſuſtain us, and the Night grew back upon us——-—— Nothing but a Miracle could preſerve us, being out of the reach of Human help———. We fell to Prayer, and our Extremity pleaded for us; —— For in this Moment of Death, when we were without the leaſt expectation of deliverance, he ſent a Ship to us, which we muſt needs confeſs to be the Finger of God*, &c. Thus he——— And this hath been the wonderful Door opened in Extremity to multitudes more for their eſcape. But O how aſtoniſhing are theſe ways of the Lord ! Well may we ſay, *His ways are in the Sea, and his Paths in the great Deep, and his Footſteps are not known*, Pſal. 77. 19.

*Secondly*, Sometimes they ſhall be caſt upon a Rock in the Sea, where they ſhall be preſerved till ſome other way of deliverance come; yea, preſerved ſtrangely, God bleſſing a ſmall matter of Proviſion which they ſaved to ſuſtain them ; though they ſaid of it, as the Widow of *Sarepta* to the Prophet, 1 *Kings* 17. 12. *I have but an handful of Meal, and a little Oyl, and I am gathering two Sticks, that I may go in and dreſs it, for me and my Son, that we may eat it, and die.* Or if they could ſave nothing, yet a few Muſcles, or Birds Eggs, with God's Bleſſing, have ſuſtained them till the time of Mercy came. This hath been the Caſe of many. Think upon this, you that abuſe the good Creatures of God by Drunkenneſs ; how ſweet would a Cup of Freſh Water be to you, when reduc'd to ſuch Extremity! O, if your Hearts be not harder than the Rocks you lay upon, how would ſuch extraordinary Mercies melt you into Love and Thankfulneſs!

*Thirdly*, Sometimes they have been wafted to the Shore ſafely upon the Wrack, or by making a Raft of the broken Pieces of the Ship, and torn Sails, and Ropes; and upon this (God knows, a poor ſecurity againſt the boiſterous Waves) have they ventur'd themſelves. A ſinking Man (as we ſay) will catch at a Bulruſh. *Paul*, and thoſe that ſuffer'd Shipwrack with him, were thus ſaved. *The Centurion commanded, That they which could ſwim, ſhould caſt themſelves firſt into the Sea, and get to Land. And the reſt, ſome on Boards, and ſome on broken pieces of the Ship*: *and ſo it came to paſs that they eſcaped all ſafe to Land*, Acts 27. 43, 44.

*Tabula poſt Naufragium.*

O the Miraculous Works of the Lord! to ſave by ſuch contemptible and improbable means! Who can but ſee and acknowledge the Finger of God to be here ? Lo, theſe are parts of his ways ; but how ſmall a portion is heard of him? *Job* 26. 14.

1. *Uſe of Reproof*. If your Preſervation in Storms at Sea, be the Wonderful Works of Divine Providence, then divers of you deſerve to be ſharply reproved from this Truth. And I beſeech you ſuffer the Word of Reproof meekly and penitently. I ſhall ſpeak nothing to reproach you ; no, it is not to reproach, but to reform you : And if you hate Reproof, and mock at Counſel, God may ſhortly ſpeak in ſuch Thundering Language to your Conſciences, as will be terrible for you to hear. I remember it is ſaid of St. *Bernard*, That whilſt he was ſeriouſly reproving the prophaneneſs of one (and if I miſremember not, it was his own Brother) who was a Soldier, and obſerving how he ſlighted his holy and ſerious Counſel, his Spirit was greatly grieved at it; and he told him, *Brother, God, I fear, will ſhortly make way to your Heart with a Sword, to which my words can find no acceſs*; and the Event ſoon verified the ſad Prediction. I pray God none of you may be taught by Captivities and Shipwracks, what it is to reject Faithful Reproofs, and wholeſome Counſel, ſeaſonably given for your good. You that read theſe Lines, ſeriouſly ask your own Conſciences theſe following Queſtions :

(1.) Have you not ſoon forgotten the Works and Wonders of the Lord, which your Eyes have ſeen? It may be, for the preſent, you have been ſenſibly affected with your Danger, and the Mercy of God in your Deliverance, but hath it remained upon your Hearts? I doubt theſe Mercies have been written in the Duſt, which ſhould have been ingraven, as in the Rock for ever. Thus it was with *Iſrael*, a People that ſaw as many Wonders wrought for them by the immediate Finger of God, as ever did any People in the World; and yet it is ſaid of them, even after the Red-Sea Deliverance, in which *God divided the Sea for them, when the Waves thereof roared*, Iſa. 51. 15. And with which, for the preſent, their Hearts were greatly affected; for it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 106. 12. *That they believed his Word, and ſang his Praiſes.* But in the next Verſe you read, that a little time eaſily wiped out the ſenſe of this Mercy; for it is ſaid, *Ver.* 13. *They ſoon forgot his works, and waited not for his counſels.* I doubt this was not the Sin of *Iſrael* only, but is the caſe of many of you at this Day. Well, God did not forget you in the Time of your Extremity, though you ſo quickly forget him. Think not to excuſe your ſelves from this guilt, by ſaying, you do ſtill remember the Thing: You may do ſo, and yet be ſaid to forget his Mercy. For a Deliverance may be remembred by him that received it two ways; namely, *ſpeculatively*, and *affectingly*. A ſpeculative remembrance is only to call to mind the Stories of ſuch a Danger, and Preſervation: This you may do, and yet God account himſelf forgotten, except you ſo remember it, as ſtill to feel the Powerful Impreſſions thereof upon your Hearts, melting them into Thankfulneſs, Love, and Dependance upon the God of your Salvations.

(2.) Have you not walked very unanſwerably to your Deliverances, yea, and to the Solemn Engagements you made to God in the Day of your Diſtreſs? I fear ſome of you have walked, after God hath reſcued you by a wonderful immediate Hand from the Jaws of Death; as if you had been *delivered to commit all theſe Abominations.* As it is *Jer.* 7. 10. It may e the *laſt* Week or Month you were reeling to and fro upon the ſtormy Sea, and ſtaggering *like* drunken Men; and *thus* reeling and ſtaggering along the reets *really* drunken. O horrid Abomination! Do e thus requite the Lord, who pitied you in your diſtreſs, and, being full of compaſſion, ſaved you, when ou cried to him? Is this the Fruit of your wonderl Salvation? If a Man ſhould have told you in that ay, it would have been thus, you your ſelves could ot have believed it, but would have anſwer'd as *Hael* did to the *Prophet*, 2 *Kings* 8. 13. *What! is thy rvant a Dog, that he ſhould do ſuch things?* Yet ſo it as, and ſo it is ſtill: The Lord humble you for this eat Wickedneſs. If this be all the Fruit of Mery and Deliverance, it had been better for you that u had gone down to the Bottom then, rather than live only to treaſure up more wrath againſt the y of wrath, and fill up your meaſure.

(3.) Are there not a ſort of *Atheiſtical Sea-men*, who n not Providence at all, either in the raiſing of ſe horrid Tempeſts, or in their marvelous Preſertion in them? but look on all as coming in a Naal way, and their eſcape to be only by good Forne, and Chance. How wonderful a thing is it, the Eyes of all conſidering Men, that Providence uld take any notice of them in a way of Favour, t ſo wickedly diſown it, and ſo directly diſoblige How can you poſſibly ſhut your Eyes againſt ſuch ar light, and ſtop your Ears againſt ſuch loud and in Language, whereby the Power and Goodneſs God proclaims it ſelf to you in theſe Providences! ! methinks you ſhould moſt readily and thankfulubſcribe that great Truth, *Pſal.* 68. 20. *He that is our God, is the God of Salvation; und unto God the Lord belong the iſſues from Death.* But though Men ſee Signs and Wonders, they will not believe, yea, though themſelves become Wonders to the World by their Miraculous Deliverances; yet ſo bruitiſh and ſtupid are they, that they will not ſee the Hand that ſaves them. Take heed what you do: You ſet your ſelves in the direct way to deſtruction by this, and highly provoke the Lord to abandon, and caſt you out of the care of his Providence; and if he once do ſo, you are loſt Men.

(4.) And yet more vile (if more vileneſs can be in Sin) than all this. Are there not a Generation of Wretched Men among you, that fall a ſwearing, curſing, and blaſpheming God, even when he is uttering his Terrible Voice in the Tempeſt, and every moment threatning to intomb them in the Deep? When you ſhould be upon your Knees bewailing your ſins, and pleading with God for Mercy (as I doubt not but ſome of you do) to be yet more and more provoking him, daring him to his Face; and yet more incenſing his Indignation, which is already kindled againſt you; who, that hears this, can chuſe but admire the riches of God's Patience and Forbearance towards ſuch Men? The very *Heathen* Mariners in a Storm, *called every Man upon his God*, Jonah 1. 5. We ſay, Extremity will cauſe the worſt of Men to pray, and compoſe the Vaineſt Spirit unto Seriouſneſs; but it ſeems by you, it will not. Is this the Frame and Temper you will meet Death in? What, ſpeaking the Language of Devils and damned Spirits before you come among them? Haſting on your own Ruin, as if it were too ſlack and lingring in its Motion? The Lord open the Eyes of theſe miſerable Creatures, and convince them, that they are not only going to Hell as others are, but that they are the Forlorn of all that Wretched Crew that are bound thither; and proportionably will be their Miſery, except they repent.

2. *Uſe of Exhortation.* This Point is yet farther improvable for you by way of Exhortation, ſerving to preſs you to thoſe proper Duties which God calls you to by his Terrible Providential Voice in the Storms, and by your wonderful Deliverances.

1. And the firſt Leſſon you are to learn from hence, is, *To adore the Power of God.* O what a Manifeſtation of Divine Power is here! You are the Men that ſee more than others, the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep. It is one of God's Ends, in ſhewing you theſe Wonders, *To make his mighty Power known*, Pſal 106. 8. O what a Terrible Voice doth God utter upon the Seas, when the Heavens are black above you, the furious Winds and dreadful Thunders ratling about you, the Sea and Waves roaring beneath you! Is not this Voice of the Lord full of Majeſty? Doth it not awe your Hearts, and make them tremble? In three things his Infinite Power is diſcovered to you.

*Firſt*, In raiſing theſe Terrible Tempeſts, and that from ſo ſmall and weak a beginning as a thin Vapour from the Earth is: This is the Wonderſul Work of God, *Pſal.* 135. 7. *He cauſeth the Vapours to aſcend from the ends of the Earth; he maketh Lightnings for the Rain, he bringeth Wind out of his Treaſures.*

*Secondly*, In limiting and bounding their Force and Power: What prodigious Effects elſe would follow? The Wind is a fierce and boiſterous Creature, and would (if God did not by his Providence reſtrain) deſtroy, and overturn all, both by Sea and Land. Or if *Satan*, who is ſtiled *The Prince, or the Power of the Air*, were left at liberty to execute his Malice by ſuch an Inſtrument, not a Ship ſhould croſs the Seas, nor a Houſe be ſafe at Land; as is evident enough by the furious haſte he made to overturn the Houſe with an horrible Tempeſt upon *Job*'s Children, as ſoon as he had received a permiſſion from Heaven to do it.

And *Third*, No leſs viſible is the Power of God in calming and appeaſing the ſtormy Winds, and remanding them into his Treaſuries, *Pſal.* 107. 29. *He maketh the Storm a Calm*: Yea, he doth ſo in the very nick of time, when all is concluded loſt. Thus you read in *Mark* 4. 39. *When the waves beat into the Ship*, ſo that it was now full, and the Diſciples cried to the Lord, *Maſter, careſt thou not that we periſh? He aroſe and rebuked the wind, and ſaid to the Sea, Peace, be ſtill; and the wind ceaſed, and there was a great calm.* Juſt as one would huſh a Child, *Peace, be ſtill*; O the Sovereign Power of God! How ſhould it be reverenced and adored by all that behold it, in theſe marvelous effects of it?

2. The Second Leſſon you are taught by this Doctrine, is, *To admire the Mercy of God.* Mercy is no leſs diſcovered than Power; yea, the Power of God is put forth to give his Mercy a fair occaſion to ſhine forth in your Deliverance. God ſometimes permits your danger to grow to an Extremity, and delays your Deliverance to the laſt Moment, till all hopes of ſafety are gone, upon the like reaſon, That *Lazarus*'s Reſurrection was deferr'd; that the Work of God in your Preſervation may commend it ſelf to you under the greateſt advantage.

O that you would view theſe Mercies in all their indearing Circumſtances. I can only hint your Duty generally in this Caſe; you may enlarge upon it, if you have hearts fit for ſuch a bleſſed Work. And mark particularly the multitudes of Mercies that are complicated and involved in one Deliverance. Obſerve the Seaſon when, the manner how, the means by which your Salvation was wrought. It is a thouſand pities that ſo much of God's glory, and your comfort as any one, even the ſmalleſt circumſtance may contain, ſhould be loſt.

3. *Laſtly*, and above all. *See that you anſwer God's ends in your Deliverance.* If that be loſt, God may ſay concerning you, as *David* did of *Nabal*, 1Sam. 25. 21. *Surely, in vain have I kept all that this Fellow hath in the Wilderneſs; ſo that nothing was miſſed of all that pertained to him; and he hath requited me evil for good.* So here in vain have I kept this Fellow upon the Sea, when I ſuffered others to ſink: In vain have I preſerv'd his Life, Liberty, and Eſtate; ſo often by an out-ſtretched Arm of Power and Mercy to him, ſeeing he requites me evil for good.

O let me intreat you to be careful to comply with the Deſigns and Ends of God in theſe your wonderful Preſervations. If you enquire what God's Ends in your Deliverance are, I anſwer.

*Firſt*, It is to lead you to Repentance. *The goodneſs of God* (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) *leadeth thee to repentance*, Rom. 2. 4. Doſt thou not know the Voice of Mercy? Why, it beſpeaks thy Return to God. It may be thou haſt ſpent all thy Life, to this Day, in the Service of Sin: Thou never redeemeſt one of all thy precious Hours, to conſider thine own Eſtate, to bewail thy Sin and Miſery, to ſeek after an Intereſt in Chriſt. Why, now here is a Providence faln in that doth, as it were, take thee by the Hand, and lead thee to this great neceſſary Work. The End of God in raiſing this Storm, was to deliver thee from the more dreadful Tempeſt of his Wrath, which without Repentance muſt ſhortly overtake thy Soul in the blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever. Now God hath awakened thy Conſcience by this Fright, made it charge home thy Sins upon thee, terrified thee with diſmal Apprehenſions of Death and Hell. O, what a fair opportunity and advantage hath he now put into thy hand for Repentance, Reformation, and gaining an Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt. If this Seaſon be loſt, Conſcience ſuffered to fall again into a dead Sleep, and thy Heart be again hardened by the deceitfulneſs of Sin, thou maiſt never have ſuch an opportunity for Salvation opened to thee any more.

*Secondly*, If this End be anſwer'd, then a farther deſign God hath in thy Deliverance, is to ingage, and incourage thy Soul to dependance upon God, in future ſtraits and dangers. This is Food for Faith, and now you are funiſh'd with experience of the Power, Mercy, and Goodneſs of God, to inable you to roll your ſelves upon him, when new Exigencies befal you. If God exerciſe you with ſuch Extremities another time you may ſay with the *Apoſtle*, 2 Cor. 1. 10. *Who delivered us from ſo great a Death, and doth deliver; in whom we truſt he will yet deliver us.*

If your firſt Deliverance were a Deliverance without a Promiſe, when you were without Chriſt, what incouragement have you to depend upon him, when his End is anſwered in your Repentance and Converſion; and being in Chriſt, are intituled to all the Promiſes?

*Thirdly*, and *laſtly*, God's End in your marvellous Preſervations and Deliverances, is, to furniſh you for, and engage yon to a Life of Praiſe. O! how ſhould the high Praiſes of God be ever in your Mouths! You have ſeen his Works and Wonders in the Deeps. And this is it which the *Pſalmiſt* preſſes upon you, as a becoming Return for your Mercies, in the Words following my Text; *O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the Children of Men.*

O with what warm and inlarged Affections ſhould you expreſs your Thankfulneſs to the God of your Salvation! and ſay as *David*, *What am I, O Lord, God; and what is my Father's Houſe, that thou ſhouldſt do ſuch great things for me?* Was ſuch a life as mine worth the working of ſo many Wonders to ſave it? O Lord, thou knoweſt it hath been a life ſpent in Vanity. Thy glory hath not been precious in mine Eyes, but my life hath been precious in thine Eyes. Many more uſeful, and leſs ſinful than my ſelf, have periſhed, and I am ſaved. O Lord, ſhew me the Deſigns and gracious Ends of theſe Deliverances. Surely there is ſome great thing to be done by me, or elſe ſo great a Salvation had not been wrought for me. The Lord ſaw in what a ſad caſe my poor Soul was, to be ſummoned immediately before his Judgment Sea that if I had gone down under all my guilt, I had ſunk to the bottom of Hell: But thou in love to my Soul haſt delivered it from the Pit of Corruption, that I might yet enjoy a Seaſon for Salvation; and be once more intruſted with the precious Talents of Time and Means. O that I may not abuſe the Grace of God in this new Inſtrument, as I have done in the former. Let me not live as one delivered to commit all theſe Abominations.

And now after all that is come upon me for my Evils, ſeeing thou, my God, haſt puniſhed me leſs than mine Iniquities deſerve; and haſt given me ſuch a Deliverance as this; ſhould I again break thy Commandments? *Ezra* 9. 13, 14. *O let this new Mercy produce a new Heart and Life!*

THE

# The Sea-man's Preſervative
## In Foreign Countries.

## SERMON III.

### Pſal. CXXXIX. 9, 10.

*If I take the Wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea; even there ſhall thy right hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me.*

IN this *Pſalm* the Omnipreſence and Omniſcience of God, are the ſubjects of the *Pſalmiſt's* Meditation; and theſe Attributes are here promiſcuouſly diſcourſed, not only becauſe of the near affinity that is betwixt their Natures, but becauſe the one is the demonſtration of the other: It is evident God knows all things, becauſe he fills all places. Touching the Omniſcience of God, he diſcovers the infinite perfection of that Attribute by the particular and exact notice it takes of all our ways: *Ver.* 3. *Thou compaſſeſt my paths, and art acquainted with all my ways.* Of all our words, *Ver.* 4. *There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knoweſt it altogether.* Yea, of all our thoughts; and that not only in the inſtant of their conception, but long before they were conceived: *Ver.* 2. *Thou underſtandeſt my thoughts afar off*, even from eternity. Thus he diſplays the Omniſcience of God. And then to make demonſtration of the truth, and certainty of this Doctrine of God's Omniſcience, he proves it from his Omnipreſence: *q. d.* He that fills all things, cannot but know all things. Now God's preſence fills Heaven, yea, and Hell too, *Ver.* 8. and all parts of the Earth and Sea, even the remoteſt, *Ver.* 9, 10. And therefore no Creature, nor action of any Creature, can eſcape his cogniſance. It is not here, as among men; if a malefactor be condemned by the Laws of one Kingdom, he may eſcape by flying into another; but it is far otherwiſe here, for, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, (perſonating a guilty fugitive indeavoring to make an eſcape from the arreſt of God's Juſtice) *If I take the Wings of the Morning, and flee into the uttermoſt parts of the Sea; even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me.*

In which words you have theſe two things mainly remarkable.

1. The greateſt ſecurity and incouragement to a ſinner ſuppoſed.

2. That ſuppoſed ſecurity and incouragement utterly deſtroyed.

*Alludit ad celerrimam radiorum ſolis excurſionem, qui momento ab oriente ad occidentem perveniunt.* Calvin.

1. The greateſt ſecurity and incouragement to a ſinner ſuppoſed; *If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea.* Where two things ſeem to offer towards his Protection.

Firſt, The Place; the remoteſt part of the Sea, by which you are to underſtand the moſt obſcure nook in the Creation; fartheſt removed from any inſpection or obſervation.

And ſecondly, His ſwift and ſpeedy flight, after the commiſſion of ſin, to this ſuppoſed Refuge and Sanctuary: It is here ſuppoſed, that a ſinner ſhould flie as ſwift as the light of the Sun, which in a moment ſhines from the Eaſt to the Weſt; and ſo the meaning is, Could I flee with a celerity equal to the Sun, or his Beams of Light, which breaking forth in the Morning, do in an inſtant inlighten the remoteſt part of the Hemiſphere: Could I as ſwiftly flee to the moſt obſcure, remote, ſolitary place in all the World. Thus the ſinner's ſecurity is ſuppoſed.

2. This ſuppoſed ſecurity and incouragement is utterly deſtroyed. *Even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me.* The leading hand of God is not here to beunderſtood, as a directing or guiding hand, to ſhew the fugitive ſinner the way of his eſcape; but contrarily, *Thy hand ſhall lead me*, as a Keeper leads his priſoner back to the place of cuſtody, from which he indeavored an eſcape. And the following clauſe is exegetical; *Thy right hand ſhall hold*, or detain *me*, *viz.* in ſtrict cuſtody. So that the ſum of all is this:

*Non accipitur deducere pro viam monſtrare; Sed deducet me manus tua tanquam cuſtos captivum ſibi commiſſam deduxit.* Vatab.

Doct. *That the whole World affords no place of ſecrecy or ſecurity for a ſinner to eſcape the obſerving Eye, and righteous Hand of God.*

*Jonah* fled from the Lord to *Tarſhiſh*; but could he eſcape ſo? No, the Lord ſent a Storm after him, which brought back the fugitive, *Jonah* 1. 3, 4. We read, *Iſa.* 29. 15. of ſuch *as dig deep, to hide their counſels from the Lord,* (*i. e.*) They plot, contrive and ſtudy to conceal their wicked deſigns, to ſin with greateſt ſecreſy and ſecurity. But, what can poſſibly be a covering from him, to whoſe ſight all things are naked and manifeſt? Where can a ſinner be hid from him, whoſe preſence fills Heaven and Earth? *Jer.* 23. 24. The Scripture gives full proof to this great Truth. It is clear from *Prov.* 15. 3. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.* And again, *Job* 34. 21, 22. *For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he ſeeth all his goings; there is no darkneſs, nor ſhadow of death, where the workers of iniquity* *may hide themſelves.* Whoever goes about to conceal a ſin in ſecret, attempts a fooliſh and impoſſible deſign. *Pſal.* 44. 21. *Shall not God ſearch this out? for he knoweth the ſecrets of the heart. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro, through the whole Earth*, 2 Chron. 16. 9.

Now in the handling of this point, I purpoſe to ſhew you,

1. That men are often induced to ſin, upon hopes of ſecreſie and concealment.
2. That to ſin upon theſe incouragements, ſtrongly argues their natural Atheiſm: They think they are ſafe, if men know it not; they reckon not upon God's diſcovery of them.
3. That theſe incouragements to ſin, are vain things, it being impoſſible any place can hide a ſinner from God; and how it appears, that the Eye of God is, and muſt needs be upon us, and our actions, wherever we are, and how cloſely ſoever we indeavor to hide them. And then apply it.

Firſt, Men are often induced to commit ſin upon the hopes of ſecreſy and concealment. Sin (eſpecially ſome kinds of ſin) carry ſo much ſhame and *odium* in them, that it reſtrains men from the open practice of them; but if Satan can perſwade them they ſhall never be divulged to their reproach, they will venture upon them. See that Text, *The eye of the Adulterer waiteth for the twilight, ſaying, No eye ſhall ſee me, and diſguiſeth his face*, Job 24. 15. reckoning himſelf ſecure, if he can carry his wickedneſs under a vail of darkneſs, not caring what wickedneſs he doth, ſo he may do it undiſcerned. It is not the acting of ſin, but the diſcovery of it that puts them into terrors. So it is added with reſpect, both to the Adulterer, and the Thief; *Ver.* 17. *The morning is to them as the ſhadow of death, if one know them; they are in the terrors of the ſhadow of death. i. e.* If a man, eſpecially a man in Authority, a Magiſtrate meet them, it is as if the Image of death paſſed before them in a viſion. So thoſe Idolaters, *Ezek.* 8. 12. *Son of man, haſt thou ſeen what the antients of the houſe of* Iſrael *do in the dark, every man in the houſe of his imagery? For they ſay, the Lord ſeeth us not.* They conclude all is well, if nothing appear. This incouragement of Secreſy is the great argument, by which Satan prevails with men to commit any ſin that hath ſhame or danger attending it. But his promiſes of concealment are uſually made good, as his promiſes of great wealth are to Witches. This is the incouragement.

Secondly, Next I will make it evident to you, that to ſin upon this incouragement argues Atheiſm in him that commits it. This is plain, for did men believe the Omnipreſence and Omniſcience of God, ſuch an incouragement to ſin as ſecreſy could have no force with them. Thus when the Antients of *Iſrael* practiſed their Idolatry in the dark, it is plain they thought God ſaw them not: *Ezek.* 8. 12. *For they ſay, the Lord ſeeth us not, the Lord hath forſaken the Earth. (i. e.)* They did not really believe God's Omnipreſence and Omniſcience. And *Job* tells us, *Chap.* 31. 26, 27, 28. *That if he had beheld the Sun in his brightneſs, (i. e.)* to admire and worſhip it as a God: Or, *his heart been ſecretly inticed; he ſhould have denied the God that is above.* Every one that is inticed to ſin upon the incouragement of Secreſy, doth ſo far deny the God that is above. If ſuch a man did really believe there is a God that ſees him, *whoſe eyes are as flames of fire*, Revel. 1. 14. *To whom the darkneſs and the light are both alike*, *Pſal.* 139. 12. it were impoſſible he ſhould be ſo terrified at the diſcovery of a Creature, and ſo ſecure and wholly unconcerned at the diſcovery of God: It could not be, that the obſervation of the great God ſhould not ſo much trouble them, as the obſervation of a little child.

Thus we find the inward thoughts of mens hearts, concerning God, diſcovered by their bold attempts upon ſecret ſins. *Iſa.* 29. 15. *Wo to them that ſeek deep to hide their counſel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; and they ſay, Who ſeeth us, and who knoweth us?* They think if their works are ſhrowded under a vail of darkneſs, they are ſafe enough: If they can eſcape the Bar of an Earthly God (a Magiſtrate) they ſhall never be accountable at any other Bar. We have another ſad inſtance of the ſame impiety in *Pſal.* 73. 11. *And they ſay, How doth God know? And is there knowledg in the moſt high?* If men did not fancy to themſelves, there is no God, or (which is all one) that he is like unto themſelves, one that cannot ſee in darkneſs; they could never incourage themſelves as they do, to ſin upon ſuch a fooliſh pretence.

Thirdly, But my proper buſineſs in this place, is to prove, That theſe incouragements to ſin are vain things; that no ſinner can hide himſelf from the Eye of God. This is plain both from Scripture and Reaſon.

The Scriptures ſpeak full home to this Truth. *Prov.* 5. 21. *The ways of a man are before the Lord; and he pondereth all his paths.* To ponder or weigh our paths, is more than ſimply to obſerve and ſee them. He not only ſees the action, but puts it into the ballances, with every circumſtance belonging to it, and tries how much every ingredient in the action weighs, and what it comes to. So that God hath not only *an univerſal inſpection* upon every action, but he hath a *critical inſpection* into it alſo. *The Lord is a God of knowledg, and by him actions are weighed*, 1 Sam. 2. 3. So *Jer.* 13. 25, 27. *Thou haſt forgotten me, and truſted in falſhood. I have ſeen thy Adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdneſs of thy whoredoms and abominations. q. d.* Thou forgetteſt there is a God in the Heavens that beheld thee, and didſt verily believe all was ſafe, becauſe ſecret from man. In this falſhood or cheat put upon thee, by the devil, and thine own Atheiſtical heart, *thou didſt truſt.* But I have ſeen thee, and all thy ſecret leudneſs. It is a Proverb among ſinners, *Si non caſte, tamen caute.* Carry the matter, if not honeſtly, yet warily: If thou have a mind to ſin, yet order it ſo, that the World may be never the wiſer. But how vain a thing is this? If men do not, the Lord doth ſee it. *I know, and am a witneſs, ſaith the Lord, Jer.* 29. 23. Thus the Scripture ſpeaks roundly and fully to the point in hand.

But becauſe the Atheiſm of the World is ſo great, and it is a hard thing to convince men of this great truth, ſo as to over-aw them from any ſecret ſin by it, I will by rational arguments demonſtrate the truth to every man's conſcience, and give you plain and full evidence, that how ſecretly ſoever men carry their ſinful deſigns, yet the Lord muſt needs be privy to them; and it is impoſſible they ſhould eſcape his cogniſance.

1. For firſt, he that formed all, cannot but know all. The Workman cannot be ſuppoſed to

be ignorant of any part of his own work. Now God is the Former of all things; every place, and every perſon he hath made. Where then ſhall the workers of iniquity hide themſelves? You have the folly of ſinners, in thinking to conceal themſelves from the Eye of God, convinced and reproved by this very argument. *Iſa.* 29. 15, 16. *Wo unto them that ſeek deep to hide their counſels from the Lord, and their words are in the dark; and they ſay, Who ſeeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely, your turning of things upſide down ſhall be eſteemed as the Potters clay. For ſhall the work ſay to him that made it, he made me not? Or ſhall the thing framed, ſay of him that framed it, he hath no underſtanding? q. d.* Think ye by deep-laid deſigns, by the advantage of darkneſs, by moulding and new moulding your crafty deſigns in your heads, as the clay is moulded now into this, then into that ſhape by the Potter's hands, to hide it from me? O brutiſh Creatures, and without underſtanding! Am not I the God that formed you? And can it be ſuppoſed, I ſhould not know the moſt ſecret thoughts, plots, and deſigns of mine own Creatures, who cannot contrive a deſign, nor conceive a thought without me? How abſurd is this? Find out a place which God made not, or a Creature which he formed not; and then your pretences to that Creatures concealment from God, in ſuch a place, may have ſome colour. And this Argument is again urged to convince the brutiſh Atheiſt. *Pſal.* 94. 8, 9, 10. *Underſtand ye brutiſh among the people; and ye fools, when will ye be wiſe? He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? He that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that chaſteneth the Heathen, ſhall he not correct? He that teacheth man knowledg, ſhall not he know? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.* So that it is the vaineſt of all vanity in the World, to think of hiding your ſins from the Lord.

2. He that ſuſtains all, cannot but know, and diſcern all. You that ſeek to hide counſel from the Lord, know you not, *That in him you live, move, and have your being? Acts* 17. 28. Do not you derive that very power from him, which you abuſe to ſinning againſt him? And do you depend neceſſarily, and continually upon God for all? Muſt he give you the power to move, and by that power can you move beyond him, and get out of his reach? Cannot you think a thought without him, and yet can exclude him from thoſe very thoughts which you had no power to conceive, but from him? Exerciſe but common Reaſon in the caſe, and it will hiſs at your abſurd deſigns.

3. He that governs all, can be ignorant of nothing. There is a perpetual influence of Providence, ſwaying and governing all the Creatures, and all their actions; elſe the very ligaments of Nature would crack, and the World break up and disband. This Providence extends it ſelf to the leaſt and loweſt of Creatures, and their actions. *Luke* 12. 6. A Sparrow falls not to the ground without it. The great God hath ſomething to do about the moſt minute and inconſiderable things, yea, the moſt contingent and uncertain things, as is the diſpoſal of a Lot, *Prov.* 16. 33. And indeed, this Omniſcience of God is that which is neceſſary to his Univerſal Government. How ſhall he rule that perſon, or in that place, which he knows not? Indeed Earthly Governors may do ſo: It is not neceſſary they have a perſonal immediate cognizance of each place and perſon in their dominions; it is enough that they be virtually and mediately governed by them: but it is not ſo with God. It is neceſſary his eye ſhould immediately ſee all the parts of his Dominion. He could not rule the World, if he were not an Omniſcient God. *Pſal.* 66. 7. *He ruleth by his power for ever, his eyes behold the Nations: Let not the rebellious exalt themſelves.*

*Deus maximus in minimis.*

4. He that hath ſet a ſpy to obſerve, and note what every man doth, cannot but know his actions, how ſecret ſoever they be. Now ſo it is here, God ſends a ſpy with you to obſerve and record your moſt ſecret actions and thoughts, in every place; I mean your own Conſciences, from whoſe obſervation none of your ways can poſſibly be exempt. The ſenſe of this made the Heathen ſay, *Turpe quid auſurus, te ſine teſte time.* When thou art attempting a ſinful act, fear thy ſelf without any other witneſs, Conſcience is privy to your moſt ſecret deſigns and thoughts. 1 *Kings* 2. 44. *Thou knoweſt all the wickedneſs which thy heart* (i. e. *thy Conſcience*) *is privy to.* And if Conſcience know all, God muſt needs ſee and know it. So the Apoſtle reaſons, from the leſſer to the greater, 1 *John* 3. 20. *If our heart condemn us,* (which is there put for our Conſcience) *God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.* If the ſpirit of a man knows the things of a man, much more he that formed that Spirit, and indowed man with it.

5. He that knows things, more ſecret and unſearchable than our moſt ſecret actions can be, muſt needs know them how ſecret ſoever they be. Now there are many things more cloſe and ſecret, than any action of ours can poſſibly be, and yet God knows them. The thoughts of the heart are more ſecret than any external action, ſo ſecret, that no Creature can ſearch them; the Devil himſelf hath but a conjectural gueſs at them. *But the Lord telleth unto man what is his thought,* as in *Amos* 4. 13. So *Jer.* 17. 10. *I the Lord ſearch the heart, I try the reins; i. e.* The moſt obſcure, inward, and deep ſecrets lodged in the heart: Nay, which is more, he not only knows our thoughts when they are formed, and conceived in the heart, but long before their conception *Pſal.* 139. 2. *Thou knoweſt my thoughts afar off.* Divines generally interpret it from eternity; even ſo long before they were actually thought, he foreknew every thought we would think: and what can be imagined more ſecret, and undiſcernable, than a future thought?

Now if this be known to him, how much more our thoughts formed into projects and deſigns, and theſe executed by external actions? O deceive not your ſelves with hopes of ſecreſy; nothing can be a ſecret to him that knows the counſels of all hearts.

6. He that providentially brings to light the moſt ſecret contrivances of men, and publiſhes them before all *Iſrael,* and before the Sun, muſt needs ſee them, and know them. How cloſely had *Achan* covered his wickedneſs? He never ſuſpected a diſcovery, yet God brought it to light. With how much contrivance was the ſin of *David* covered, yet God diſcovered it. *Thou didſt this thing ſecretly, but I will do this thing before all* Iſrael, *and before the Sun;* 1 Sam. 12. 12. Hiſtories abound with Examples of God's bringing to light murders, ſo ſecretly committed

that it was impoſſible they ſhould ever be revealed in this World, without a miracle of Providence; and yet ſo they have been brought to light. *Beſſus* having committed ſuch a murder, fancied the Swallows that were chattering in the Chimney, had ſaid, *Beſſus* killed a Man; and thereupon confeſſed the fact. How ſecure were the contrivers of the Popiſh Powder-plot, that *Catholick Villany*, in a double ſenſe having ſworn all their Accomplices to ſecreſy, and managed the whole deſign ſo cloſely, that *Guy Faux* upon the diſcovery of it, ſaid, *The Devil muſt needs be the diſcoverer of it.* How eaſie were it to expatiate upon this Theam? But I will not be tireſom in inſtances: All Ages are the witneſſes of this truth. Who then can deny or queſtion that great confeſſed truth, *Dan.* 2. 28. *There is a God in Heaven that reveals ſecrets?* And if he reveals them, he muſt needs know them.

7. He that will judg all ſecrets, cannot but know them. *Now God will judg the ſecrets of men in that great day.* Rom. 2. 16. *God will bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,* Eccl. 12. *ult.* The Judg of the whole Earth will not judg at random, his Judgment will be infallible, becauſe his Omniſcience is ſo. *His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he ſeeth all his goings; for he will not lay upon man more than right, that he ſhould enter into judgment with God*, Job 34. 21, 23.

So that the truth of this point is beyond all controverſie and contradiction, That the whole World affords no place of ſecreſy or ſecurity for a ſinner, to eſcape the obſerving eye, and righteous hand of God.

The Uſes follow in theſe Inferences.

1. *Infer.* If this be ſo, then Time, Place, and Opportunity, how much ſoever they ſeem to promiſe ſecreſy and concealment, ſhould never further a temptation to ſin.

Suppoſe all circumſtances concurring, ſo that in the eye of Reaſon you ſeem ſecured from the ſhameful conſequences of ſin; yet methinks the conſideration of this truth ſhould ſufficiently deter you from a wicked purpoſe. *Prov.* 5. 20. *And why wilt thou, my Son, be raviſhed with a ſtrange Woman? and imbrace the boſom of a ſtranger? For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.* There be four things which ſtrengthen temptations to ſin; and particularly the ſin of uncleanneſs upon Seamen. Firſt, The abſence of lawful Remedies. Secondly, The preſence of alluring objects. Thirdly, Ths inſtigation of wicked examples. Fourthly, And the hopes of concealment, being remote from their acquaintance; ſo that their ſins, in probability, ſhall never diſgrace them. This laſt circumſtance is not the leaſt: O how many hath it prevailed upon! But I hope you will never yield to this temptation, whoſe heart and ſtrength is broken by this conſideration of the Eye of God upon you. A chaſte Woman being once ſollicited to folly, told him that ſollicited her, She could never yield to the motion, till he could find a place where God ſhould not ſee.

Nay, my friends, it ſhould do more than reſtrain you from the groſs acts of ſin, it ſhould powerfully curb the very thoughts and firſt motions of ſin in your hearts. That was the uſe holy *Job* made of this truth; *Job* 31. 1, 4. *I have made a Covenant with mine eyes, why then ſhould I think upon a Maid? Doth he not ſee my ways, and count all my ſteps?*

Suppoſe you ſhould carry your wickedneſs ſo cloſe, that none on Earth ſhould know it; yet the Lord ſees it, and will bring it into judgment, and your own Conſcience is privy to it. I pray Sirs tell me, Is it not a great comfort to a Malefactor, that he acted his crime ſo cloſely, that none but the Judg, and one authentick Witneſs more (whoſe teſtimony is as good as a thouſand) beheld it? Why this is the caſe of all ſecret ſinners. But to preſs home this great and neceſſary truth more particularly, I beſeech you to conſider.

1. God doth not only behold you, but beholds you with deteſtation and abhorrence in your ways of iniquity; it is a ſight that grieves him to the heart. *Gen.* 6. 5, 6. *And the Lord ſaw the wickedneſs of Man was great on the Earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* Here was wickedneſs, great wickedneſs breaking out externally, and evil, only evil, and that continually working internally. So that, both heart and life were evil extenſively, intenſively, and protenſively. This the Lord ſaw; and how it affected him, the ſixth Verſe tells you. *And it repented the Lord he had made man on the Earth, and it grieved him at the heart.* Ah it cuts him to the heart, to ſee your ſinful hearts and courſes. Nothing can be ſo contrary to the pure and holy Nature of God, as this is. This made the Prophet admire how his patience could indure ſuch a ſight. *Hab.* 1. 13. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look upon iniquity; wherefore lookeſt thou upon them that deal treacherouſly? &c.* And if he ſhould ſay, Lord how canſt thou behold thy ſelf affronted by vile Creatures, and hold thy hands from avenging it? O the ſtupendious patience of God!

2. It doth not only grieve him to the heart, but it puts his patience to the greateſt trial and exerciſe in beholding it. Therefore he is ſaid, *to indure with much long-ſuffering, Rom* 9. 22. It doth, as it were, create a conflict betwixt his Patience and Juſtice. He is ſo provoked by your ſin, that he expreſſes it as a difficulty to bear it, *Amos* 2. 13. *I am preſſed under you, as a Cart is preſſed that is full of Sheaves*; burdened till the Axel-tree of infinite Patience be ready to crack under the weight.

Nay thirdly, He doth not only ſee your evils, but he regiſters and records them, in order to a day of reckoning with you for all together, except ye repent. *Deut.* 32. 34. *Is not this laid up in ſtore with me, and ſealed up among my Treaſures?* A Metaphor taken from the *Clerk of the Aſſize*, who ſeals up the Bag of Inditements againſt the time of tryal. You think if you can blind the eyes of men, all is well, you ſhall hear no more of it: Ah, but it is ſealed up among God's Treaſures, *i. e.* the things he records and reſerves for the day of account.

4. God doth not only ſee you, but he will alſo one day make you ſee your ſelves, and your ways, and that with horror and conſternation. You think you ſhall taſte nothing but the ſweet and pleaſure of ſin; but how are you deceived? The days are coming, when ſin that is now pleaſant, ſhall be turned into Wormwood and Gall. You will not ſee the evil of it, and, becauſe you ſee it not, you think God doth not. *Theſe things* (ſaith God) *haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence; and thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch a one as thy ſelf;*

*but I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes*, *Pſal.* 50. 21. God ſees them now, and he will make you ſee them too, by opening your eyes in this World graciouſly, or in that to come judicially.

5. God doth not only ſee your ways, but he will make all the World ſee them too. For, *there is nothing hid that ſhall not be revealed, nor covered that ſhall not be made known*, Matt. 10. 26. *There is a day when God will make manifeſt the hidden counſels of the heart*, 2 Cor. 4. 5. When *that which hath been ſpoken in darkneſs, ſhall be heard in light; and that which ye have ſpoken in the ear in cloſets, ſhall be proclaimed upon the houſe tops*, Luk. 12. 3. Well then, whenever the occaſions and opportunities of ſin are preſented to you, under this incouragement of Secreſy, I beſeech you remember this truth, that no place can hide you from the Eye of God. He ſees all your ways, yea, he ſees them with abhorrence; the ſight of them is the greateſt exerciſe of his patience: His ſight of them is not a tranſient Glance, but he ſees and records your evils, they are ſealed up among his Treaſures: He ſees, and will make you ſee them too with horror, when he ſhall ſet them in order before you. He ſees them, and will make Angels and Men ſee them in the great day. O then never let Secreſy any more incourage you to ſin.

2. *Inference.* What prodigious Sinners muſt they be, that ſeek no covert for their ſin in darkneſs, but with an impudent face declare, yea, glory in their ſhame? who are not aſhamed to ſin openly with a bare face, and a Whores forehead? Theſe are ſinners of the firſt magnitude. *They declare their ſin as* Sodom, *and hide it not*, *Iſa.* 3. 9. It is natural to man to indeavour to hide his ſin as *Adam*; and you ſee from the Text, guilty ſinners fain would (if it were poſſible) fly to any obſcure corner from the obſervation of God and Men; and it is a Mercy, God hath planted ſuch an affection, as ſhame is, in the Soul of Man, to be a Bridle to reſtrain his exorbitant Luſts. But yet there is a Generation of monſtrous Sinners, who have ſo far unmanned themſelves, *That they are not at all aſhamed when they commit abominations, neither can they bluſh*, *Jer.* 6. 15. If there be any remains of ſhame left in them, they exerciſe it upon a wrong Object: They are aſhamed of that which would be their glory, and glory in that which is their ſhame; they add Impudence to their Sin, and bluſh not to proclaim that which others ſtudy to conceal.

Such a vile Temper as this, ſhews a man even ripe for Wrath; he hath even filled up his meaſure, and is come to the very culminating point and top of Wickedneſs. There be ſome Men arrived to ſuch a degree of Holineſs, that all that converſe with them, judg them even ripe for Heaven: They ſpeak the Dialect, and have the very ſavour of Heaven upon them. Others are come to ſuch a prodigious height of Impiety, that underſtanding Men cannot but conclude they are nigh unto Damnation; they ſpeak the very Language, and have the very ſcent of Hell upon them. Such are they that openly declare eir Sin as *Sodom*, and glory in their ſhame.

Thus we ſee ſome Drunkards will glory in eir ſtrength, to pour down Wine and ſtrong rink, and can boaſt of the number of their ps: Some Adulterers can glory in their acts Wickedneſs, not ſufficing themſelves to damn their own Souls, but labouring to infect and corrupt as many as they can by their filthy Tongues, that they may draw them into the ſame Miſery. We can hardly tell how to ſcrew up Sin one Peg higher than this. Firſt to practiſe Sin, then defend it, then boaſt of it. Sin is firſt a Man's Burden, next his Cuſtom, next his Delight, and then his Excellency. Lord, whither is Man faln! that Holineſs ſhould ever be his diſgrace, and ſin, yea the vileſt of ſins, his Glory! O the power of Divine Patience!

3. *Inference.* If the Eye of God ſearches every obſcure corner in the World, to behold the evil that is committed there, then certainly the Eye of God cannot but look into every ſecret place in the World, to ſee the good that is done there. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil, and the good*, *Prov.* 15. 3. The good as well as the evil; yea, he beholds with delight the good done in ſecret.

As ſome Sinners ſeek corners to act their Wickedneſs in, and cannot ſatisfy themſelves to commit Sin in the light, (for as our Saviour ſaith, *Joh.* 3. 20. *He that doth evil, hateth the light*) ſo on the contrary, a truly godly Man ſeeks Corners to pray in, to meditate in, and to examine his own Heart in, and thinks theſe Duties of Godlineſs can never be managed with too great a privacy; not that he is in the leaſt aſhamed of his Duty, no, that is not the reaſon, but he is afraid of Hypocriſie, when Duties lie too open, and expoſed to the eyes of Men. A Sinner takes his full liberty to vent his corruptions, when he can do it in ſecret; and a Saint takes his full liberty to vent and exerciſe his Graces, when no Eye but the Eye of God ſees him. Thou, when thou prayeſt (ſaith our Saviour) enter into thy Cloſet, and ſhut thy Door, and Pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father (which ſeeth in ſecret) ſhall reward thee openly. O how much better is it, both as to your preſent comfort, and future account, to get into a corner to pray, than to whore, or drink? To pour out your Souls to God graciouſly, than to pour out your Luſts againſt God ſo wickedly? How contrary are the principles of Grace and Corruption? The ſtudy of ſinners is to hide their Evils from the eyes of Men, the ſtudy of a Saint is to hide his Duties from the eyes of Men: The Sinner would not have the World ſuſpect what he hath been about, nor would the Saint have all the World know what he hath been about. The way of an Adulterer is as the *way of an Eagle in the Air, or as a Serpent upon a Rock*; *i. e.* a ſecret way, where they leave no prints or tracks behind them. *So is the way of an adulterous Woman, ſhe eateth and wipeth her mouth, and ſaith, I have done no wickedneſs*, *Prov.* 30. 19, 20. By wiping the mouth, is there meant preventing all ſuſpition; ſuffering no ſign of the action to remain upon them: So contrarily, a gracious perſon that hath been with God in ſecret Prayer, or Faſting, when his duty is ended, he labours to avoid all oſtentations. And therefore you have the caution from Chriſt, *Matth.* 6. 17, 18. *But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thy head, and waſh thy face; that thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret.* The meaning is, carry thy private Duties ſo cloſe, that none may know what paſſeth between God and thee: When thou haſt been entertained in ſecret with hidden *Manna*, a Feaſt of fat things, wipe thy mouth in a holy ſenſe, *i. e.* wipe off all ſuſpition of Hypocriſy and Vanity by a prudent and humble concealment. Religion doth not lay all open, as we ſay: As ſinners have their ſecret pleaſures, their ſtoln Waters which are ſweet to them; ſo the Saints have their ſecret delights in God, their hidden *Manna*, which no man knows but he that eateth of it. And as the Eye of God vindictively beholds the one, ſo it delightfully beholds the other; and ſo you find it, *Cant.* 2. 14. *O my Dove*, (ſaith Chriſt to the Church) *Thou art in the Clefts of the Rocks, in the ſecret places of the Stairs: Let me ſee thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance comely.* Let this incourage you to ſecret Duties; let not others find more pleaſure in ſecret Luſts, than you can do in God and ſecret duties.

*Non eſt Religio ubi omnia patent.*

4. *Inference.* Doth the Eye of God ſee all the evil and wickedneſs that is committed in all the ſecret corners of the World, how admirable then is the Patience of God towards the World! who can imagine, how much wickedneſs is ſecretly practiſed in a Town, or City every day? Or, if all the villanies that are perpetrated in a ſmall circumference, in one day, were known to us, we ſhould admire, that God doth not make us like *Sodom* for judgment and deſolation before the next day: What then are the innumerable ſwarms of ſin, which are as the Sand upon the Sea-ſhore, from all the parts and corners of the Earth! Alas, there is not the ten thouſandth part of the groſſer ſort of wickedneſſes committed in the World, that ever comes to our eye or ear; and if it did, we cannot eſtimate the evil of ſin, as God doth; nor feel with that reſentment the burden of it, as he doth; and yet the long-ſuffering God forbears it with infinite patience. Surely his power was not more diſcovered in making the World, than it is in forbearing to deſtroy it again, for the wickedneſs that is in it. But the World ſtands for the Churches ſake that is in it. *And were it not, that the Lord of Hoſts had left unto us a ſmall remnant, we had been as* Sodom, *we had been like unto* Gomorrah, Iſa. 1. 9. There is alſo an elect remnant to be called and gathered by the Goſpel out of it, in their ſeveral Generations; and when that number ſhall be accompliſhed, God will ſet fire to the Four quarters of it, and it ſhall lie in white Aſhes; till then, the long-ſuffering of God waiteth.

5. *Inference.* If God ſee all the ſecret wickedneſs that is committed in every corner of the World; how clear is it, that there is a Judgment to come, and that this Judgment will be exact?

That there is a Judgment to come is by this manifeſt, that there is abundance of ſin committed in the World, which never comes to light here, nor never will in this World. It is true, ſome mens Sins are open, and the Judgments of God upon them are as open; but it is not ſo with all. The Apoſtle ſaith, 1 *Tim.* 5. 24. *Some mens ſins are open before-hand, going before-hand to Judgment; and ſome mens, they follow after.* Some Mens Sins are written as it were in their foreheads, every one ſees them, but *others follow after*, are not diſcovered till the day of the revelation of the Secrets of all hearts, and then that which is now done in cloſets ſhall be proclaimed as upon houſe-tops: though they were never put to ſhame for their ſins in the places where they committed them, yet God will ſhame them, before Men and Angels. This is the day to judg ſecrets, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5.

And, as it is certain there will be ſuch a Judgment, ſo it is certain this Judgment will be exact; for the Judge of all hath ſeen all: Whatever he charges any Man with, hath been acted before his face. *Pſal.* 90. 8. *Thou ſetteſt our ſecret ſins in the light of thy countenance.* Here can be no miſtake, the Omniſcient God will judg for what he hath ſeen; *For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he ſeeth all his goings, for he will not lay upon man more than right that he ſhould enter into judgment with God.* The meaning is, he cannot miſtake in his judgment, being Omniſcient, and having ſeen all the ways of man; ſo that there can be no plea offered by any man for a reverſe of his ſentence.

O then let us be exact and careful, as well in our ſecret as in our open actions; for God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. *Ecceſ.* 12. *ult.*

6. *Inference.* Laſtly, If the Eye of God be in every place upon us, and all our Actions: Then let thoſe whoſe condition of life hath ſent them out of the eyes and obſervations of their Parents and Maſters, keep the ſenſe of God's Eye upon their hearts, as ever they would eſcape Sin and Ruin.

It is no ſmall advantage to young unprincipled Perſons, to live under the Diſcipline of pious and careful Governors; but it often falls out, that they are early tranſplanted into another Soil, ſent into Foreign Countrys in order to their Education or Imployment; and as often are there corrupted and debauched by the evil examples of the places where they reſide; they learn another Language, or drive another Trade than that their Parents or Maſters deſigned them for. But if the ſenſe of this great Truth might accompany them where-ever they are, O what a Soveraign Antidote would it prove againſt thoſe deadly poiſons of Temptations! This alone would be a ſufficient Preſervative. If our Children and Servants have but the awful ſenſe of God's Eye upon them, we may turn them looſe in the wide World without fear.

If Providence ſhall direct this diſcourſe to your hands, my Hearts deſire and prayer for you is, That the Spirit of the Lord would imprint this great Truth upon your hearts. And I am the more moved to indeavour your Preſervation, upon the conſideration of the apparent danger you are in, and the manifold diſappointments and miſchiefs that muſt unavoidably follow the corrupting of your tender years. The danger you are in is great, whether you conſider,

Firſt, The infecting catching nature of Sin. No Plague is more infectious and inſinuating than Sin is. Many are the Wiles, Devices, Stratagems, and Baits, Satan lays to draw you into ſin, 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. Or,

Secondly, The proneſs that is in your own Nature, to cloſe with the offers and temptations that you are tried with: it is as great a wonder if you eſcape, as that one that lives in a Peſt-houſe, ſhould remain healthy; or that dry Tinder ſhould not catch, when thouſands of ſparks fly about it, and light upon it. Or,

Thirdly, The abſence of all thoſe means by which you have formerly been preſerved from ſin. You are now without the Ordinances of God, the Family Duties, the Admonitions, Counſels, Examples, and Obſervations of your Parents, Maſters, and Friends: All which have been of great uſe to keep you from ſin, and repreſs the vanities of Youth. Or laſtly,

Fourthly, The manifold furtherances to Temptations which your Age affords; *Childhood and Youth are vanity.* Inconſiderateneſs, Raſhneſs, Injudiciouſneſs, and the want of experience, do all caſt you into the very ſnare. See how the Holy Ghoſt hath ſignified the danger of perſons at your age, in *Prov.* 7. 7.

All theſe things do greatly indanger you. And if any, or all of them together, prevail to the vitiating and corrupting of you, then what a train of ſad conſequences will follow upon it! For,

1. The Great God will be diſhonored and reproached by you, even that God whoſe diſtinguiſhing Mercies are now before your eyes, and ſhould be admired by you, that cauſed you to ſpring up in a better ſoil, and not from Idolaters in a Land of Darkneſs.

2. Conſcience will be wounded and polluted with guilt; and though at preſent you feel not the remorſe and gnawings of it, yet now you are preparing for it. The ſins of Youth, are complaints and Sorrows of old Age, *Job* 13. 26.

3. The hearts of your Friends (if Godly) will be grieved and greatly troubled, to find their expectations and hopes diſappointed; and all thoſe Prayers for you, and counſels beſtowed on you to come to nothing. If an unequal match by *Eſau* was ſuch a grief of heart to *Iſaac* and *Rebecca*, what will prophaneſs and uncleanneſs be to your Parents? *Gen.* 26. 34.

4. The ſerviceableneſs and comfort of your whole Life, will in all probability be deſtroyed by the corruption of your Youth. If Bloſſoms be withered, and Buds nipt, what Fruit can be expected? To conclude,

5. Your precious and immortal Souls are hazarded to all Eternity. And *what ſhall it profit a man to gain the whole World, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* Mat. 16. 26.

All this miſchief may be happily prevented by the ſerious conſideration of this point, you have now been reading. For if God ſhall fix that Truth in your Hearts by Faith, then

Firſt, Inſtead of running with others into the ſame exceſs of Riot, you will keep your ſelves pure and unſpotted in an unclean defiling World. You will anſwer all temptations to ſin, as *Joſeph* did, *Gen.* 39. 9. *How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?*

Secondly, Inſtead of joining with others in ſin, you will mourn for the Sins of others. You will ſay with *David*, Pſal. 120. 5. *Wo is me, that I ſojourn in* Meſhec, *that I dwell in the Tents of* Kedar! Your Soul, like *Lot*'s, will be vexed from day to day with the filthy Converſations of the Wicked, 2 *Pet.* 1. 17, 18.

Thirdly, Inſtead of returning to your Country with a wounded Name and Conſcience, you will return full of inward Comfort and Peace, and to the joy of all your Friends and Relations.

Fourthly, To conclude, you will give fair incouragements to the expectations of all that know you, of becoming uſeful Inſtruments for the Glory of God, and benefit of the World in your Generation. O therefore beg of God, that this Truth may be deeply ingraven upon your Hearts.

# The Succeſsful SEAMAN.

## SERMON IV.

### DEUT. VIII. 17, 18.

*And thou ſay in thine heart, My Power, and the might of mine Hand hath gotten me this VVealth: But thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee Power to get VVealth.*

THIS Context contains a neceſſary and very ſeaſonable Caution to the *Iſraelites*, who were now paſſing out of their Wilderneſs-ſtraits into the rich and fruitful Land of *Canaan*, which abounded with all Earthly Bleſſings and Comforts. Now when the Lord was about to give them poſſeſſion of this good Land, he firſt gives them ſome wholeſom Caveats to prevent the abuſe of theſe Mercies. He knew how apt they were to forget him in a proſperous eſtate, and aſcribe all their comfortable fruitions to their own prudence and valor; to prevent this he reminds them of their former eſtate, and warns them about their future eſtate. He reminds them of their former condition whilſt they ſubſiſted upon his immediate care in the Wilderneſs. *Ver.* 15, 16. *Who led thee through the great and terrible Wilderneſs, wherein were fiery Serpents, and Scorpions, and Drought, where there was no Water*; here were their dangers and wants. *Who brought thee* *forth Water out of the Rock of Flint, who fed thee in the Wilderneſs with Manna, which thy Fathers knew not*; here were their ſupplies in theſe ſtraits. *That he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end*; Here was the wiſe and gracious deſign of God in all this.

But wherein did God humble them by feeding them with Manna? Were they not ſhrewdly humbled (ſaith Mr. *Garnal*, *Vol.* 2. *p.* 345. an ingenious Author) to be fed with ſuch a dainty diſh, which had God for its Cook, and was called Angels food for its delicacy? It was not the meanneſs of the fare, but the manner of having it, by which God intended to humble them. The food was excellent, but they had it from hand to mouth; ſo that God kept the Key of their Cupboard, they ſtood to his immediate allowance. This was an humbling away. But now the diſpenſation of Providence was juſt upon the change, they were going to a Land, *where they ſhould eat Bread without ſcarceneſs*, Ver. 9. and have their comforts in a more natural ſtated and ſenſible way; and now would be the danger. Therefore

He not only reminds them of their former eſtate, but in this Text cautions them about their future eſtate, *Say not in thy heart, My power, or the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth, &c.* In this Caution we have theſe two things eſpecially to obſerve:

1. The falſe cauſe of their proſperity removed.

2. The true and proper cauſe thereof aſſerted.

1. The falſe cauſe removed: *Not their power, or the might of their hand.* That is ſaid to be gotten by the hand, that is gotten by our wiſdom, as well as labour: Head-work and Wit-work, is Hand-work in the ſenſe of this Text. It cannot be denied, but they were a great People, prudent, induſtrious, and had an excellent Polity among them: But yet, tho they had all theſe natural external means of inriching themſelves in that fertile ſoil, God will by no means allow them to aſcribe their Succeſs and Wealth to any of theſe cauſes: for alas, what are all theſe without his Bleſſing?

2. The true and proper cauſe aſſerted: *It is the Lord that gives thee power to get wealth. i. e.* All thy care, labour, wiſdom, ſtrength, ſignifies nothing without him; it is not your pains, but his bleſſing that makes your deſigns to proſper: And therefore in all your proſperity, ſtill acknowledg him as the Author of all. Hence note,

**Doct.** *That the Proſperity and Succeſs of our Affairs, is not to be aſcribed to our own abilities, but to the Bleſſing of God upon our lawful indeavours.*

We find two *Proverbs* in one Chapter that ſeem to differ in the account they give of this matter; and indeed they do but ſeem ſo. It is ſaid in *Prov.* 10. 4. *The hand of the diligent maketh rich*; aſcribing riches and proſperity to humane diligence. And *Verſ.* 22. *The bleſſing of the Lord, it maketh rich.* But theſe two are not really oppoſed to each other, but the one ſubordinated to the other. The diligent hand, with God's bleſſing upon it, makes rich; neither of them alone, but both conjoined. A diligent hand cannot make rich without God's bleſſing; and God's bleſſing doth not ordinarily make rich without a diligent hand. And theſe two are put together in their proper places, 1 *Chron.* 22. 16. *Up and be doing, and the Lord be with you.* It is a vain pretence for any Man to ſay, If the Lord be with me, I may ſit ſtill, and do nothing; and a wicked one to ſay, If I am up and doing, I ſhall proſper whether God be with me, or no. The Sluggard would fain proſper without diligence; and the Atheiſt hopes to proſper by his diligence alone: But Chriſtians expect their proſperity from God's Bleſſing, in the way of honeſt diligence.

*Faith muſt not ſtifle induſtry, nor induſtry blind Faith.*

It is a common thing for men to benum their own arms, and make them as dead and uſeleſs by leaning too much upon them: So it is in a Moral, as well as Natural way. All the prudence and pains in the World avail nothing without God. So ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, in *Pſal.* 127. 2. *It is in vain for you to riſe up early, to ſit up late, to eat the bread of ſorrows, for ſo he giveth his beloved ſleep.*

A Man would think he that riſes betime, fares hard, works hard, ſits up late, cannot but be a thriving Man; and probably he would be ſo, if God's bleſſing did ſecond his diligence and frugality. But the *Pſalmiſt* intends it of diligence in a ſeparate ſenſe; a diligent hand working alone, and then it is all in vain, and ſerves only to confirm the common Proverb, *Early up, and never the nearer.* Labour without God cannot proſper; and labour againſt God will not only deſtroy it ſelf, but the labourer to boot.

Now, that this is really ſo as the Doctrine ſtates it, I ſhall indeavour to make evident,

1. By a General Demonſtration of the whole Matter.
2. By a Particular Enumeration of the ordinary Cauſes and Means of all Succeſs; which are all dependent things upon the Lord's Bleſſing.

*Firſt*, That Succeſs in Buſineſs is not in the power of our Hand, but in the Hand of Providence, to diſpoſe it as he pleaſes, and to whom he pleaſes, appears by this: *That Providence ſometimes blaſts and fruſtrates the moſt prudent, and well-laid deſigns of Men; and in the mean time, ſucceeds and proſpers more weak and improbable ones.* What is more common in the Obſervation of all Ages, than this? One Man ſhall toil, as in the fire, for very vanity; run to and fro, plot and ſtudy all the ways in the World to get an eſtate, deny back and belly, and all will not do: He ſhall never be able to attain what he ſtrives after, but his deſigns ſhall be ſtill fruitleſs. Another hath neither a head to contrive, nor a hand to labour as the former hath; nor doth he torture his brains about it, but manages his affairs with leſs judgment, and ſpends fewer thoughts about it, and yet Succeſs follows it. It ſhall be caſt in upon ſome, who as they did not, ſo (conſidering the weak management of their buſineſs) had little rational incouragement to expect it; and flie from others, who induſtriouſly purſue it in the prudent choice and diligent uſe of all the proper means of attaining it. And this is not only an obſervation grounded upon our own experience, but confirmed by the wiſeſt of Men; *Eccleſ.* 9. 11. *I returned, and ſaw under the Sun, that the race is not to the ſwift, nor the battel to the ſtrong; neither yet bread to the wiſe, nor yet riches to Men of underſtanding, nor yet favour to men of ſkill*; but *time and chance hapneth to them all.* If two men run for a prize, Reaſon gives the prize to the ſwifteſt; if two Armies join battel, Reaſon gives the victory to the ſtrongeſt; if two men undertake a deſign to get Wealth, Reaſon gives the Riches to the wiſeſt; yea, but Providence ſometimes diſpoſes it quite contrary to the verdict of Reaſon, and the Prize is given to the ſloweſt, the Victory to the weakeſt, the Eſtate to the more ſhallow capacity: So that theſe events ſeem to fall out rather caſually, than anſwerably to the means imployed about them. And who that obſerves this, can doubt but it is the Hand of God's Providence, and not our diligence, that diſpoſes the iſſues of theſe things? For why doth God ſo often ſtep out of the ordinary way, and croſs his hands, as old *Iſrael* did, laying the right hand upon the younger, and the left upon the elder; I mean, give Succeſs to the weak, and diſappointment to the ſtrong, but to convince us of this great truth which I here bring it to confirm? And becauſe men are ſo apt to ſacrifice to their own Prudence, and diſown Providence, therefore it ſometimes makes the caſe much plainer than ſo: It denies riches to the induſtrious, that live for no other end but to get them, and caſts them in upon thoſe that ſeek them not at all, and indeed are ſcarcely competent for buſineſs. *Ariſtides*, one of the wiſeſt Men of his age, was yet ſtill ſo poor, that *Plutarch* ſaid, it brought a ſlur upon Juſtice it ſelf, as if ſhe were not able to maintain her Followers. *Socrates*, one of the prime *Grecian* Sages, was ſo exceeding poor, that *Apuleius* could not but note, That *Poverty* was become an Inmate with *Philoſophy*; when in the mean time, the empty, ſhallow, and fooliſh, ſhall come up with it, and overtake it without any pains at all, which others proſecute in the moſt rational courſe all their life, and all to no purpoſe. Thus it is noted of Pope *Clement* the Fifth, *None more rich, none more fooliſh.* And this is the ground of that Proverb, *Fortuna favet fatuos*; *Fortune favours fools.* Though the Author of that Proverb, in nicknaming Providence, ſhewed as little Wiſdom as he that is the Subject of it.

*Paupertas eſt Philoſophiæ Vernacula.*

*Epitom. Hiſt. Gallic.*

By all which, this point is in the general made good; it is not Induſtry, but Providence, that directs and commands the Succeſs of Buſineſs: It being much in the attaining of Riches, as the Apoſtle ſaith it is in the obtaining of Righteouſneſs: *The Gentiles which followed not after Righteouſneſs have attained to Righteouſneſs; but* Iſrael *which followed after the Law of Righteouſneſs, hath not attained to the Law of Righteouſneſs*, Rom. 9. 30, 31. So it is here, for the vindication of the honour of Providence, which men would ſcarcely own, if it did not thus baffle them ſometimes: They that follow the World, cannot attain it; and they attain it, that follow it not; that all men may ſee their good is not in their own hand; and leſt man who is not only a covetous Creature, and would ingroſs all to himſelf, but as proud as covetous, ſhould aſcribe all to himſelf. But this will farther appear,

Secondly, By a particular enumeration of the ordinary Cauſes and Means of all Succeſs in buſineſs, which are all dependent things upon a higher Cauſe.

Now, if we proceed upon a rational account, we ſhall find five things required to the ſucceſs of our affairs; and that I may ſpeak to your capacity, I will inſtance in that affair of Merchandizing, in which you are imployed, as the Hands that execute what the Heads of your Merchants contrive; and will ſhew you, that neither their wiſdom in contriving, nor your skill and induſtry in managing their deſigns, can proſper without the leave and bleſſing of Divine Providence. Let us therefore conſider what is neceſſary to the raiſing of an Eſtate in that way of imployment; and you will find that in a rational and ordinary way, Succeſs cannot be expected, unleſs

1. The deſigns and projects be prudently laid, and moulded with much conſideration and foreſight. An error here is like an error in the firſt concoction, which is not to be rectified afterwards. *The wiſdom of the prudent* (ſaith *Solomon*) *is to underſtand his way*; that is, to underſtand and throughly to conſider the particular deſign and buſineſs in which he is to ingage. Raſhneſs and inconſiderateneſs here hath been the ruin of many thouſand enterpriſes. And if a deſign be never ſo well laid, yet

2. No ſucceſs in buſineſs can be rationally expected, except there be an election of proper Inſtruments to manage it. The beſt laid Deſign in the World may be ſpoiled by an ill management. If the perſons imployed, be either uncapable or unfaithful, what but trouble and diſappointment can be expected? *He that ſendeth a meſſage* (ſaith *Solomon*) *by the hands of a fool, cutteth off the legs, and drinketh damage.* It is as if a man ſhould ſend him on his buſineſs that hath no legs to go (*i. e.*) one that is incompetent for the buſineſs he is imployed about. All that a man ſhall reap from ſuch a deſign, is damage. And if the Inſtrument imployed be never ſo capable, yet if he be not alſo faithful to the Truſt committed to him, all is loſt: And ſuch is the depth of deceit in the heart of man, that few or none can be ſecured againſt it. *Solomon* was the wiſeſt of men, and yet fatally miſcarried in this matter. *He ſeeing the young Man* (Jeroboam) *that he was a mighty man of valor, and that he was induſtrious, made him Ruler over all the charge of the houſe of* Joſeph, 1 *King.* 11. 28. And this was the Man that rent the Kingdom from his Son, even ten Tribes from the Houſe of *David.* And yet

3. Let Deſigns be projected with the greateſt prudence, and committed to the management of the fitteſt inſtruments; all is nothing as to Succeſs, without the concurrence of Health, Strength, favorable Winds, ſecurity from the hands of Enemies, and perils of the Deep. If any of theſe be wanting, the deſign miſcarries, and all our projects fail. How often are hopeful and thriving Undertakings fruſtrated by the failure of any one of theſe perquiſits? *Go to now ye that ſay, To day or to morrow we will go unto ſuch a City, and remain there a year, and buy and ſell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what ſhall be on the morrow: for what is your life? it is even a vapor that appeares for a little while, and then vaniſheth away*, Jam. 4. 13, 14. How ſoon are the purpoſes of mens hearts broken off, and their Thoughts periſh in one day? They think to ſend or go to ſuch a place, and there inrich themſelves, and return proſperous; but ſometimes Death, ſometimes Captivity, ſometimes croſs Winds daſh all their hopes.

4. Proper Seaſons muſt be nickt, and hit, elſe all ſucceſs and expectation of increaſe is loſt. *There is* (ſaith *Solomon*) *a ſeaſon for every thing, and a time to every purpoſe under the Sun*, Eccleſ. 3. 1. This being taken, gives facility and ſpeedy diſ-

patch to a Buſineſs; and therefore he gives this reaſon, why Man miſcarries ſo frequently, and is diſappointed in his enterpriſes, becauſe he knows not the time. *Eccleſ. 9. 11. He comes* (as one ſaith) *when the Bird is flown.* It is a wiſe and weighty Proverb with the *Greeks*, *That there is much time in a ſhort opportunity*: That is, a man hitting the ſeaſon of a buſineſs, may do more in a day, than loſing it, he may be able to do in a year. This is of a ſpecial conſideration in all Humane Affairs, and is the very Hinge upon which Succeſs turns: So that to come before, is to pluck Apples before they are ripe, and to come after it, is to ſeek them when they are faln and periſhed.

5. Laſtly, In getting Wealth, the Leaks in our Eſtates muſt be ſtopped; elſe we do but put it into a Bag with Holes, as the Prophet's phraſe is in *Hag.* 1. 6. If a man loſe as much one way, as he gets another, there can be no increaſe. Hence it is, that many are kept low and poor all their days: If one deſign proſpers, yet another miſcarries; or, if all ſucceed well abroad, yet there is a ſecret conſumption of it at home, by Prodigality, Riot, Luxury, or a ſecret Curſe upon it, which the Scripture calls *God's blowing upon it*, *Hag.* 1. 9. If therefore by any of theſe ways, our gains moulder away, we do but diſquiet our ſelves in vain, and labour in the fire for very vanity. Thus you ſee what things are requiſit to the advancement of an Eſtate, upon a prudential account.

Now let us particularly obſerve, what a dependence here is upon Providence in all theſe things; and then it will be clear that our Good is not in our hand, nor Succeſs at our beck, but it is the Lord that gives us power to get Wealth. For,

As to the moulding and projecting of a Deſign, we may ſay, both of the prudent Merchant and ingenious Sea-man, what the Prophet doth of the Husbandman, *Iſa* 28. 16. *It is his God that inſtructs him to diſcretion, and teacheth him*: There is indeed a Spirit in Man, *But it is the inſpiration of the Almighty that giveth underſtanding*, *Job* 32. 8. The Faculty is Man's, but the Light of Wiſdom, whether natural or ſpiritual, is God's: And the Natural Faculty is of it ſelf no more capable of directing us in our Affairs without his teaching, than the *Dial* is to inform us of hours without the Suns ſhining upon it. And becauſe Men are ſo dull in apprehending, and backward in acknowledging it, but will lean to their own underſtandings; thence it is, that prudent Deſigns are ſo often blaſted, and weaker ones ſucceeded.

And no leſs doth Providence manifeſt it ſelf in directing to, and proſpering the means and inſtruments imployed in our buſineſs. It is of the Lord, that they prove ingenious, active and faithful Servants to us; that your Factors abroad, prove not Malefactors to you; that every deſign is not ruined by the Negligence, Ignorance, or Treachery of them that manage it. If God qualifie Men to be fit inſtruments to ſerve you, and then providentially direct you to them, his Hand is thankfully to be owned in both. It was no ſmall Mercy to *Abraham*, that he had ſo diſcreet, pious, and faithful a Servant to manage even his weightieſt Affairs, ſo prudently and proſperouſly for him. *Laban*, *Pharaoh*, and *Jethro*, never proſpered, as when *Jacob*, *Joſeph*, and *Moſes*, had the charge of their buſineſs. *Laban* ingenuouſly acknowledged, *That he had learned by experience, the Lord hath bleſſed him for* Jacob's *ſake*, *Gen.* 30. 27. A Heathen you ſee is more ingenuous in owning the Mercy of God to him in this caſe, than many profeſſed Chriſtians are, who ſacrifice all to their own Net, and burn Incenſe to their Drag, (*i. e.*) idolize the means and inſtruments of their Proſperity, and ſee nothing of God in it.

And then as to the preſervation of thoſe that go down into the Sea, to do our buſineſs in the great Waters; who can but acknowledg this to be the peculiar Work of God? Doth not daily experience ſhew how often poor Sea-men are cut off in the proſecution of our deſigns? Sometimes by ſickneſs, ſometimes by ſtorms, and ſometimes by Enemies, to whom they become a prey. If they eſcape all theſe, yet how often do they lie Windbound, or hindered by croſs accidents, till the proper Seaſon be over, and the deſign loſt? Certainly, if Providence ſhall ſo far favor men, as to prevent all theſe, to command Winds fit for their purpoſe, reſtrain Enemies, preſerve Life, and carry them ſafely and ſeaſonably to their Ports, it deſerves a thankful acknowledgment; and thoſe that do not acknowledg Providence, do diſoblige it.

Laſtly, Who is it that ſtops the Leaks in your Eſtates, prevents the waſting of your Subſtance, and ſecures to you what you poſſeſs? Is it not the Lord? How many fair Eſtates moulder away inſenſibly, and come to nothing? Certainly, as there is a ſecret Bleſſing in ſome Families, ſo that themſelves can ſcarce give any account how they are provided for; ſo there is a ſecret blaſt and conſumption upon others, which brings Poverty upon them like an armed man. And this is the true ſenſe of that Scrtpture, *Hag.* 1. 6. *Ye have ſown much, and bring in little: Ye eat, but ye have not enough: Ye drink, but are not filled with drink: Ye clothe you, but are not warm: And he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a Bag with holes*; or, as in the *Hebrew*, a *Bag pierced*, or *bored through*; what goes in at one end, goes out at another, and ſo all labour is loſt; nothing ſtays with them to do them good. So that it is an undeniable truth, That *Proſperity* and *Succeſs* is not to be aſcribed to our Abilities, but to the Bleſſing of God upon our lawful Endeavours.

1. *Inference.* And if ſo, how are they juſtly reprovable, that wholly depend upon means in the neglect of Providence; that never eye God, or acknowledg him in any of their ways! This is a very great evil, and highly provoking to the Lord: It is the fruit and diſcovery of the Natural Atheiſm of the Hearts of Men. How confident are Men of Succeſs and Proſperity, when ſecond Cauſes ly fair for it, and ſmile upon them! And on the contrary, how dejected and heartleſs, when they ſeem to ly croſs to their hopes! O how few conſider and believe that great truth, *Eccleſ.* 9. 1. *That the righteous, and the wiſe, and their works are in the hand of God.* To be in the hand of God, noteth both their ſubjection to his Power, and to his directive Providence. Whether your works be in your hand, or put out of your hand, they always are in God's hand, to proſper or fruſtrate them at his pleaſure.

Fooliſh man decreeth Events, without the leave of Providence; as if he were abſolute Lord of his own Actions, and their Succeſs. Indeed you may then ſpeak of Succeſs, when you have asked God's leave. *Job* 22.28. *Acquaint thy ſelf with God, then ſhalt thou decree a thing, and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed.* But your confidence in the means, whilſt God is neglected,

lected, will ſurely be followed either with a Diſappointment or a Curſe. For what is this, but to labour without God, yea, to labour againſt God? for ſo do all they, that give the Glory of God to the Creature, that ſet the inſtrumental and ſubordinate in the place of the principal efficient Cauſe. It is juſt with God to deny you your comfort in thoſe things, wherein you rob him of his Glory.

2. *Inference.* How vain and unreaſonable are the proud boaſts of Men, in the midſt of their Succeſſes and Proſperity? If God be the ſole Author of it, and it is not your power, nor the might of your hand, that hath gotten you this Wealth; why do you glory in it, as if it were the effect and fruit of your own Prudence and Induſtry? How ſoon do the Spirits of Men riſe with their Eſtates? How haughtily do they look? How proudly do they ſpeak? What a ſenſible change of Temper doth a ſmall change of the Condition work? It is an exceding hard thing to keep down the Heart, when Providence exalteth a Man's Eſtate. *Magnæ fœlicitatis eſt, a fœlicitate non vinci*, ſaith *Auſtin*. It is a great Felicity, not to be overcome by Felicity. That Man is ſurely rich in Grace, whoſe Graces ſuffer no eclipſe by his Riches. It is as hard to be proſperous and humble, as to be afflicted and chearful. But to keep down thy heart in times of Succeſs and Proſperity, I will offer thee, Reader, a few humbling Conſiderations about this Matter.

1. And the firſt is this, Though Providence do ſucceed and proſper thy Earthly deſigns, yet this is no Argument at all of the love of God to thy Soul: Thou mayeſt be the object of his Hatred and Wrath for all this. No Man knows either love or hatred by all that is before him, *Eccleſ.* 9. 1. How weak an evidence for Heaven muſt that be, which millions now in Hell have had in a greater meaſure than you have? The leaſt dram of Grace is a better pledg of Happineſs, than the greateſt Sum of Gold and Silver that ever lay in any Man's Treaſury. Externals diſtinguiſh not Internals; you cannot ſo much as gueſs what a Man's Spiritual eſtate is, by the view of his Temporal. *Iſhmael* was a great Man, the Head of a Princely Family, but excluded from the Covenant, and all its Spiritual Bleſſings, *Gen.* 17. 20, 21. He that reads the 73 *Pſalm*, and *Job* 21. will plainly ſee how wretched a caſe that Man is in, who hath no better evidence for the Love of God, than this amounts to.

2. Be not proud of outward Proſperity and Succeſs; for Providences are very changeable in theſe things; yea, it daily rings the Changes all the World over. Many a greater Eſtate than yours, and every way as well, yea, far better ſecured to the eye of Reaſon, hath he ſcattered in a moment. It is the ſaying of a Philoſopher, ſpeaking of the Eſtates of *Merchants* and *Sea-men*, *Non amo fœlicitatem e funibus pendentem*; I like not that Happineſs that hangs upon Ropes. I need not here cite *Hiſtories* to confirm this Truth: There is none of you but can abundantly confirm it your ſelves, if you will but recollect thoſe inſtances and examples which have faln within your time and remembrance. It is a poor happineſs that may leave a Man more miſerable to morrow, than he that never arrived to what you have, can be.

3. Pride not your ſelves in your Succeſs; for as Providences are very changeable, ſo the change ſeems very nigh to you, when your Heart is thus lifted up, eſpecially if you be ſuch, to whoſe eternal Happineſs God hath any ſpecial regard. To be ſure, he will pull down that proud heart, and quickly order Humbling Providences to that end: *He looketh upon every one that is proud, to abaſe him*, *Job* 40. 11. The Heart of good *Hezekiah* was tickled with vain glory, and he muſt needs ſhew the King of *Babylon*'s ſervants all his treaſures, and precious things; and at that very time came the Prophet *Iſaiah* to him with a ſad meſſage from the Lord, That all theſe Treaſures in which he had gloried muſt be carried to *Babylon*, *Iſa.* 39. If you hope comfortably to enjoy the good of Providence, provoke it not by ſuch vain oſtentations. It is an ingenious note even of a Heathen,

*Tu quoque fac timeas, & quæ tibi læta videntur,*
*Dum loqueris, fieri triſtia poſſe, puta.*

Ovid.

Excercise Fear in Proſperity, and think with thy ſelf, when thy heart is moſt affected with it; that whilſt the boaſt is in thy Lips, the ſcene may alter, and thy Happineſs be turned into Sorrow. Whilſt that proud boaſt was in the mouth of *Nebuchadnezzar*, the voice from Heaven told him, *His Kingdom was departed from him*, *Dan.* 4. 30, 31. Pride ſhews that Proſperity which feeds it, to be at its Vertical Point.

3. *Inference.* If Succeſs in Buſineſs be from the Lord, then certainly the true way to Proſperity is to commend our Affairs to God by Prayer. He takes the true way to thrive, that ingages God's Bleſſing upon his indeavors. Commit thy way unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs, *Pſal.* 37. 4. It is a vile thing for any Man to grudg that time that is ſpent in Prayer, as ſo much time loſt in his buſineſs. But having preſſed this point before, I ſhall add no more here.

4. *Inference.* Doth all Succeſs and Proſperity depend upon and come from God? Then let it be faithfully imployed to his Glory. *If it be of him, and through him*, then it's all the reaſon in the World it ſhould *be to him*, Rom. 11. 36. You do but give him of his own, as *David* ſpeaks. All this ſtore cometh of thine hand, and is thine own, 1 *Chron.* 29. 16. He never intended your Eſtates for the gratifying of your Luſts, but to give you a larger capacity thereby of honouring him in the uſe of them. O conſider, when God hath proſpered your Eſtates abroad, and you return ſucceſsfully home, now you have an opportunity of honouring God, and evidencing your ſenſe of his goodneſs to you, by relieving of the poor with a liberal and chearful Charity; by incouraging the Goſpel, and making them partakers of your good things, who labour for your Souls, and diſpenſe better things to you than you can return to them. I would not here be miſ-interpreted, as tho I pleaded my own Intereſt, under a pretence of pleading God's. No, God forbid, I am well ſatisfied with a capacity of doing any good, how little ſoever I receive; nor can many of you reap the fruit of my labours. But I would not leave you ignorant, or regardleſs of ſo great and plain a duty as this is. You are bound to this retribution by a plain and poſitive Precept; *Gal.* 6. 6. *Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.* You are obliged to do it, proportionably to the ſucceſs God gives you in your Trade, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. And

matter, 1 *Cor.* 9. 11. but the diſcharge of a plain and neceſſary duty.

5. *Inference.* Let not your hearts be ſatisfied with all the Succeſs and Increaſe in the World, except your Souls thrive as well as your Bodies, and your Eternal concerns proſper as well as your Temporal. It was a pious wiſh of St. *John* for *Gaius* his Hoſt, That he might proſper and be in health, even as his Soul proſpered, *d3 Epiſt. Joh. Verſ.* 2. But it were to be wiſhed, that your Souls did but proſper, as your Bodies and Eſtates do. It is a poor comfort to have an increaſing Eſtate, and a dead or declining Soul. When a conſiderable Preſent was ſent to *Luther*, he earneſtly proteſted, God ſhould not put him off with thoſe things. O Friends I beſeech you take not up in theſe Injoyments.

6. *Inference.* Laſtly, If God be the Author of all your Succeſs, how prodigious an evil is it, to make your Proſperity an inſtrument of diſhonouring him that gave it, to abuſe the Eſtates Providence gives you, to rioting and drunkenneſs? Do you thus requite the Lord? Is this the thanks you give him for all his care over you, and kindneſs to you? You would never be able to bear that from another, which God bears from you. If God do you good, O do not return him evil for it, when you have ſo done, not to think it any great

# The Diſappointed Sea-man.

## SERMON. V.

### Luke V. 5.

*Maſter, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing.*

THeſe words are the Reply made by *Peter* unto *Chriſt*, who in the former Verſe had commanded him to *Lanch out into the Deep, and let down the Nets for a Draught. Peter* is diſcouraged as to any farther attempt at that time; having already taken ſo much pains to ſo little purpoſe: *We have* (ſaith he) *toiled all night, and taken nothing.* In which Reply we note theſe two things.

1. The great pains he and his Company had taken in their honeſt Calling and Imployment, to get a livelihood. *We have toiled all night.* No calling more lawful, no diligence in an honeſt imployment could be greater; not only to ſpend the night, when other Labourers take their reſt, in watching, but in toiling. The word κοπιάσαντες comes from a Verb that ſignifies *waſting, tiring, ſpending, labour.* Here was great diligence, even to the wearying and waſting of their Spirits. *They toiled, and that all the night.*

*κοπιάω, quando quis conſumpto labore, feſſus ſuccumbit.*

2. The unſucceſsfulneſs & fruitleſneſs of their Labours, they *caught nothing.* Tho their deſign was honeſt, and their induſtry great, yet it ſucceeded not according to their deſires and expectations: It proved but loſt labour, and pains to no purpoſe. Hence the Note will be,

Doct. *That God ſometimes fruſtrates and blaſts the moſt diligent Labours of Men, in their juſt and lawful Callings.*

What imployment more honeſt or laborious than that of the Husbandman, who eats his Bread in the ſweat of his brows, and ſuſtains all that ſpending toil and labour by an expectation of Fruit in the Seaſon? And yet ſometimes it ſo falls out, that after all his labours and hopes, he reaps nothing but ſhame and diſappointment. *Joel* 1. 11. *Be ye aſhamed, O ye Husbandmen; howl O ye Vine-dreſſers for the Wheat, and for the Barly, becauſe the harveſt of the Field is periſhed.*

The imployment of the *Mariner* is as lawful as it is beneficial. What he gets is gotten with eminent hazard of Life and Liberty, as well as Watchings and Labours; and yet it ſo falls out ſometimes, that they labour but for the wind, and ſpend their ſtrength for very vanity: God cuts off their expectations and lives together. There is a time when they return rich and proſperous; and a time, when they either return empty, or return no more. So it was with *Tyre*, that renowned *Mart* and famous *Empory*; the flouriſhing and fall of whoſe Trade you have in *Ezek.* 27. 33, 34. *When thy Wares went forth out of the Seas, thou filledſt many people, thou didſt inrich the Kings of the Earth with the multitude of thy riches, and of thy merchandiſe.* Here was their Proſperity and Succeſs: But will this day always laſt? Shall the Sun of their proſperity never ſet? No, no, the change was at hand; for in the next Verſe the ſcene alters, *In the day when thou ſhalt be broken by the Seas, in the depths of the Waters, thy merchandiſe, and all thy company in the midſt of thee ſhall fall.*

Now if we ſearch into the Grounds and Reaſons of theſe Diſappointments by the hand of Providence, we ſhall find them reducible to a threefold Cauſe and Reaſon.

1. The ſoveraign pleaſure of God ſo diſpoſes it.
2. The good of the People of God requires it.
3. The manifold ſins of Men in their Callings, provoke it.

Firſt, The ſoveraign pleaſure of God ſo diſpoſes it. He is the Rector of the Univerſe, and as ſuch will ſtill aſſert his Dominion. It is his pleaſure to eſtabliſh this order in the World, to exalt ſome and depreſs others; to ſet ſome above, and others below: All muſt not be rich and great, but ſome muſt be poor and low, and to theſe ends Providences are ſuted: On ſome it ſmiles, on others it frowns. 1 *Sam.* 2. 7. *The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up.* And certainly there is much of Divine Wiſdom ſhining forth in this ordination and diſpoſition of perſons, and their conditions. If Providence had alike proſpered every Man's deſigns, and ſet them upon a Level, there had been no occaſion to exerciſe the rich Man's Charity, or the poor Man's Patience. Nay, without frequent Diſappointments, it ſelf would ſcarcely be owned in Succeſſes, nor thoſe Succeſſes be half ſo ſweet to them that receive them, as now they are. The very Beauty of Providence conſiſts much in theſe various and contrary effects: So that with reſpect to the infinite Wiſdom which governs the World, it is neceſſary ſome ſhould be croſſed, and others proſpered in their deſigns.

Secondly, And if we conſider the gracious ends and deſigns of God towards his own people, it appears needful, that all of them, in ſome things, and many of them in moſt things (relating to their outward condition in this World) ſhould be fruſtrated in their expectations and contrivements. For, if all things here ſhould ſucceed according to their wiſh, and a conſtant tide of Proſperity ſhould attend them;

*Luxuriant animi rebus plerumque ſecundis.*

1. How ſoon would Senſuality and Earthlineſs invade their hearts and affections? Much proſperity like the pouring in of much Wine intoxicates, and overcomes our weak heads and hearts. Earthly as well as Heavenly objects have a transforming efficacy in them. There cannot but be much danger in thoſe Earthly things that give or promiſe us much delight. Can a Chriſtian keep his heart as looſe from the ſmiling, as from the frowning World? We little think how deeply it inſinuates into our affections in the day of Proſperity; but when Adverſity comes, then we find it.

2. How ſoon would it eſtrange them from their God, and interrupt their communion with him? He is certainly a very mortified and heavenly Chriſtian, whoſe walk with God ſuffers no interruption by the multitude of Earthly affairs, eſpecially when they are proſperous. When *Iſrael* was ſetled in the midſt of the riches and delights of *Canaan*, then ſay they, (even to their Benefactor, the Author of all their Proſperity) *We are Lords, we will come no more to thee*, Jer. 2. 31. Or, if it do not wholly interrupt their communion, yet it ſecretly deſtroys and waſtes the vigor, life, and ſweetneſs of it. So that Divine Wiſdom ſees it neceſſary to croſs and diſappoint them in the World, to prevent the miſchievous influences that Proſperity would have upon their duties. He had rather you ſhould miſs your deſired comforts in theſe things, than that he ſhould miſs that delightful fellowſhip with you, which he ſo deſires.

3. How loth ſhould we be to leave this, if conſtant Succeſs and Proſperity ſhould follow our affairs and deſigns here? We ſee that notwithſtanding all the cares, fears, ſorrows, croſſes, wants, and diſappointments we meet with from year to year, and from day to day; yet we are apt to hug the World in our Boſoms. As bitter as it is, we court it, admire it, and zealouſly proſecute it. We cling to it, and are loth to leave it, tho we have little reſt or comfort in it. What would we do then, if it ſhould anſwer our expectations and deſires? If we graſp with pleaſure, a Thorn that pierces and wounds us; what would we do, if it were a Roſe that had nothing but delight and pleaſure in it?

Thirdly, And as Diſappointments fall out as the Effects of Soveraign pleaſure, and are ordered as preventive means of much miſchief, which Proſperity would occaſion to the People of God; ſo it comes as a righteous retribution and puniſhment of the many evils that are committed in our trading and dealings with Men. It is a hard thing to have much buſineſs paſs through our hands, and no iniquity cleave to them, and defile them. If God be provoked by our iniquities againſt us, wonder not, that things go croſs to our deſires and hopes. God may ſuffer ſome Men to proſper in their wickedneſs, and others to miſcarry in their juſt and righteous enterpriſes; but ordinarily we find, that crying ſins are remarkably puniſhed ſooner or later with viſible judgments. So that if others do not, yet we our ſelves may obſerve the Relation that ſuch a Judgment bears to ſuch a Sin.

And from among many, I will here ſelect theſe following evils which have deſtroyed the Eſtates and Hopes of many.

(1.) Irreligious and Atheiſtical neglect and contempt of God and his Worſhip, eſpecially in thoſe that have been inlightned, and made profeſſion of Religion. This was the ſin which brought that blaſting judgment upon the eſtates and labours of the *Jews*, as the Prophet *Haggai* tells them, *Chap.* 1. *Verſ.* 2, 4, 6, 9. compared; *They neglected the Houſe of God*, *i. e.* were careleſs and regardleſs of his Worſhip, and in the mean time were wholly intent upon their own houſes and intereſts; as he tells them in *Verſ* 2, 4. And what was the iſſue of this? Why, ruin to all their Earthly comforts and deſigns; ſo he tells them, *Verſ.* 6, 9. *Ye have ſowen much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm: And he that earneth wages, doth it to put it into a bag with holes. Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts? Becauſe of mine houſe that is waſte, and ye turn every Man unto his own houſe.* Here are great and manifold Diſappointments of their hopes, a curſe, a blaſt upon all they took in hand; and the procuring cauſe of all this, was their eager proſecution of the World, in a careleſs diſregard of God, and his Service.

(2.) Injuſtice and Fraud is a blaſting ſin. A little unjuſt gain mingled with a great eſtate, will conſume it like a Moth. The Spirit of God hath uſed a very lively ſimilitude to repreſent to us the miſchievous effects of this ſin upon all Humane diligence and induſtry; *Jer.* 17. 11. *As the Partridg ſitteth upon Eggs and hatcheth them not; ſo he that getteth riches, and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his days, and at his end ſhall be a fool.*

Unjuſt gain, how long ſoever men ſit brooding upon it, ſhall after all their ſedulity and expectation, turn to no other account than a Fowls ſitting upon a Neſt of addle-eggs uſes to do: If ſhe ſit till ſhe have pined away her ſelf to death, nothing is produced.

You think you conſult the intereſt of your Families herein; but the Lord tells you, *That you conſult ſhame to your houſes*, Hab. 2. 10. This is not the way to *Feather*, but to *Fire* your Neſt. A quiet Conſcience is infinitely better than a full Purſe. One Diſh of wholeſom, though coarſer food, is better than an hundred delicate, but poiſoned diſhes. If a man have eaten the beſt food in the world, and afterwards ſips but a little poiſon, he loſeth not only the benefit and comfort of that which was good, but his life or health to boot. It may be you have gotten much honeſtly, what pity is it all this ſhould be deſtroyed for the ſake of a little gotten diſhoneſtly? This is the reaſon why ſome Men cannot proſper.

(3.) Oppreſſion is a blaſting ſin to Mens Eſtates and Imployments. It is a crying ſin in the ears of the Lord, and ordinarily intails a Viſible curſe upon Mens Eſtates. This like a Moth will ſuddenly fret and conſume the greateſt Eſtate. *Jam.* 5. 2, 4. *Your riches are corrupted, and your Garments Moth-eaten:* (*i. e.*) The ſecret of God waſtes and deſtroys what you get. And what was the cauſe? he tells us, *Verſ.* 4. *Behold, the hire of the laborers, that have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath.*

The oppreſſion of poor Laborers doth more miſchief to the oppreſſors, than it doth to them that are oppreſſed. It is noted by one upon this Scripture, that it is twice repeated in this Text, *Which have reaped your fields*, and then again, *The cry of them which have reaped*; and the reaſon is, becauſe it is their life, and ſo an act of the greateſt unmercifulneſs. And beſides, they are diſappointed of the ſolace of their Labors. *Deut.* 24. 14, 15. *He hath ſet his heart upon it*; (*i. e.*) He comforts himſelf in the toils and labors of the day, by reckoning upon his wages at the end of the day.

*Manton in loc.*

I wiſh thoſe that are Owners and Imployers of poor Sea-men may ſeaſonably conſider this evil. What a wo is denounced upon him, *that uſeth his neighbours ſervice without wages! Jer.* 22. 13. Or, that by crafty pretences defraud them of any part thereof, or by tireſom delays wear out their patience, and caſt them upon manifold ſufferings and inconveniences while they wait for it. God hath not only threatned to be a ſwift witneſs againſt thoſe that oppreſs the hireling in his wages, but hath ſtrictly forbidden the detaining of their wages. The *Jews* were commanded to make payment before the Sun ſet, *Deut.* 24. 14, 15. *Levit.* 19. 30. Be juſt in all your dealings and contracts, or never expect the Righteous God ſhould ſmile upon your undertakings.

*Minus ſolvit, qui minus tempore ſolvit.*

(4.) Falſhood and Lying is a Blaſting ſin to our Imployments: A ſin which tends to deſtroy all converſe, and diſband all civil Societies. And though by falſhood men may get ſome preſent advantages; yet hear what the Holy Ghoſt ſaith of Riches gotten this way: *The getting of Riches by a lying Tongue, is a Vanity toſſed to and fro of them that ſeek death, Prov.* 21. 6. Some trade in Lies, as much as in Wares; yea, they trade off their Wares with lies. And this proves a gainful Trade (as ſome men count gain) for the preſent; but in reality, it is the moſt unprofitable Trade that any man can drive. For it is but *the toſſing of a vanity to and fro*: A phraſe importing labor in vain, it profits nothing in the end; and as it profits nothing, ſo it hurts much. They ſeek profit *intentionally*, but death *eventually*; *i. e.* it will bring deſtruction and ruin, not only upon our Trades, but our Souls. The God of Truth will not long proſper the way of lying. One penny gotten by a laborious Hand, is better than great Treaſures gotten by a lying Tongue. Take heed you ſeek not Death, in ſeeking an Eſtate this way. It is a Sin deſtructive to Society; for there is no trade where there is no truſt, nor no truſt where there is no truth; and yet this curſed trade of Lying creeps into all trades, as if there were no living (as one ſpeaks) without lying: But ſure it is better for you to be *loſers* than *lyers*. He ſells a dear bargain indeed, that ſells his Conſcience with his Commodity.

(5.) Perjury or Falſe-ſwearing is a Blaſting Sin. That Man cannot proſper that lies under the guilt thereof. It is ſaid, *Mal.* 3. 5. *That God will be a ſwift witneſs againſt the falſe ſwearer*; *i. e.* It ſhall not be long before God by one remarkable ſtroke of Judgment or another witneſſeth againſt ſo great and horrid an evil. And again, *Zach.* 5. 4. the curſe, yea, the roll of curſes *ſhall enter into the houſe of the falſe Swearer, and ſhall remain in the midſt of his houſe, and ſhall conſume it, with the timber thereof, and the ſtones thereof.* This is a Sin that hath laid many Houſes waſte, even great and fair, without Inhabitant. The Ruins of many that were once flouriſhing and great men, are at this day left to be the laſting Monuments of God's righteous Judgments, and dreadful warnings to Poſterity.

And thus I have ſhewed you, what are thoſe common evils in Trade, which are the cauſes of thoſe Blaſts and Diſappointments upon it. It now remains that we apply it.

1. *Inference.* Doth God ſometimes diſappoint the moſt diligent labours of Men in their lawful Callings? Then this teacheth you Patience and Submiſſion under your Croſſes and Diſappointments; for it is the Lord that orders it to be ſo. Events are in his hand, and it is a Sin of great aggravation to fret and murmur at them, when they fall out croſs to your deſires and hopes. *Behold is it not of the Lord of Hoſts, that the people ſhall labour in the very fire, and the people ſhall weary themſelves for very vanity?* Hab. 2. 13.

To labour in the very fire, notes intenſe Labour, ſuch as exhauſts the very ſpirits of Men whilſt they are ſweltering and toiling at it; and yet all is to no purpoſe, they labour but for vanity: And whence is it, that ſuch vigorous indeavours are blaſted and miſcarry? Is it not of th Lord? And if it be of the Lord, Why do we fr and quarrel at his diſpoſals? Indeed many dar not openly and directly charge God, but ſeek t

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cover their Diſcontent at Providence, by a groundleſs quarrel with the Inſtruments, who it may be are chargeable with nothing; but that after they have done all they could, in the uſe of proper means, they did not alſo ſecure the Event. It is true, the Dominion of Providence doth not excuſe the negligence of Inſtruments; and in many caſes, theſe may be juſtly reproved, when Providence is duly honored and ſubmitted to: But when Men groundleſly quarrel with Inſtruments, becauſe they are croſſed in their expectations, the quarrel is commenced againſt God himſelf; and our diſcontents with Men, are but a covert for our diſcontents with God.

Now this is a ſore evil, a Sin of great and dreadful aggravations. *To be given over* (ſaith a grave Author) *to a contradicting Spirit, to diſpute againſt any part of the Will of God, is one of the greateſt Plagues that a Man can be given up to. Who art thou that replieſt againſt God? Rom.* 11. It may be thou haſt loſt an Eſtate, thy friends fail, thy hopes are faln; God hath blown upon all the projects that thy heart did fancy to it ſelf. Poſſibly in one day, the deſigns, labours, and hopes of many years are deſtroyed: Well, be it ſo, yet repine not againſt the Lord. Conſider, he is the Soveraign and only Lord, who may do whatever he pleaſeth to do, without giving thee any account of his matters. Who can ſay to him, What doſt thou? Beſide, if thou be one that God delights in, even theſe Diſappointments are to be numbred with thy beſt Mercies. Theſe things are permitted to periſh, that thou mayeſt not periſh for ever; and it ſhould trouble thee no more, than when thy Life is preſerved, by caſting out the wares and goods of the Ship. It is better that theſe periſh, than that thou ſhouldſt periſh: But if thou be one that haſt mingled Sin (eſpecially ſuch as were beforementioned) with thy Trade, and ſo haſt pulled down miſery upon thine own head, by provoking the Lord againſt thee; With what face canſt thou open thy mouth to complain gainſt him? Will you lay a train to blow up all our ſucceſs, and then fret againſt God, when ou ſee the iſſue? O how unreaſonable is this!

Maſter *Strong* of the will of God, P. 242.

But becauſe Diſappointments fall out ſo freuently, and it is ſo hard to bring our hearts to a uiet ſubmiſſion to the Will of God under them, will not diſmiſs this Point, until I have offered ou ſome proper and weighty Conſiderations, to ork your hearts into a calm and meek ſubmiſſin to the Will of God; and I ſhall account it a reat mercy, if they may prevail.

1. *Conſideration.* And in the firſt place, if thou e one that feareſt God, conſider, That Diſapointments in Earthly things fix no mark of Gods atred upon thee. He may love thee, and yet roſs thee: *Ecclef.* 9. 1, 2. *No man knows either ve or hatred by all the things that are before him. ll things come alike to all; there is one event to the ghteous, and to the wicked.* Yea, we often find cceſs and Proſperity following the Wicked, hileſt the Rod of God is upon the Tabernacles the Righteous. *Theſe are the ungodly that proſper the World* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) whileſt in the ean time *he was plagued all the day long, and aſtned every morning*, Pſal. 73. 12, 14. Well en, if you have no other ground than this, you nnot infer the want of love, from the want of cceſs. A man may be proſpered in Wrath, d croſſed in Mercy

2. *Conſideration.* And what tho your projects, hopes, and expectations of inlarging your Eſtates, fail; yet you may live as happily and comfortably in the condition you are, (if God give you a heart ſutable to it) as if you had injoyed all that Succeſs you ſo fancied and deſired.

It is not the increaſe of an Eſtate, but the bleſſing of God upon a competency, that makes our condition comfortable to us. As the Eſtate inlarges, ſo doth the Heart. The Prophet *Habakkuk* ſpeaking of the *Chaldean* Prince, *Hab.* 2. 6. ſaith, *He keeps not at home, he inlarges his deſire as Hell, and is as Death, and cannot be ſatisfied, but gathereth unto him all Nations, and heapeth unto him all People.* And this is the nature of every Man's heart, to inlarge its deſire under the greateſt inlargements of Providence. Still the heart is projecting for ſome farther comfort and content, in ſome new acquiſition; when indeed, a Man is as near it in a lower condition, as in the higheſt exaltation.

It is ſtoried of *Pyrrhus* King of *Epirus*, that having inlarged his Dominions by the Conqueſt of *Macedonia*, he thirſted after *Italy*; and demanding the advice of *Cineas* his great Counſellour, he asked the King, What he meant to do when he had conquered *Italy?* Why then ſaid he, I mean to get *Sicily*, which is near, rich, and powerful. When you have gotten *Sicily* (ſaid *Cineas*) what then? *Afric*, ſaid the King, is not far off; and there be many goodly Kingdoms, which by my Fame, and the valour of my Soldiers I may ſubdue. Be it ſo, ſaid *Cineas*: When you have *Afric*, and all in it; what will you do then? Why then, ſaid the King, thou and I will be merry, and make good chear. *Cineas* replied, Sir, if this be the end you aim at, what need you venture your Kingdom, Perſon, and Honour, to purchaſe what you have already? Surely, *Epirus* and *Macedonia* are ſufficient to make you and me merry: And had you all the World, you could not be more merry than you may now be.

*Plutarch in Pyrrho.*

*Reader*, I adviſe thee, under all Diſappointments of thy expectations, to bleſs God for any comfortable injoyment thou haſt. If God give thee a ſmaller Eſtate, and a contented Heart; it is as well, yea' better, than if thou hadſt injoyed thy deſire. The Bee makes a ſweater meal upon two or three Flowers, than the Ox that hath ſo many Mountains to graze upon.

3. *Conſideration.* And what if by theſe Diſappointments, God be carrying on the great deſign of his eternal Love upon thy Soul? This may be the deſign of theſe Providences; and if ſo, ſure there is no cauſe for thy deſpondencies. There is a double aim of theſe Providences; ſometimes they are ſent to awaken and rouze the dull decayed habits of Grace, which under proſperous Providences fell aſleep, by the intermiſſion of acts, and remiſſion of wonted vigor and activity? And ſhould the Lord permit things to run on at this rate, what a deplorable caſe would this grow to? *Let a man live* (ſaith one) *but two or three years without affliction, and he is almoſt good for nothing; he cannot pray, nor meditate, nor keep his heart fixed upon Spiritual things: But let God ſmite him in his Health, Child, or Eſtate; now he can find his Tongue and Affections again; now he awakes and falls to his duty in earneſt; now God hath twice as much honour from him as he had before. Now, ſaith God, this amendment pleaſeth me; this rod was well beſtowed: I have diſappointed him*

Mr. *Steel.*

*him to his great benefit and advantage. And thus God chides himſelf friends with his people again.*

And ſometimes they prove the bleſſed occaſions to work Grace. *If they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction, then he ſheweth them their works, and their tranſgreſſions that they have exceeded: He openeth alſo their ear to diſcipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity,* Job 36. 8, 9, 10.

And if this be the fruit of it, you will bleſs God through eternity for theſe happy Diſappointments. Then theſe things periſhed, that thy Soul might not periſh.

4. *Conſideration.* Be patient under Diſappointments; for if you meekly ſubmit, and quietly wait upon God, he can quickly repair all that you have loſt, and reſtore it by other Providences double to you. Have you not heard after all *Job*'s deprivations, and the fruſtrations of all his earthly hopes, and his admirable patience under all, what a gracious end the Lord made with him? And why may not you hope for ſuch a comfortable change of Providence towards you, if you carry it under Diſappointments as he did? Certainly, ſad Providences are near their change, when the heart is calmed in the Will of God, and corrected home to him.

5. *Conſideration.* And why ſhould it ſeem ſo hard, and grievous to you, for God to diſappoint your hopes, and purpoſes, when you cannot but know, that you have diſappointed his expectations from you ſo often, and that in greater and better things than theſe?

He hath looked for fruit (as it is *Iſai.* 5. 4.) for obedience, reformation, and renewed care of duty from you many times; he promiſed himſelf, and made account of a good return of his afflictions and mercies, and you promiſed him as much, and yet have failed his expectation: And is it ſtrange that you ſhould fail of your hopes, who have failed God ſo often?

O then ſee that you be quiet in the Will of God; fret not at the defeating of your hopes: Wreak not your diſcontent upon innocent inſtruments; but look to the juſt, holy, and good Will of God in all things. The Wife is ſometimes angry with the Servant for what he hath done, till he tell her that it was his Maſter's order, and then ſhe is quiet.

Is a Ship miſcarried, a Voyage loſt, a Relation dead, an Eſtate gone, a Friend carried into captivity, whoſe return was expected with ſo much comfort? Why, if it be ſo, it is the Lord hath done it, and be thou ſilent before him. Your repining will not make it better; ſin is no proper cure for affliction. A quiet ſubmiſſive ſpirit is pleaſing to God, and profitable for you.

2. *Inference.* Doth God ſometimes diſappoint the expectations of Men in their imployments? then never ſet your hearts immoderately upon Earthly things, nor raiſe up to your ſelves too great expectations from theſe things. The ſtronger your expectations, the heavier God's Diſappointments will be.

There is a double evil in over-reckoning our ſelves, and over-acting our confidence about worldly things: It provokes God to diſappoint us, and then makes the Diſappointment much more grievous when it comes.

It provokes a Diſappointment, eſpecially to the Godly. The Lord is jealous of their affections, and will not indure that any thing ſhould be a corrival or competitor with him for their Hearts: Yea, it is ſo uſual with God to daſh, and remove whatever ingroſſes too much of the heart, that a gracious Soul cannot but reckon that comfort in great danger to be loſt, which he finds to be overloved.

If *David* ſet his heart upon *Abſolom*, God will not only ſmite him, but ſmite *David* by him, and make him firſt the inſtrument of his ſorrow, and then the object of it. *Jonah* did but take a little too much comfort in his Gourd, and the next news we hear, was, That God prepared a Worm to ſmite it, and cauſe it to wither away.

And when your inordinate hopes are croſt, (as it is very probable they will be) how will your ſorrows be aggravated in proportion to them! Thoſe things that ſeemed to promiſe us moſt comfort, are the things that give us moſt ſorrow. Strong affections make ſtrong afflictions. Our ſorrows uſually riſe from what was our hope, and our comforts from that which was leaſt regarded.

3. *Inference.* If it be ſo, then labour to make ſure things eternal, leſt you be eternally diſappointed there alſo. O what a ſad caſe is that Man in, whoſe expectations fail from both Worlds! If your hopes from this World fail; yet you may bear it comfortably, if you fail not in your better hopes: But if this fail too, you are of all men the moſt miſerable. You know by experience, how ſad it is to have your hopes cut off in theſe ſmaller concerns; to go forth in expectation of a profitable voyage, and to return in a worſe caſe than you went out: It may be you thought to get an eſtate, but the iſſue is, to loſe that little you had. You thought to go to ſuch a place, and there meet with a good market, and poſſibly your ſelves may be carried as ſlaves to be ſold in the market. Theſe Diſappointments are very ſad and cutting things, but nothing to an Eternal Diſappointment in your great concern.

For a Man to hope he is in Chriſt, and a pardoned ſtate, and at laſt find himſelf deceived, and that all the ſins of his nature, heart, and practice, lie upon him: To hope for admiſſion into Heaven, when he is turned out of this World by death, and find the door ſhut againſt him; to cry with thoſe poor diſappointed wretches, *Matth.* 7. 22. *Lord, Lord, open to us*; and receive ſuch an unexpected return from Chriſt, as they did, *Depart from me, I know you not*: Lord, how intolerable is ſuch a defeat of hope as this! O, who can think of it without horror!

The things about which your expectations are fruſtrated in this World, are ſmall things; you may be happy in the want of them: But the fruſtration of your hopes from the World to come, is in things of infinite weight. Theſe Diſappointments are but for a little while; but this will be for ever. O therefore be provoked, even by theſe things, to a diligent and ſeaſonable prevention of a far greater miſery.

Since theſe things cannot be ſecured, labour to ſecure thoſe things that may. O that you were but as full of thoughts, cares, and fears for Heaven, as you are for the World! You have ſpent many thouſand thoughts about theſe things to no purpoſe. All your thoughts about them are come to nothing; but had they been ſpent for your Souls, to what a comfortable account wou they now have turned? Friends, I beſeech you make ſure for eternity, and let theſe croſſes, an loſſes in the World, be the happy occaſions to a waken you to a ſerious diligence for your everlaſting intereſts. Then you are no loſers by your loſſes; nay, you will have cauſe to call them proſperous Diſappointments, and gainful Loſſes to you.

4. *Inference.* Then as you would not have the works and labours of your hands blaſted, beware of thoſe ſins that provoke God to blow upon them. Think not that injuſtice, oppreſſion, deceit, and perjury, ſhall ever profit you. God hath curſed all the ways of ſin, and you cannot proſper in them. Above all, beware of Atheiſm and Irreligion: God will not own them, that diſown him, and ſlight his Worſhip. I doubt your prophanation of the Lords day, by drunkenneſs, idleneſs, and worldly imployments, is not the leaſt cauſe of thoſe diſappointments and loſſes that have befaln you: The firſt day of the week, like the firſt fruits of the *Jews* Harveſts, might ſanctifie the whole lump.

And let none pretend, that multiplicity of buſineſs will not allow them time and diſpoſition for Sabbath work. If you be too buſie to attend the Lord's ſervice, he can quickly give you a Writ of Eaſe, and make you keep more reſting days from your labours, than you are willing to do. The Lord would not excuſe the *Iſraelites*, no not in the buſieſt Seaſons, the times of Earing, and Harveſt, and the very building of the Tabernacle; but all muſt give way to the Sabbath. And I am ſure, the promiſe of Bleſſing and Succeſs, is made to the conſcionable obſervation of it: *Iſa.* 58. 13, 14. *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleaſure upon my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable; and ſhalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleaſures, nor ſpeaking thine own words: Then ſhalt thou delight thy ſelf in the Lord:* There is a recompence to the Soul. *And he ſhall cauſe thee to ride on the high places of the Earth:* There is a reward to the Body. Godlineſs is profitable to all things.

# The Sea-man's Return.

## SERMON VI.

### DEUT. XXXIII. 19.

*They ſhall call the People unto the Mountain, there they ſhall offer Sacrifices of Righteouſneſs: For they ſhall ſuck of the abundance of the Seas, and of the Treaſures hid in the Sand.*

THIS Scripture is part of the laſt words of *Moſes*: A Man that in his life was a great Bleſſing to *Iſrael*; and when he was to be ſeparated from them by death, he pronounces diſtinct and ſuitable Bleſſings upon all the Tribes. As *Chriſt* parted from the Diſciples, bleſſing them; ſo doth *Moſes* from his People: Only with this difference, *Moſes* as God's Mouth pronounced, but God alone could confer the Bleſſing. *Moſes* bleſſed them authoritatively, but could not bleſs them poteſtatively as *Chriſt* did. Now theſe words contain the Bleſſing of the Tribe of *Zebulun*, which was the Tribe of *Sea-men.* And in them we ſhall conſider theſe two parts, *Viz,*

1. Their Privilege.
2. Their Duty.

Firſt, Their Privilege: *That they ſhould ſuck f the abundance of the Seas, and of the Treaſures hid in the Sands.* To ſuck the abundance of the Sea, is a metonymical expreſſion, ſignifying as much as to be inriched and ſtored with the Wares and Merchandize imported by Sea to them. *eographers* attribute to the Sea, *Arms* and *Bo-ms*; and the Scripture, *Breaſts.* The Sea like an indulgent Mother imbraces thoſe that live upon it in her Boſom, and with full flowing Breaſts nouriſheth them, and feeds them, as a Mother doth the Infant that ſucks, and depends for its livelihood upon her Breaſts.

*ffluentiam ma-is ſugere, eſt ma-nis bonis, & ercibus abunda-.* Gloſ.

And theſe Breaſts do not only afford thoſe that hang upon them the neceſſaries of Life, Bread, Rayment, *&c.* but the Riches, Ornaments, and Delights of life alſo. *The Treaſures hid in the Sand*; as Gold, Coral, Ambergriece, and ſuch like precious and rich treaſures which it yields. This was the Bleſſing and Privilege of this Tribe of *Zebulun*, whoſe Cities and Villages were commodiouſly ſituated upon the Sea-ſhore, for Merchandize and Traffick: As you may ſee *Joſ.* 19. 11.

*Referunt ad ea quæ evomere ſolent maria, ſcil. ad auri fodinas. Effodient e terra arenoſa aurum.* Pol. Synop. in Loc.

Secondly, Their Duty, to which theſe Mercies and Privileges obliged them. *They ſhall call the People to the Mountain, there they ſhall offer Sacrifices of Righteouſneſs.* By the Mountain, we are here to underſtand the *Temple*, which *Moſes* by the Spirit of Propheſy foreſaw to be built upon Mount *Sion*, and Mount *Moriah*; which two were as the Shoulders that ſupported it, *Ver.* 12. Here was the Worſhip of God; the Sacrifices were here offered up to him. And hither *Zebulun*, in the ſenſe of God's Mercies to them, ſhould call the People, *i. e.* ſay ſome, their own People, their Families, and Neighbours; or as others, the Strangers that were among them for Traffick; ſaying as *Iſa.* 2. 3. *Come, let us go up to the Houſe of the Lord, to the Mountain of the God of Jacob.* And here they ſhall offer *the Sacrifices of Righteouſneſs.* By which we are to underſtand their Thank-offerings for the Mercies they had received of the Lord. The *Jews* had not only Expiatory Sacrifices to procure the pardon of ſins committed, but Euchariſtical Sacrifices, or Thank-offerings, to teſtifie the ſenſe they had of Mercies received. Theſe Sacrifices typified Moral Duties; and when theſe Types were aboliſhed, the Apoſtle ſhews, that *the calves of our lips, the ſacrifices of praiſe*, are in the ſtead of them, *Heb.* 13. 15.

So then, the ſum of all is this, That when they returned from Sea, or had received the Bleſſings thereof, from the Hand of God, they ſhould repair to the place of his Worſhip, and there acknowledg and praiſe the God of their Mercies. So that the whole Verſe thus explained, caſts it ſelf into this Doctrinal Obſervation.

Doct. *That it is the ſpecial duty of Sea-men, when God returns them to their habitations in peace, thankfully to acknowledg and bleſs his Name, for all the preſervations and mercies they have received of his hand.*

Theſe are Mercies indeed, which are obtained from God by Prayer, and returned to him again by Praiſe. When we have received our Mercies, God expects his Praiſes: After the *Pſalmiſt* had opened the hazards and fears of Sea-men upon the Stormy Ocean, and the goodneſs of God in bringing them to their deſired Haven, *Pſal.* 107. 30. he preſently calls upon them for this duty, *Verſ.* 31. *O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*

O that men would! Why how is it imaginable they ſhould not? He hath the heart of a Beaſt, not of a Man, that will not. Did I ſay the heart of a Beaſt? Give me that word again. There is a kind of gratitude, even in Beaſts, to their Benefactors. *The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Aſs his Maſters Crib*, Iſa. 1. 3.

Now the method into which I will caſt the Diſcourſe, ſhall be,

Firſt, To open the nature of the Duty, and to ſhew you what it is to praiſe God for his Mercies.

Secondly, To give you the Grounds and Reaſons of the Duty, why God expects it, and you ought to give it him. And then,

Thirdly, To apply it in the ſeveral Uſes it is improvable unto.

1. The nature of the Duty needs opening, for few underſtand what it is. Alas, it is another manner of thing than a cuſtomary formal cold, *God be thanked.* Now, if we ſearch into the nature of this duty, we ſhall find that whoever undertakes this Angelical work, muſt,

Firſt, Be a heedful Obſerver of the Mercies he receives. This is fundamental to the Duty. Where no Obſervations of Mercies have been made, no Praiſes for them can be returned. God was never honoured by his unobſerved Mercies. When *David* had opened the Providences of God, to the ſeveral degrees and orders of Men, in its various adminiſtrations; and called upon them diſtinctly, to praiſe God for them; he adds in the cloſe of all, *Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord*, Pſal. 107. *ult.* It is God's charge againſt *Iſrael*, Hoſea 2. 8. *She did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oil, and multiplied her Silver: i. e.* She did not obſerve and take notice of theſe Mercies, as coming from my hand; but only look'd at the next cauſe. Thus it is with many, they think not upon their own Mercies; others can obſerve them, but they cannot; they can quickly obſerve what troubles befal them, but take little notice of their own Mercies. Such men can never be thankful.

Secondly, The thankful man muſt not only *obſerve* what Mercies he hath, and from whom they come; but muſt particularly *conſider* them, in their natures, degrees, ſeaſons, and manner of conveyance. There is much of God's glory, and our comfort loſt for want of this. *The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all them that have pleaſure therein*, Pſal. 111. 2. And indeed, there is no imployment in all the World, that yields more pleaſure to a gracious Soul, than the Anatomizing of Providences doth. How ſweet is it to obſerve the mutual reſpects, coincidencies, and introductive occaſions of our Mercies! Every minute circumſtance hath its weight and value here. He hath little pleaſure in his meat, that ſwallows it whole without chewing.

Thirdly, The thankful perſon muſt duly eſtimate and value his Mercies. It is impoſſible that man can be thankful for Mercies he little eſteems. *Iſrael* could not praiſe God for that Angels food with which he fed them, whilſt they deſpiſed it in ſaying, There is nothing but this *Manna.*

And ſurely it ſhews the great corruption of our nature, That thoſe things which ſhould raiſe the value of Mercies with us, cauſe us the more to ſlight them; yet thus it falls out. The commonneſs, or long continuance of Mercies with us, which ſhould indear them the more, and every day increaſe our obligation to God, cauſes them to ſeem but cheap and ſmall things. And therefore doth God ſo often threaten them, yea, and remove them; that their worth and excellency may thereby be acknowledged.

Fourthly, The thankful perſon muſt faithfully record his Mercies, elſe God cannot have his due praiſe for them. *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits*, Pſal. 103. 2. Forgotten Mercies bear no fruit: A bad memory in this caſe, makes a barren heart and life.

I confeſs, the Mercies of God are ſuch a multitude, that a memory of Braſs cannot retain them. *I will come before thee in the multitude of thy mercies*, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 5. 7. They are called *Showers of Bleſſings*, Ezek. 34. 26. And as impoſſible it is diſtinctly to recount all our Mercies, as to number the drops of rain that fall in a ſhower. Nevertheleſs, it hath been the pious care and indeavour of the People of God, to preſerve and perpetuate his Mercies, by uſing all the helps to memory they could. Therefore they have kept Regiſters, *Exod.* 17. 14. indited *Pſams, to bring to remembrance*, *Pſal.* 70. *Title*; denominated Places from the Mercies received there. Thus *Jacob* called the place where he found ſo much mercy, *Bethel.* *Hagar* named the Well, where God unexpectedly ly relieved her, *Beerlahairoi*, the Well of him that liveth and looketh upon me, *Gen.* 16. 13, 14.

They have ſtamped the Mercies upon the Days in which they received them. Thus the *Jews* called thoſe Days in which God wrought their deliverance, *Purim*, after the name *Pur*, ſignifying the Lot *Haman* had caſt for their lives; *Eſth.* 9. 26. Yea, they have called their Mercies upon their Children, 1 *Sam.* 1. 20. Thus thankful Souls have ſtriven to recognize their Mercies, that God might not loſe the praiſe, nor themſelves the comfort of them.

Fifthly, The thankful Perſon muſt be ſutably affected with the Mercies he receives. It is not a *ſpeculative*, but an *affectionate* remembrance that becomes us: Then God hath his glory, when the ſenſe of his Mercies melts our hearts into holy joy, love, and admiration. Thus *David* ſits down before the Lord like a man aſtoniſhed at his goodneſs to him; 2 *Sam.* 7. 20. *And what can* David *ſay more? For thou Lord knoweſt thy ſervant.* The Mercies of God have made the Saints hearts leap for joy within them: *Pſal.* 92. 4. *Thou Lord haſt made me glad, through thy Works; therefore will I triumph in the Works of thy hands.* Mercies are not Mercies, Deliverances are no Deliverances to us, if we that receive them, are not glad of them.

Sixthly, The thankful Perſon muſt order his Converſation ſutably to the ingagements that his Mercies have put him under. When we have ſaid all, it is the life of the thankful, that is the very life of thankfulneſs. Obedience and ſervice are the only real manifeſtations of gratitude. *He that offereth praiſe, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his converſation aright, will I ſhew the ſalvation of God*, *Pſal.* 50. 23. Set down this for an Everlaſting truth, That God was never praiſed and honored by an abuſed Mercy. God took it ill from *Hezekiah*, *That he rendred not again according to the benefit done unto him*, 2 Chron. 32. 25. He that is truly thankful, will ſay as *David*, Pſal. 116. 12. *What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?* We then glorify God with his Mercies, when we imploy them to right ends, when we thankfully take out our own ſhare of comfort from them, receiving them with thankſgiving, as from the hand of a Father. Mr. *Swinock* tells of a young man, who lying upon his ſick bed, was always calling for meat; but as ſoon as it was brought him, he ſhook and trembled dreadfully at the ſight of it, and ſo continued till it was taken away; and before his death, acknowledged God's juſtice, for that in his health he ordinarily received his Meat without thankſgiving.

Swinock's *Chriſtian Man's Calling*, pag. 409.

Uſe all God's Mercies with thankfulneſs: God will remember them in fury, who forget him in his favours.

And think not what God beſtows upon you, is wholly for your own uſe: But honour God with your Mercies, by clothing the naked, and feeding the hungry, eſpecially ſuch as are Godly. This is a due improvement of your Eſtates; thus you may make to your ſelves friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs. Ah, how little do we conſider, what praiſe, what glory we may occaſion this way from others to the Name of God! It is ſtoried of *Dionyſius*, the *Syracuſian Tyrant*; that when he ſaw what heaps of Gold and Silver his Son hoarded up in his Cloſet, he asked him, what he meant to let it lie there, and not to make friends with it, to get the Kingdom after his death? O Son (ſaid he) thou haſt not a ſpirit capable of a Kingdom. Thus honour the Lord with your ſubſtance; look upon all you have as your Maſter's Talents, for which you muſt give an account: And ſo uſe and imploy them for God, that you may give up your account with joy; and then you will ſhew your ſelves thankful indeed. Thus you ſee what is included in real thankfulneſs. O, it is another matter than we take it to be.

*Juſtin. Lib.* 51.

2. Next I promiſed to give you the Grounds and Reaſons of this Duty: Why you are obliged after the receit of Mercies, to ſuch a thankful return of praiſes. And among many I will only ſingle out theſe three, and briefly open them.

Firſt, God requires and expects it. It is ſo ſpecial and peculiar a part of his glory, as he will never part with it. As great Landlords oblige their Tenants to a homage and ſervice, when they make over their Eſtates to them, and reſerve a quit rent to themſelves, which they value at a high rate; ſo God when he beſtows Deliverances of Mercies upon us, ſtill reſerves an acknowledgment to himſelf: And this is dear to him, he will not indure to be defrauded of it; much leſs, that it be given to another. You find this reſervation of praiſe expreſly made by him in *Pſal.* 50. 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me.* Where you have the requeſt, the grant, and the reſervation in the grant, *q. d.* When I have granted thee thy deſire, ſee thou do not defraud me of my glory. There be three things in every Mercy, the *matter* of it, the *comfort* of it, and the *glory* of it. The two firſt God makes over freely to us, he gives the Mercies themſelves, he allows us to ſuck out all the lawful pleaſure and delight that is in them; but the third he reſerves to himſelf, and will never part with to any other. If an *Hezekiah* himſelf render not to God due acknowledgments, as well as God loves him, there ſhall be great wrath upon him, and *Judah*, for the default, 2 *Chron.* 32. 26.

Secondly, You are under manifold ingagements to render it to the Lord.

(1.) Common ingenuity obliges to a due acknowledgment of favors freely received; and unthankfulneſs on that ſcore, is the odium of mankind. *Ingratum ſi dicas, omnia dixeris.* You cannot give a man a more odious character among men, than to ſay, He is an ungrateful man.

(2.) The examples of the very Heathen will condemn you. They praiſed their Gods, which yet were no Gods, when they received any deliverance, *Judg.* 16. 24. Shall Idols, Dunghil-Deities, receive their ſacrifices and praiſes, whilſt the true God is forgotten?

Nay (3.) many of you have formally and expreſly obliged your Souls to it, by ſolemn vows and promiſes in the day of your diſtreſs: And yet will you deal perfidiouſly with God? Will you not pay the vows which your lips have uttered? Certainly, you can never free your Souls from the guilt of perfidiouſneſs againſt God, whilſt you give him not the glory due to his Name.

3. Laſtly, Your ingratitude is the ready way to deprive you of the Mercies you have, and to withhold from you the Mercies you might have in your future diſtreſſes and wants. He that is ungrateful for Mercies received, provokes God to re-

move them. Thus it fell out with ungrateful *Iſrael: Hoſ.* 2. 5, 8, 9. *She did not know,* (*i. e.*) She did not with conſideration and thanks duly acknowledg) *That I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl. Therefore will I return, and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the ſeaſon thereof: And will recover my Wool, and my Flax.* Thus they ſuffered their Mercies to lapſe into the Lord's hand for non-payment of their Duties. If you be weary of your Mercies, and willing to be rid of them, you cannot take a more effectual courſe, than to forget from whom you had them, and withhold his praiſe for them.

And then, for future Mercies and Deliverances, you have no ground to expect any more from God, whom you have thus requited for former favours. He that gives no thanks for one Mercy, hath little ground to expect another. It was a ſad word which God ſpake upon this very provocation, *Judg.* 10. 11, 12, 13. When a new diſtreſs befel *Iſrael* by the *Ammonites*, and they cried to the Lord for help; he tells them, That he had many times delivered them from their enemies: *Yet*, ſaith he, *have you forſaken me, and ſerved other gods. Wherefore I will deliver you no more; go and cry to the gods which ye have choſen, and let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. q. d.* With what face can you come to me for new Mercies and Deliverances, when your ſelves know, how former Mercies have been abuſed! Think ye that I am weary of my Mercies, to caſt them away upon ſuch unthankful wretches? No, no. Expect no more Mercies from me, *I will deliver you no more.* One of the Fathers calls ingratitude, *Obex infernalis, An Helliſh ſtop*; which interrupts the courſe and current of all God's, Mercies. Mercy is not only a precious thing, too good to be caſt away, but it is a very tender thing, and God deeply reſents the abuſes of it. Thus you ſee the Grounds and Reaſons of your duty; it remains now that we apply it.

1. *Uſe.* Is it your unqueſtionable Duty to return praiſes upon every receit of Mercies? Then in the firſt place, bear your ſhame and juſt reproof for your manifeſt unthankfulneſs. You dare not deny, but you have received many ſignal and eminent Mercies from the Hands of God. If you ſhould deny that, I need go no farther to prove you prodigiouſly ungrateful. But it is too manifeſt to be denied: You have found God a very preſent help in trouble; his Mercy hath often reſcued you out of the very jaws of death. Some of you have been in dangers in the Deeps; in Deaths oft. You have been put to your wits end; all viſible hope and help failed. You might have ſaid with the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 142. 4. *I looked upon my right hand, and there was none; and upon the left, but refuge failed.* You have ſeen your companions intombed before your eyes in the Seas, and concluded in your own thoughts, your turn was next. You have been in danger by barbarous enemies, that have chaſed you upon the Sea, to make you a prey: Yea, it may be you have been a prey to them, and never thought to have ſeen the Land of your Nativity; your Houſes, Wives, and Children any more. You have languiſhed under dangerous diſeaſes, and that remote from friends, and neceſſary accommodations. You have loſt your Eſtates, and been reduced to a low ebb, and never thought to have ſeen a day of proſperity any more. Yet hath the Lord delivered you out of all your troubles: He hath provided unexpected means of preſervation, when the proud Waters were ready to go over your Souls. And tho others went down before your eyes, you were marked out for Deliverance. God ſpake to the raging Waves, ſaying, Touch not this Man, I will not deliver him up, tho I have done ſo by others. When cruel enemies chaſed you, he delivered you, cauſing the darkneſs of the night to interpoſe ſeaſonably betwixt you and them; as the dark ſide of the Cloud ſhadowed *Iſrael* from the *Egyptians* that purſued them, *Exod.* 14. 20. Sometimes giving you a favourable gale, which blew Mercy and Deliverance to you: Sometimes by ſtrengthning you to reſiſt their furious attacks, and delivering you from their rage; or, if he delivered you into their hands, yet there he preſerved you, inabling you to indure their ſeverities, or cauſing the enemy to treat you well; and finding out a way which you knew not, to bring you at laſt out of the Houſe of Bondage.

He pitied you under your dangerous diſeaſes; and tho neceſſary accommodations and means might be wanting, he was your Phyſician, and healed you; he recovered you immediately without means, or bleſſed weak and ſmall means to your good. When you were reduced by loſſes, and captivities to a low ebb, ſo that you might ſay as the Church, *Lam.* 3. 17. I forgat Proſperity; he hath not only recruited thy ſtrength, but thy eſtate alſo: and when both thy body and eſtate, like an old leaky Ship, have been ready to ſink; he hath ſtopped the leaks in both, careened, repaired, and launched thee into the World again, as whole, as ſound, and ſtrong as ever.

And now Reader, ſuffer me to account and expoſtulate a little with thy Conſcience. What hath the fruit of all theſe Mercies been to thee? And how haſt thou carried it ſince thoſe days, towards the God of thy Mercies? Haſt thou indeed been melted by the ſenſe of all this kindneſs into love, thankfulneſs, and new obedience? Have theſe favours ingaged thee to more ſtrictneſs in thy duties, and greater watchfulneſs againſt ſin? Haſt thou ſaid with that good man, *Ezra* 9. 13, 14. *And now, my God, ſeeing thou haſt puniſhed me leſs than mine iniquities deſerve, and haſt given me ſuch Deliverances as theſe, ſhould I again break thy Commandments?* If it be ſo, ſurely Mercy and Goodneſs ſhall follow thee all the days of thy life. The Lord then reckons all theſe Mercies well beſtowed, and will never repent that he hath done thee good.

But I fear this is not thy caſe. Sure I am, there are ſome among you that have quickly forgotten the God that delivered you. Some that have abuſed him to his face, by aſcribing his Mercies to good luck, chance, and fortune; not once owning him as your Deliverer. And ſome that have made his Mercies weapons of ſin, to wound him withal, waſting your eſtates by prodigality, which were given to refreſh your Families, and God's poor; yea, abuſing them to drunkenneſs and luxury. And is this the thanks you return him? For which of all my good Works (ſaith Chriſt to the *Jews*) do you ſtone me? So ſay I, for which of all God's kindneſſes to you, do you thus diſhonour and abuſe him? O let ſhame cover your faces this Day! Go Reader, fold down this Leaf, and get thee to thy knees, and ſay, I am the man to whom this reproof is ſent. I have abuſed the God of my Mercies, I have turned his Grace into wantonneſs. Smite with *Ephraim* upon thy thigh, and ſay, *What have I done!* Mourn heartily for thy unkindneſs to thy beſt Friend, *The God that hath done thee good all thy life long,* and *deſerves other returns from thee than theſe.*

2. *Uſe.* Laſtly, It calls upon you all to be thankful for your Mercies. *Chryſoſtom* once wiſhed for a voice like Thunder, that all Men might hear him. O that I could ſo call you to this duty, that ſome of you might effectually hear God's call in this Exhortation!

Will you own the Hand that delivers you, that feeds, clothes, and heals you? Will you reſolve to live the life of praiſe? and render to the Lord according to the benefits you have received? Will you indeed walk humbly and thankfully under all your Deliverances and Succeſſes, and glorifie God by that wherewith he hath comforted and refreſhed you? If there be any ſaving knowledg of God, and ſpiritual ſenſe of his love in your Souls, methinks I ſhould prevail with you; for do but weigh theſe following Arguments ſeriouſly, and they will ingage you to it.

1, *Argument.* How freely have all your Mercies ſtreamed to you from the Fountain of Grace! There was nothing in you to ingage it. The very notion of Mercy includes freeneſs; they are all beſtowed upon us, not only as we are *immerentes*, but *male merentes*, undeſerving, but ill deſerving Creatures; not only without our merits, but againſt our merits. And what, tho there be a concurrence of your abilities, head-work, and hand-work, in the procurement of ſome of your Mercies, yet ſtill thoſe Mercies are the pure effects of Free-grace: For all thoſe indeavours of yours had ſignified nothing to their procurement, without God's Bleſſing; yea, and that wiſdom and induſtry which you uſed, are themſelves the Free-gifts of God. You know there be thouſands in the World, as induſtrious and wiſe as you, and ſuch as never provoked God by ſuch ſins as you have; who yet are denied the Mercies you injoy. O, how ſhould this indear you to God!

2, *Argument.* How ſeaſonably your Mercies have been beſtowed upon you, in the very nick of extremity and danger. God hath on purpoſe ſuffered it to grow to an extremity, that thereby he might commend his Mercy to you with the greater advantage. *In the Mount of the Lord it hath been ſeen*, Gen. 22. 14. Without this, God ſaw his Mercies would have been ſlighted and low prized by you. But God hath watched the opportunity of beſtowing his goodneſs upon you, for no other end, but to magnifie his Mercies in your eyes, and make the deeper and more laſting impreſſions upon your hearts. Shall ſuch Mercies, which at firſt were ſo amazing, and overwhelming to you; at the receit whereof, you were like men that dreamed, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 126. 1. ſo ſoon grow ſtale and common? God forbid.

3. *Argument.* How ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing have ſome of your Mercies been? God hath not dealt with every one, as he hath with you. Are not ſome that went out with you, found wanting at your return? They are among the dead, it may be among the damned, and you among the living, yet injoying the capacity and means of Salvation. God hath proſpered your Voyage, and returned you with Succeſs; you have ſucked the abundance of the Sea, and the Treaſures hid in the Sand, as the Text ſpeaks: but others may ſay as *Naomi*, *Ruth* 1. 21. *I went out full, and am come back empty.* I went out full of hopes, and am come back with ſad diſappointments. And is not this a ſtrong tie to Thankſgiving?

4, *Argument.* Did not your Mercies find you under great guilt? You know what your own tranſgreſſions againſt the Lord were; and yet ſuch was the ſtrength of Mercy, that it brake through all your great provocations, and made its way to you through a multitude of iniquities. It came triumphing over all your great unworthineſs; and is not ſuch Mercy worthy to be admired and recorded for ever! O what will affect and melt your hearts, if this will not? Surely ſuch Mercies have a conſtraining power in them, upon all ſenſible Souls.

5. *Argument.* To conclude: if all the Goodneſs of God, which hath paſſed before your eyes, do indeed prevail upon you, to love the Lord, and fear to offend him; if they really conſtrain you to give up your ſelves, and all you have, to be his: Then all theſe are but the beginnings of Mercies, and you ſhall ſee yet greater things than theſe. God hath more Mercies yet behind, and thoſe of a higher kind, and more excellent nature than theſe Temporal Mercies are. You are now delivered from the dangers of the Sea, and have eſcaped thoſe perils: O but what is this, to deliverance from wrath to come? You have been preſerved from, or delivered out of *Turkiſh* ſlavery: But what is that to a Deliverance from the curſe of the Law, the bondage of your Luſts, and the power of Satan? Happy Souls, if theſe Deliverances prove introductive to the great Salvation.

### *The Concluſion.*

Thus I have (as the Lord hath inabled me) indeavoured to chuſe, and improve proper ſubjects for your Meditation in every condition that befals you. I cannot carry theſe Truths one degree farther; it is the Lord only, that can make them effectual to your Souls. But it is my earneſt requeſt to you Maſters, that have the overſight, and muſt give an account for your Companies, That you will not only read and conſider theſe things your ſelves, but that you will at fit ſeaſons, eſpecially upon the Lord's day, read and inculcate them unto your Servants and Company; and that, as thoſe who muſt give an account. Will not this be a better expence of that precious and hallowed time, than to ſpend it in ſleeping in your Cabins, or drinking in Tipling-Houſes? All that ſin of theirs which you may prevent, and do not, becomes your own ſin. And have you not perſonal ſins enough already, but you muſt draw the guilt of their ſins upon you alſo? I beſeech you, and it is my laſt requeſt, That you will faithfully labour, that you and your Companies may ſerve the Lord.

## *FINIS.*

# A Saint Indeed:

OR,

# The Great Work of a Chriſtian Open'd and Preſs'd, from *Proverbs* IV. 23.

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## The Epiſtle Dedicatory

*To my dearly beloved and longed for, the Flock of* Jeſus Chriſt *in* Dartmouth, *over whom the* Holy Ghoſt *hath made me an Overſeer: Sound Judgment, True Zeal, and Unſtained Purity, is heartily wiſhed.*

*My Dear Friends,*

THere are three ſad Sights with which our Eyes ſhould continually affect our Hearts: The (1.) Is to behold in every place, ſo many prophane and diſſolute ones, who bear the very Image of Satan; the face of whoſe Converſation plainly diſcovers what they are, and whither they are going, *Philip.* 3. 18, 19. Theſe look like themſelves, the Children of Wrath: The (2.) Is to ſee ſo many curſed Hypocrites artificially diſguiſing themſelves, and with marvellous dexterity acting the parts of Saints, ſo that even a judicious Eye may ſometimes miſtake the *Similar Workings* of the Spirit on them, for his *Saving Workings* on others: To hear ſuch a Perſon conferring, praying, bewailing his Corruptions, and talking of his Ezperiences; would eaſily perſwade a Man to believe that he hath the Heart, as well as the Face, of a ſincere Chriſtian: For,

> *Sic oculus, ſic ille manus, ſic ora ferebat.*

So the People of God do ſpeak, ſo they pray, and even ſo they open their conditions: Theſe look like Saints, but are none. The (3.) Is to ſee ſo many real Saints in whom the Spirit of Truth is, who yet through the impetuous workings of their Corruptions, and neglecting of the Watch over their Hearts, do often fall into ſuch ſcandalous Practices, that they look like Hypocrites, tho' they are not ſo.

Theſe are three ſad Sights indeed, and Oh that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes Fountains of Tears, that I might weep abundantly over them all!

For the firſt I would mourn heartily, conſidering that they (ſo continuing) muſt be damned eternally, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 8, 9. 1 *Cor.* 6. 9.

For the ſecond, I would both weep and tremble, conſidering that they (ſo abiding) muſt be damned doubly, *Matth.* 24. 51.

And for the third, no leſs than any of the reſt, becauſe, tho' they themſelves may and ſhall be ſaved, yet they themſelves make faſt the Bonds of Death upon both the former; *Mat.* 18. 7. 2 *Sam.* 12. 13, 14.

Alas! that ever they ſhould ſhed the Blood of others Souls, for whom Chriſt ſhed his own Blood!

That ever they ſhould be *Cruel* to others, who have found Chriſt ſo *Kind* to them! I know they dare not do it directly and intentionally, but ſo it proves occaſionally and eventually. Suffer me here to digreſs a little, and expoſtulate with theſe prejudiced and hardened Souls, I will preſently return to you again. O why do you miſchief your own Souls by other Mens Examples? Becauſe they ſtumble and break their Shins, will you fall, and break your Necks? I deſire all ſuch as harden themſelves by theſe things, and take up a good Opinion of their own Deplorable Condition, that they would ſoberly conſider, and anſwer theſe three Queries.

*Query* 1. Doth Religion any way countenance or patronize the ſinful Practices of its Profeſſors? Or doth it not rather impartially and ſeverely condemn them? It is the Glory of the Chriſtian Religion, that it is pure and undefiled, *Jam.* 1. 27. No Doctrine ſo holy, *Pſal.* 19. 8. Nor doth any make more proviſion for an holy Life, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. Indeed there is a Caſe wherein we may charge the evil Practices of Men upon their Principles, but that is, when their Practices naturally flow from, and neceſſarily follow their Principles: As for Example, If I ſee a Papiſt ſin boldly, I may charge it upon his Principles, for they ſet Pardons to ſale, and ſo make way for Looſneſs. If I ſee an *Arminian* ſlight the Grace of God, and proudly advance himſelf, I may cry ſhame upon his Principles, which directly lead to it: But can I do ſo where ſuch Practices are condemned, and provided againſt by their own avowed Principles that commit them?

*Q.* 2. Is it not a moſt irrational thing to let fly at Religion becauſe of the ſcandalous ways of ſome, whilſt in the mean time you wholly ſlight and over-look the holy and heavenly Converſations of many others? Are all that profeſs Godlineſs looſe and careleſs in their Lives? No, ſome are an Ornament to their Profeſſion, and the Glory of Chriſt: And why muſt the Innocent be condemned with the Guilty? Why the Eleven, for one *Judas*?

*Q.* 3. If you condemn Religion becauſe of the ſcandalous Lives of ſome that profeſs it, muſt you not then caſt off all Religion in the World, and turn downright Atheiſts? Surely this is the Conſequent of it: For what Religion is there, but ſome that profeſs it walk contrary to their Profeſſion? And then, as *Conſtantine* told the *Novation*, you muſt ſet up your Ladder, and go to Heaven by your ſelf.

But alas! It is not our printed Apologies for Religion, but the viſible Reformations of its Profeſſors that muſt both ſalve its Honour, and remove thoſe fatal Stumbling-blocks at which the blind World ſtrikes, and falls into Eternal Perdition.

Now there are two ways by which this may be effected: Firſt, By convincing the Conſciences of Profeſſors of their Miſcarriages, and the Evil and Aggravations of them. Secondly, By Medicating the Heart, and cleanſing the Fountain whence they proceed. In the firſt of theſe, a worthy and eminent Servant of Chriſt hath lately laboured, holding a clear Goſpel-Glaſs before the Faces of Profeſſors, which truly repreſents their Spots and Blemiſhes: If he that reads it will conſider, apply and practice, it ſhall doubtleſs turn to his Salvation; but if it turn to no good Account to him that reads it, I know it ſhall turn to a Teſtimony for him that wrot it. The ſecond is a principal deſign of this ſmall Treatiſe, the Subject whereof is exceeding weighty, and of daily uſe to the People of God, tho the manner of handling it be attended with many Defects and Weakneſſes: Every one cannot be Excellent, who yet may be Uſeful.

*See Goſpel-Glaſs.*

I will exerciſe your Patience no longer than whilſt I tell you,

1. Why I publiſh it to the View of the World.
2. Why I direct it particularly to you.

Firſt, For the Publication of it, take this ſincere and brief Account, That as I was led to this Subject by a ſpecial Providence, ſo to the Publication of it by a kind of Neceſſity: The Providence at firſt leading me to it, was this: A dear and choice Friend of my intimate Acquaintance being under much inward trouble upon the Account of ſome ſpecial Heart-Diſorder, open'd the caſe to me; and earneſtly requeſted ſome Rules and Helps in that particular; whilſt I was bending my thoughts to that ſpecial Caſe, divers other Caſes of like Importance (ſome of which were dependent upon that conſideration) occurred to my thoughts, and this Scripture which I have inſiſted upon, preſented it ſelf, as a fit foundation for the whole Diſcourſe; which being lengthen'd out to what you ſee, divers Friends requeſted me to tranſcribe for their uſe, divers of the Caſes here handled, and ſome others, begg'd me to publiſh the whole, to which I was in a manner neceſſitated to ſave the pains of Tranſcribing, which to me is a very tedious and tireſome Work: And juſt as I had almoſt finiſh'd the Copy, an opportunity preſented (and that ſomewhat ſtrangely) to make it publick. So that from firſt to laſt I have been carried beyond my firſt Intentions in this thing.

*Object.* If any ſay the World is even cloyed with Books, and therefore tho' the Diſcourſe be neceſſary, yet the Publication is needleſs.

*Sol.* 1. I anſwer, There are multitudes of Books indeed, and of them, many concern not themſelves about Root-Truths, and Practical Godlineſs, but ſpend their ſtrength upon impracticable Notions and frivolous Controverſies: Many alſo ſtrike at Root-Truths, and endeavour to undermine the Power of Godlineſs: And ſome there are that nouriſh the Root, and tend to clear and confirm, to prepare and apply the great Truths of the Goſpel, that they may be bread for Souls to live and feed on: Now, though I could wiſh, that thoſe that have handled the Pen of the Scribe, had better imployed their time and pains than to obtrude ſuch uſeleſs Diſcourſes upon the World, yet for Books of the latter rank, I ſay, that when Husbandmen complain of two much Corn, let Chriſtians complain of too many ſuch Books.

2. and if you be ſo highly conceited of your own furniture and ability, that ſuch Books are needleſs to you: If you let them alone, they will do you no hurt, and other poor hungry Souls will be glad of them, and bleſs God for what you deſpiſe and leave.

*Obj.* If it be ſaid that ſeveral of the caſes here handled touch not your condition, I anſwer.

*Sol.* 1. That which is not your condition may be anothers condition. If you be placed in an caſie, full, and proſperous ſtate, and ſo have no need of the helps here offered to ſupport your Heart under pinching wants, others are forced to live by Faith for every days proviſion: If you be dandled upon the knee of Providence, ſome of your Brethren are under its feet. If you have inward peace, and tranquility of Spirit, and ſo need not the Counſels here given, to ward off thoſe deſperate concluſions that poor afflicted Souls are ready to draw upon themſelves at ſuch a time; yet it may be a word in ſeaſon to them, and they may ſay as *David* to *Abigail*, *Bleſſed be thou of the Lord, and bleſſed be thy Advice.*

2. That may be your condition ſhortly, which is not your condition at preſent: Say not thy Mountain ſtands ſtrong, thou ſhalt never be moved: There are changes in the Right Hand of the moſt High, and then thoſe Truths which are little more eſteemed than Hedge-fruits, will be as Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver: In *Jer.* 10. 11. The Prophet there teaches the Jews (who then dwelt in their own Houſes) how to defend their Religion in *Babylon*, and what they ſhould ſay to the *Caldeans* there, and therefore that Verſe is written in *Caldee*. So much for the reaſons of its Publication: Next for the Dedication of it to you, I was induced thereto by the Conſideration,

1. Of the relation I have to you above all the people in the world: I look upon my Gifts as yours, my Time as yours and all the Talents I am intruſted with, as yours: It is not with you as with a Woman whoſe Husband is dead, and ſo is freed from the Law of her Husband, the relation ſtill continues, and ſo do all the mutual Duties of it.

2. By the conſideration of my neceſſitated abſence from you, I would not that perſonal abſence ſhould by inſenſible degrees untwiſt (as uſually it doth) the Cord of Friendſhip; and therefore have endeavoured (as abſent Friends uſe to do) to preſerve and ſtrengthen it by this ſmall remembrance. It was *Veſpaſian*'s anſwer to *Apollonius* when he deſired acceſs for two Philoſophers: *My Doors* (ſaid *Veſpaſian*) *are always open to Philoſophers, but my very Breaſt is open to thee.* I cannot ſay with him, my Doors are open for the free acceſs of Friends, being by a ſad Providence ſhut againſt my ſelf; but this I can ſay, my very Breaſt is ſtill open to you; you are as dear to me as ever.

3. Another inducement (and indeed the main) was the perpetual uſefulneſs and neceſſity of theſe

Truths for you, which you will have continual need of: And I know few of you have ſuch happy Memories to retain, and I cannot be always with you to inculcate theſe things, but *litera ſcripta manet*; I was willing to leave this with you as a Legacy, as a Teſtimony of ſincere love for, and care over you: This may counſel and direct you when I cannot: I may be rendred uſeleſs to you by a civil or natural Death; but this will out live me, and Oh that it my ſerve your Souls when I am ſilent in the duſt.

To haſten now to a Concluſion, I have only theſe three Requeſts to you, which I earneſtly beſeech you not to deny me; yea, I charge you, as ever you hope to appear with comfort before the great Shepherd, do not dare to ſlight theſe Requeſts.

1. Above all other ſtudies in the World, ſtudy your own Hearts: Waſte not a minute more of your precious time about frivolous and ſapleſs Controverſies; it is reported even of *Bellarmine* (how truly I examine not) *Quod a ſtudiis ſcholaſticæ Theologiæ averteretur fere nauſeabundus, quoniam ſucco carebant liquide pietatis*, (i. e.) he turned with loathing from the ſtudy of School-divinity, becauſe it wanted the ſweet juice of Piety; I had rather it ſhould be ſaid of you, as one ſaid of * *Swinkfeldius*, (*He wanted a regular Head, but not an honeſt Heart*) then that you ſhould have regular Heads, and irregular Hearts: My dear Flock, I have according to the Grace given me, laboured in the courſe of my Miniſtry among you, to feed you with the Heart-ſtrengthning Bread of Practical Doctrine, and I do aſſure you, it is far better you ſhould ſhould have the ſweet and ſaving impreſſions of Goſpel-Truths, feelingly and powerfully conveyed to your Hearts; then only to underſtand them by a bare ratiocination, or a dry ſyllogiſtical inference. Leave trifling Stndies to ſuch as have time lying on their hands, and know not how to imploy it: Remember you are at the door of Eternity, and have other work to do; thoſe hours you ſpend upon Heart-work in your Cloſets, are the golden ſpots of all your time, and will have the ſweeteſt influence into your laſt hour: Never forget thoſe Sermons I Preached to you, upon that Subject, from 2 *Kings* 20. 2, 3. Heart-work is weighty and difficult work; an Error there, may coſt you your Souls: I may ſay of it, as *Auguſtine* ſpeaks of the Doctrine of the Trinity, *Nihilo facilius aut periculoſius erratur*; a Man can err in nothing more eaſily or more dangerouſly: O then, ſtudy your Hearts.

Fuligattus in vita *Bellarm.*

* Caput regulatum ille defuit, cor bonum non defuit.

2. My next requeſt is, That you will carefully look to your Converſations, and be accurate in all your ways, hold forth the word of Life: Be ſure by the ſtrictneſs and holineſs of your Lives, to ſettle your ſelves in the very Conſciences of your Enemies. Remember that your Lives muſt be produced in the great Day, to judge the World, 1 *Cor.* 6. 2. Oh then what manner of Perſons ought you to be! You have many Eyes over you, the Omniſcient Eye of God, that ſearches the Heart and Reins, *Rev.* 2. 23. The vigilant Eye of Satan, *Job* 1. 7, 8. The envious Eyes of Enemies, that curiouſly obſerve you, *Pſal.* 5. 8. The quick and obſervant Eye of Conſcience, which none of your Actions eſcape, *Rom.* 9. 1.

Oh then be preciſe, and accurate in all manner of Converſation: Keep up the power of Godlineſs in your *Cloſets* and *Families*, and then you will not let it fall in your more publick Imployments and Converſes in the World: I have often told you that it is the honour of the Goſpel, that it makes the beſt Parents and Children; the beſt Maſters and Servants; the beſt Husbands and Wives in the World.

My third and laſt requeſt is, That you pray for me: I hope I can ſay, and am ſure ſome of you have acknowledged, that I came at firſt among you, as the return and anſwer of your Prayers: And indeed ſo it ſhould be, ſee *Luke* 10. 2. *I* am perſwaded alſo, I have been carryed on in my Work by your Prayers: 'tis ſweet when 'tis ſo; ſee *Epheſ.* 6. 18, 19. And I hope by your Prayers to receive yet a farther benefit, even that which is mentioned, *Heb.* 13. 18, 19. *Philem.* 22. And truly 'tis but equal you ſhonld pray for me, I have often prayed for you: Let the Pulpit, Family and Cloſet, witneſs for me: And God forbid I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord in ceaſing to pray for you.

Yea, Friends, your own intereſt may perſwade to it: What mercies you obtain for me, redound to your own advantage; if God preſerve me, it is for your uſe and ſervice: The more Gifts and Graces a Miniſter hath, the better for them that ſhall wait on his Miniſtry: The more God gives in to me, the more I ſhall be able to give out to you. I will detain you no longer, but to entreat you to accept this ſmall Teſtification of my great Love, and have recourſe to it, according as the exigencies of your condition ſhall require: Read it conſideringly, and obediently; Judge it not by the dreſs and ſtile, but by the Weight and Savour of what you read. 'Tis a good rule of *Bernard*, *In legendis libris, non quæramus ſcientiam ſed ſaporem*, (*i. e.*) In reading Books, regard not ſo much the Science, as the Savour: That it may prove the ſavour of Life unto Life to you, and all thoſe into whoſe hands it ſhall come, is the hearty deſire of

*Your Loving and*
*Faithful Paſtor,*

*JOHN FLAVELL,*

From my Study at
*Ley* in *Slapton*, *Octob.* 7.
1667.

# A SAINT INDEED, &c.

## Prov. IV. 23.

*Keep thy Heart with all diligence, for out of it are the Iſſues of Life.*

THE Heart of Man is his worſt part before it be Regenerate, and the beſt afterwards; it is the Seat of Principles, and Fountain of Actions. The Eye of God is, and the Eye of the Chriſtian ought to be principally fixed upon it.

The greateſt difficulty in Converſion, is to win the Heart to God; and the greateſt difficulty after Converſion, is to keep the Heart with God. Here lies the very pinch and ſtreſs of Religion; here's that that makes the way to Life a narrow Way, and the Gate of Heaven a ſtrait Gate. Direction and help in this great work, is the ſcope and ſum of this Text; wherein we have,

1. An Exhortation, *Keep thy Heart with all diligence.*

2. The Reaſon or Motive inforcing it, *For out of it are the iſſues of life.*

In the Exhortation I ſhall conſider,

1. The Matter of the Duty.
2. The Manner of performing it.

1. The Matter of the Duty, *Keep thy Heart.* Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the Body which the Philoſphers call the *primum vivens, & ultimum moriens*; the firſt that lives, and the laſt that dies; but by Heart in a Metaphor, the Scriptures ſometimes underſtands ſome particular noble faculty of the Soul: In *Rom.* 1. 21. It is put for the underſtanding part, their fooliſh Heart, (*i. e.*) *their fooliſh underſtanding was darkned.* And *Pſal.* 119. 11. It is put for the Memory, *Thy word have I hid in my Heart.* And 1 *John* 3. 10. it is put for the Conſcience, which hath in it both the light of the Underſtanding, and the recognitions of the Memory: If our heart condemn us, (*i. e.*) if our Conſcience; whoſe proper Office it is to condemn. But here we are to take it more generally for the whole Soul, or inner Man; for look what the Heart is to the Body, that the Soul is to the Man: and what Health is to the Heart, that Holineſs is to the Soul: *Quod ſanitas in corpore id ſanctitas in corde.* The ſtate of the whole Body depends upon the ſoundneſs and vigour of the Heart, and the everlaſting ſtate of the whole Man upon the good or ill condition of the Soul.

And by keeping the Heart, underſtand the *diligent* and *conſtant* uſe and improvement of all holy means and Duties, to preſerve the Soul from ſin, and maintain its ſweet and free cummunion with God, * *Lavator* in *loc.* will have the word taken from a beſieged Garriſon, begirt by many Enemies without, and in danger of being betrayed by treacherous Citizens within, in which danger the Soldiers upon pain of death are commanded to watch; and whereas the expreſſion, (keep thy heart) ſeems to put it upon us as our work; yet it doth not imply a ſufficiency or ability in us to do it; we are as able to ſtop the Sun in its courſe, or make the Rivers run back-ward, as by our own skill and power to rule and order our hearts: We may as well be our own *Saviours*, as our own *Keepers*, and yet *Solomon* ſpeaks properly enough, when he ſaith *Keep thy Heart*; becauſe the duty is ours, though the power be Gods. A Natural man hath no power, a Gracious man hath ſome, though not ſufficient; and that power he hath, depends upon the exciting and aſſiſting ſtrength of Chriſt; *Gratia gratiam poſtulat*, Grace within us is beholding to Grace without us, *John* 15. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* So much of the Matter of the Duty.

2. The Manner of performing it is, *With all diligence*; the Hebrew is very emphatical, מכל משמר *cum omni cuſtodia*, keep with all keeping, *q. d.* keep, keep; ſet double guards, your hearts will be gone elſe. And this vehemency of expreſſion with which the duty is urged, plainly implies how difficult it is to keep our hearts, and how dangerous to let them go.

2. The Reaſon, or Motive quickning to this Duty, is very forcible and weighty; *For out of it are the iſſues of life.* That is, it is the Sourſe and Fountain of all vital Actions and Operations; *Hinc Fons boni & peccandi origo*, ſaith *Jerom*; it is the ſpring and original both of Good and Evil, as the ſpring in a Watch that ſets all the Wheels in motion. The Heart is the Treaſury, the Hand and Tongue but the Shops, what is in theſe came from thence; the Hand and Tongue always begin where the Heart ends. The heart contrives, and the Members execute, *Luke* 6. 46. *A good man out of the good treaſury of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treaſury of his heart bringeth forth evil things; for out of the abundance of his heart his mouth ſpeaketh.* So then, if the heart err in its work, theſe muſt needs miſcarry in theirs; for heart errours are like the errours of the firſt concoction which cannot be rectified afterwards: Or like the miſ-placing and inverting of the ſtamps and letters in the Preſs, which muſt needs cauſe ſo many Errata's in all the Copies that are printed off. Oh then! how important a Duty is that which is contained in the following Propoſition?

Doct. *That the keeping and right managing of the heart in every condition, is the great buſineſs of a Chriſtians life.*

What the Philoſopher ſaith of Waters, is as properly applicable to Hearts, *Suis terminis difficile continentes*; 'tis hard to keep them within any bounds; God hath ſet bounds and limits to them, yet how frequently do they tranſgreſs, not only the bounds of Grace and Religion, but even of Reaſon and common Honeſty? *Hic labor hoc*

opus

* *I ſay conſtant, for the reaſon added in the Text, extends the duty to all the ſtates and conditions of a Chriſtians life, and makes it bind* ad ſemper: *If the heart muſt be kept becauſe out of it are the iſſues of life, then as long as theſe iſſues of life do flow out of it, we are obliged to keep it.*

*opus eſt*, this is that which affords the Chriſtian matter of labour, fear and trembling to his dying day. 'Tis not the cleanſing of the hand that makes a Chriſtian, for many a Hypocrite can ſhew as fair a hand as he, but the purifying, watching, and right ordering of the heart; this is the thing that provokes ſo many ſad complaints, and coſts ſo many deep groans and briniſh tears. 'Twas the Pride of *Hezekiah*'s heart that made him lie in the duſt mourning before the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 32. 26. 'Twas the fear of Hypocriſie invading the Heart, that made *David* cry, *Let my heart be ſound in thy Statutes, that I be not aſhamed* Pſal. 119. 80. 'Twas the ſad experience he had of the Diviſions and Diſtractions of his own heart in the Service of God, that made him pour out that Prayer, *Pſal.* 86. 1. *Unite my heart to fear thy Name.*

The Method in which I ſhall improve the Point, ſhall be this.

1. Firſt, I ſhall enquire what the keeping of the heart ſuppoſes and imports.

2. Secondly, Aſſign divers Reaſons, why Chriſtians muſt make this the great work and buſineſs of their Lives.

3. Thirdly, Point at thoſe ſpecial ſeaſons which eſpecially call for this diligence in keeping the heart.

4. Fourthly and laſtly, Apply the whole in ſeveral Uſes.

1. What the keeping of the Heart ſuppoſes and imports.

To keep the heart neceſſarily ſuppoſes a previous Work of Sanctification; which hath ſet the heart right, by giving it a new ſpiritual bent and inclination; for as long as the heart is not *ſet right* by Grace, as to its habitual frame, no Duties or Means can *keep it right* with God. Self is the Poiſe of the unſanctified heart, which byaſſes and moves it in all its deſigns and actions; and as long as it is ſo, it is impoſſible that any external means ſhould keep it with God.

Man by Creation was of one conſtant, uniform frame, and tenour of Spirit, held one ſtrait and even courſe; not one thought or faculty ravell'd or diſorder'd, his Mind had a perfect illumination to underſtand and know the will of God, his Will a perfect compliance therewith; his ſenſitive Appetite and other inferiour Powers, ſtood in a moſt obedient ſubordination.

Man by degeneration is become a moſt diſordered and rebellious Creature, conteſting with and oppoſing his Maker, as the *firſt Cauſe*, by ſelf-dependance, as the *chiefeſt Good*, by ſelf-love; as the *higheſt Lord*, by ſelf-will; and as the *laſt End*, by ſelf-ſeeking; and ſo is quite diſordered, and all his acts irregular: His illuminated Underſtanding is clouded with ignorance, his complying Will, full of rebellion and ſtubbornneſs; his ſubordinate Powers, caſting off the dominion and government of the ſuperiour Faculties.

But by Regeneration this diſordered Soul is ſet ight again; Sanctification being the rectifying nd due framing, or as the Scripture phraſes it, he renovation of the Soul after the Image of God; ph. 4. 24. in which, *ſelf-dependance* is removed y Faith; *ſelf-love*, by the love of God; *ſelf-will*, y ſubjection and obedience to the will of God; nd *ſelf-ſeeking*, by ſelf-denial. The darkned nderſtanding is again illuminated, *Eph.* 1. 18. the fractory Will ſweetly ſubdued, *Pſal.* 110. 3. the bellious Appetite, or Concupiſcence, gradually conquered, *Rom.* 6. 7. *per tot.* And thus the Soul which Sin had univerſally depraved, is again by Grace reſtored and rectified.

This being preſuppoſed, it will not be difficult to apprehend, what it is to keep the heart, which is nothing elſe but the *conſtant care and diligence of ſuch a renewed man, to preſerve his ſoul in that holy frame to which Grace hath reduced it, and daily ſtrives to hold it.*

For though Grace hath in great meaſure rectified the Soul, and given it an habitual and heavenly temper; yet Sin often actually diſcompoſes it again; ſo that even a gracious heart is like a muſical Inſtrument, which though it be never ſo exactly tuned, a ſmall matter brings it out of tune again; yea, hang it aſide but a little, and it will need ſetting again, before you can play another Leſſon on it; even ſo ſtands the caſe with gracious hearts; if they are in frame in one duty, yet how dull, dead and diſordered when they come to another? And therefore every duty needs a particular preparation of the heart, *Job* 11. 13. *If thou prepare thine heart, and ſtretch out thy hands towards him:* Well then, to keep the heart, is carefully to preſerve it from ſin, which diſorders it; and maintain that ſpiritual and gracious frame which fits it for a life of communion with God: and this includes theſe ſix Acts in it.

1. Firſt, Frequent obſervation of the frame of the heart, turning in and examining how the caſe ſtands with it, this is one part of the work. Carnal and formal perſons take no heed to this, they cannot be brought to confer with their own hearts; there are ſome men and women that have lived forty or fifty years in the world, and have ſcarce had one hours diſcourſe with their own hearts all that while: 'Tis an hard thing to bring a Man and himſelf together upon ſuch an account; but Saints know thoſe Soliloquies and Self-conferences to be of excellent uſe and advantage. The Heathen could ſay, *Anima ſedendo & quieſcendo fit ſapiens*, the Soul is made wiſe by ſitting ſtill in quietneſs; though Bankrupts care not to look in their Books of Accompt, yet upright hearts will know whether they go backward or forward, *Pſal.* 77. 6. *I commune with mine own heart*; The heart can never be kept, until its caſe be examin'd and underſtood.

2. It includes deep Humiliations for heart-evils and diſorders; thus *Hezekiah* humbled himſelf for the Pride of his heart, 2 *Chron.* 32. 26. Thus the People were order'd to ſpread forth their hands to God in Prayer, in a ſenſe of the Plague of their own Hearts, 1 *Kings* 8. 38. Upon this account many an upright heart had been laid low before God: O what an heart have I? they have in their Confeſſions pointed at the heart, the pained place, Lord here is the wound, here is the Plague-ſore. It is with the heart well kept, as it is with the eye, which is a fit emblem of it, if a ſmall duſt get into the eye, it will never leave twinkling and watering till it have wept it out: So the upright heart cannot be at reſt till it have wept out its troubles, and poured out its complaints before the Lord.

3. It includes earneſt Supplications and inſtant Prayer for heart purifying and rectifying Grace, when Sin hath defiled and diſorder'd it, ſo *Pſal.* 119. 12. *Cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults*; and *Pſal.* 86. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy Name.* Saints have always many ſuch Petitions depending before the Throne of Grace; this is the thing

which is moſt pleaded by them with God: When they are praying for outward Mercies, happily their Spirits may be more remiſs, but when it comes to the Heart-caſe, then they intend their Spirits to the utmoſt, fill their Mouths with Arguments, weep and make ſupplication; Oh, for a heart to love God more! To hate ſin more, to walk more evenly with God; Lord deny not to me ſuch a heart whatever thou deny me; Give me an heart to fear thee, love, and delight in thee, if I beg my bread in deſolate places. 'Tis obſerved of holy Mr. *Bradford*, that when he was confeſſing ſin, he would never give over confeſſing untill he had felt ſome brokenneſs of heart for that ſin; and when praying for any ſpiritual Mercy, would never give over that ſuit, till he had got ſome reliſh of that Mercy; that's the third thing included in keeping the heart.

4. It includes the impoſing of ſtrong ingagements and bonds upon our ſelves to walk more accurately with God, and avoid the occaſions whereby the heart may be induced to ſin: Well compoſed, adviſed and deliberate Vows, are in ſome caſes of excellent uſe to guard the Heart, againſt ſome ſpecial ſin; ſo *Job* 31. 1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes*; by this means, holy ones have over-awed their Souls, and preſerved themſelves from defilement by ſome ſpecial heart-corruptions.

5. It includes a conſtant holy jealouſie over our own hearts; quick-ſighted ſelf-jealouſie is an excellent preſervative from ſin, he that will keep his heart, muſt have the eyes of his Soul awake and open upon all the diſorderly and tumultuous ſtirrings of his Affections; if the Affections break looſe, and the Paſſions be ſtirred, the Soul muſt diſcover and ſuppreſs them before they get to an height: O my Soul, doſt thou well in this? My tumultuous thonghts and paſſions, where is your Commiſſion? *State viri, quæ cauſa via? quive eſtis in armis*. Virg.

Happy is the man that thus feareth always, *Prov.* 28. 14. By this fear of the Lord it is that Men depart from evil, ſhake off ſecurity, and preſerve themſelves from iniquity; he that will keep his heart muſt feed with fear, rejoice with fear, and paſs the whole time of his ſojourning here in fear, and all little enough to keep the heart from ſin.

6. And laſtly, to add no more, It includes the reallizing of God's Preſence with us, and ſetting the Lord always before us: This the People of God have found a ſingular means to keep their hearts upright, and awe them from ſin; when the eye of our Faith is fixed upon the eye of God's Omniſcience, we dare not let out our thoughts and affections to vanity: Holy *Job* durſt not ſuffer his heart to yield to an impure, vain thought; and what was it that moved him to ſo great a Circumſpection? Why, he tells you, *Job* 31. 4. *Doth he not ſee my ways, and count all my ſteps? Walk before me* (ſaith God to *Abraham*) *and be thou perfect*, Gen. 17. 1. Even as Parents uſe to ſet their Children in the Congregation before them, knowing that elſe they will be toying and playing; ſo would the Heart of the beſt man too, were it not for the Eye of God.

In theſe and ſuch like particulars, do gracious Souls expreſs the care they have of their hearts; they are as careful to prevent the breaking looſe of their corruptions in times of temptation, as Seamen are to bind faſt the Guns, that they break not looſe in a ſtorm; as careful to preſerve the ſweetneſs and comfort they have got from God in any duty, as one that comes out of an hot Bath, or great Sweat, is of taking Cold, by going forth into the chill Air. This is the work, and of all works in Religion it is the moſt difficult, conſtant and important work.

1. 'Tis the hardeſt work; Heart-work is hard work indeed: To ſhuffle over Religious Duties with a looſe and heedleſs Spirit, will coſt no great pains; but to ſet thy ſelf before the Lord, and tie up thy looſe and vain thoughts to a conſtant and ſerious attendance upon him; this will coſt thee ſomething: To attain a facility and dexterity of Language in Prayer, and put thy meaning into apt and decent expreſſions, is eaſie; but to get thy heart broken for ſin, whilſt thou art confeſſing it; melted with free grace, whilſt thou art bleſſing God for it; to be really aſhamed and humbled through the apprehenſions of God's infinite holineſs, and to keep thy heart in this frame, not only in, but after Duty; will ſurely coſt thee ſome groans, and travelling pains of Soul: To repreſs the outward acts of ſin; and compoſe the external part of thy life in a laudable and comely manner, is no great matter, even carnal perſons by the force of common Principles can do this; but to kill the root of corruption within, to ſet and keep up an holy Government over thy thoughts, to have all things lye ſtraight and orderly in the heart, this is not eaſie.

2. 'Tis a conſtant work; the keeping of the heart is ſuch a work, as is never done till life be done; this labour and our life, end together: It is with a Chriſtian in this buſineſs, as it is with Sea-men, that have ſprung a Leak at Sea; if they tug not conſtantly at the Pump, the water encreaſes upon them, and will quickly ſink them: 'Tis in vain for them to ſay the work is hard, and we are weary: There is no time or condition in the life of a Chriſtian, which will ſuffer an intermiſſion of this work. It is in the keeping watch over our hearts, as it was in the keeping up of *Moſes* his hands, whilſt *Iſrael* and *Amalek* were fighting below, *Exod.* 17. 12. No ſooner do *Moſes* his hands grow heavy and ſink down, but *Amalek* prevails. You know it coſt *David* and *Peter* many a ſad day and night for intermitting the watch over their own hearts but a few minutes.

3. 'Tis the moſt Important Buſineſs of a Chriſtians life; without this, we are but Formaliſts in Religion: All our Profeſſions, Gifts and Duties ſignifie nothing: *My Son, give me thine heart*, Prov. 23. 26. God is pleaſed to call that a gift, which is indeed a debt; he will put this honour upon the Creature to receive it from him in the way of a gift; but if this be not given him, he regards not whatever elſe you bring to him: There is ſo much only of worth and value in what we do, as there is of heart in it. Concerning the heart, God ſeems to ſay, as *Joſeph* of *Benjamin*, *If you bring not* Benjamin *with you, you ſhall not ſee my face.* Among the Heathens, when the Beaſt was cut up for Sacrifice, the firſt thing the *Prieſt* look't upon was the heart, and if that were unſound and naught, the Sacrifice was rejected. God rejects all duties (how glorious ſoever in other reſpects) offered him without a heart. He that performs duty without a heart, *viz.* heedleſly, is no more accepted with God, than he that performs it with

a double heart, *viz.* hypocritical, *Iſa.* 66. 3. And thus I have briefly open'd the nature of the Duty, what is imported in this Phraſe, *Keep thy Heart.*

2. Next, I ſhall give you ſome rational Account why Chriſtians ſhould make this the great buſineſs of their lives, to keep their hearts?

The importance and neceſſity of making this our great and main buſineſs, will manifeſtly appear in that, 1. The honour of God. 2. The ſincerity of our Profeſſion. 3. The beauty of our Converſation. 4. The comfort of our Souls. 5. The improvement of our graces: And, 6. Our ſtability in the hour of Temptation, are all wrapt up in, and dependent on our ſincerity and care in the management of this work.

1. The Glory of God is much concerned therein; heart-evils are very provoking evils to the Lord. The Schools do well obſerve, that outward ſins are *majoris infamiæ*, ſins of greater infamy, but heart-ſins are *majoris reatus*, ſins of deeper guilt. How ſeverely hath the great God declared his Wrath from Heaven againſt heart-wickedneſs? The great Crime for which the old World ſtands indicted, *Gen.* 6. 5, 6, 7. is heart-wickedneſs; *God ſaw that every imagination* (or fiction) *of their heart was only evil, and that continually:* for which he ſent the dreadfulleſt Judgment that was ever executed ſince the World began: *And the Lord ſaid, I will deſtroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beaſt, and the creeping things, and the fowls of Heaven, for it repenteth me that I have made man*, v. 7. We find not their murders, adulteries, blaſphemies, (though they were defiled with theſe) particularly alledged againſt them; but the evils of their hearts: Yea, that which God was ſo provoked by, as to give up his peculiar inheritance into the enemies hand, was the evil of their hearts, *Jer.* 4. 14. *O* Jeruſalem, *waſh thine heart from wickedneſs, that thou maiſt be ſaved; how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* The wickedneſs and vanity of their thoughts God took ſpecial notice of; and becauſe of this, the *Chaldean* muſt come upon them as a *Lion from his thickets*, v. 7. *and tear them to pieces.* For the very ſin of thoughts it was that God threw down the faln Angels from Heaven, and keeps them ſtill in everlaſting Chains to the Judgment to which they are reſerved; as Priſoners that have moſt Irons laid upon them, may be ſuppoſed to be the greateſt Malefactors: And what was their ſin? Why only ſpiritual wickedneſs, for they having no bodily Organs, could act nothing externally againſt God. Yea, meer heart-evils are ſo provoking, that for them he rejects with indignation all the duties that ſome men perform unto him, *Iſa.* 66. 3. *He that killeth an* x, *is as if he ſlew a man; he that ſacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dogs neck; he that offereth* *Oblation, as if he offered Swines blood; he that* *rneth incenſe, as if he bleſſed an Idol.* In what ords could the abhorrence of a Creatures acti s be more fully expreſſed by the holy God? urder and Idolatry are not more vile in his ac unt than their Sacrifices, though materially ſuch himſelf appointed: And what made them ſo? e following words inform us, *Their ſoul delighteth* *heir abominations.*

To conclude, ſuch is the vileneſs of meer rt-ſins, that the Scriptures ſometimes intimate difficulty of pardon for them. So in the caſe of *Simon Magus*, Acts 8. 21. his heart was not right, he had vile thoughts of God, and the things of God, the Apoſtle bids him *repent and pray, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him.* O then never ſlight heart-evils! for by theſe God is highly wronged and provoked, and for this reaſon, let every Chriſtian make it his work to keep his heart with all diligence.

The ſincerity of our Profeſſion much depends upon the care and conſcience we have in keeping our hearts; for it's moſt certain, that a man is but an hypocrite in his Profeſſion, how curious ſoever he be in the externals of Religion, that is heedleſs and careleſs of the frame of his heart; you have a pregnant inſtance of this in the caſe of *Jehu*, 2 Kings 10. 31. *But* Jehu *took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord God of* Iſrael *with his heart.* That Context gives us an Account of the great ſervice perform'd by *Jehu* againſt the Houſe of *Ahab* and *Baal*, as alſo of a great temporal reward given him by God for that ſervice, even that his children to the fourth Generation ſhould ſit upon the Throne of *Iſrael.* And yet in theſe words *Jehu* is cenſured for an Hypocrite; though God approved and rewarded the work, yet he abhorred and rejected the perſon that did it, as hypocritical: And wherein lay his hypocriſie, but in this, that he took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord with his heart, (*i. e.*) he did all inſincerely and for ſelf-ends? And though the work he did were materially good, yet he not purging his heart from thoſe unworthy ſelf-deſigns in doing it, was an hypocrite: And *Simon*, of whom we ſpake before, though he appeared ſuch a perſon that the Apoſtle could not regularly refuſe him, yet his hypocriſie was quickly diſcovered: And what diſcovered it but this, that though he profeſſed and aſſociated himſelf with the Saints, yet he was a ſtranger to the mortification of heart-ſins? *Thy heart is not right with God*, Acts 8. 21. ——'Tis true, there is a great difference among Chriſtians themſelves, in their diligence and dexterity about heart-work; ſome are more converſant and ſucceſsful in it then others are; but he that takes no heed to his heart, he that is not careful to order it aright before God, is but a Hypocrite, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. *And they come unto me as the people cometh, and ſit before thee* (*as my people*) *and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they ſhew much love, but their heart goes after their covetouſneſs.* Here were a company of formal hypocrites, as is evident by that expreſſion (*as my people*) like them, but not of them: And what made them ſo? Their outſide was fair, here were reverent poſtures, high profeſſions, much ſeeming joy and delight in Ordinances, *Thou art to them as a lovely Song*; yea, but for all that, they kept not their hearts with God in thoſe Duties, their hearts were commanded by their Luſts, they went after their Covetouſneſs; had they kept their hearts with God, all had been well; but not regarding which way their heart went in duty, there lay the core of their hypocriſie.

*Object.* If any upright Soul ſhould hence infer, then I am an hypocrite too, for many times my heart departs from God in Duty, do what I can, yet I cannot hold it cloſe with God.

*Sol.* To this I anſwer, The very Objection carries in it its own Solution: Thou ſayeſt, Do what I can, yet I cannot keep my heart with

God. Soul, if thou doſt what thou canſt, thou haſt the bleſſing of an upright, though God ſees good to exerciſe thee under the affliction of a diſcompoſed heart. There remains ſtill ſome wildneſs in the thoughts and fancies of the beſt to humble them; but if you find a care before to prevent them; and oppoſition againſt them when they come, grief and ſorrow afterwards; you will find enough to clear you from raigning hypocriſie.

(1.) This fore-care is ſeen partly in laying up the word in thine heart to prevent them, *Pſal.* 119. 11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee:* partly in our endeavours to engage our hearts to God, *Jer.* 30. 21. and partly in begging preventing Grace from God in our onſets upon duty, *Pſal.* 119. 36, 37. 'tis a good ſign where this care goes before a Duty.

And (2.) 'tis a ſweet ſign of uprightneſs to oppoſe them in their firſt riſe, *Pſal.* 119. 113. *I hate vain thoughts.* Gal. 5. 17. *The ſpirit luſteth againſt the fleſh.*

And, (3.) Thy after-grief diſcovers thy upright heart; if with *Hezekiah* thou art humbled for the evils of thy heart, thou haſt no reaſon from thoſe diſorders to queſtion the integrity of it; but to ſuffer ſin to lodge quietly in the heart, to let thy heart habitually and uncontrolledly wander from God, is a ſad and dangerous ſymptom indeed.

3. The beauty of our Converſation ariſes from the heavenly frames, and holy order of our ſpirits; there is a ſpiritual luſtre and beauty in the Converſation of Saints, T*he righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour*, they ſhine as the Lights of the World; but whatever luſter and beauty is in their lives, comes from the excellency of their ſpirits; as the Candle within puts a luſtre upon the Lanthorn in which it ſhines. It is impoſſible that a diſordered and neglected heart, ſhould ever produce a well-ordered converſation; and ſince (as the Text obſerves) the iſſues or ſtreams of Life flow out of the heart as their Fountain, it muſt needs follow, that ſuch as the heart is, the life will be: hence, 1 *Pet.* 2. 11, 12. *Abſtain from fleſhly luſts——having your converſation honeſt* * or beautiful, as the Greek word imports. So *Iſa.* 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.* His way notes the courſe of his life, his thoughts the frame of his heart; and therefore ſince the way and courſe of his life flows from his thoughts, or the frame of his heart, both or neither will be forſaken: The heart is the womb of all actions, theſe actions are virtually, and ſeminally contained in our thoughts, theſe thoughts being once made up into affections, are quickly made out into ſuitable actions and practiſes. If the heart be wicked, then as Chriſt ſaith, *Matth.* 15. 19. *Out of the heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries,* &c. Mark the order, firſt, wanton, or revengeful thoughts, then unclean or murderous practiſes.

* καλὴν

And if the heart be holy and ſpiritual, then as *David* ſpeaks from ſweet experience, in *Pſal.* 45. 1. *My heart is (inditing) a good matter, I ſpeak of the things which (I have made) my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.* Here's a Life richly beautified with good works; ſome ready made; *I will ſpeak of the things which I have made:* Others upon the Wheel making, my Heart is enditing, but both proceeding from the heavenly frame of his Heart.

Put but the Heart in frame and the Life will quickly diſcover that it is ſo. I think it is not very difficult to diſcern by the Duties and Converſes of Chriſtians, what frames their Spirits are under; take a Chriſtian in a good frame, and how ſerious, heavenly, and profitable will his Converſes and Duties be! What a lovely Companion is he, during the continuance of it! 'Twould do any ones heart good to be with him at ſuch a time, *Pſal.* 37. 30, 31. *The mouth of the righteous ſpeaketh wiſdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment, the Law of his God is in his heart.*

When the heart is up with God, and full of God, how dexterouſly and ingeniouſly will he wind in ſpiritual diſcourſe, improving every occaſion and advantage to ſome heavenly purpoſe? Few words run then at the waſte ſpout.

And what elſe can be the reaſon, why the Diſcourſes and Duties of many Chriſtians are become ſo frothy and unprofitable, their Communion both with God, and one another, become as a dry ſtalk, but becauſe their Hearts are neglected? Surely this muſt be the reaſon of it, and verily it is an evil greatly to be bewailed; for want of this Chriſtian-fellowſhip it became a ſapleſs thing, ſo the attracting beauty that was wont to ſhine from the Converſations of the Saints upon the Faces and Conſciences of the World, (which if it did not allure, and bring them in love with the ways of God; yet at leaſt left a teſtimony in their Conſciences of the excellency of thoſe Men and their way) this is in a great meaſure loſt, to the unſpeakable detriment of Religion.

Time was when Chriſtians did carry it at ſuch a rate, that the World ſtood at a gaze at them, as that word ξενίζονται, 1 *Pet.* 4. 4. Imports, their Life and Language was of a different ſtrain from others, their Tongues diſcovered them to be *Galileans* where-ever they came; but now ſince vain ſpeculations, and fruitleſs controverſies have ſo much obtained, and heart-work, practical godlineſs ſo much neglected among Profeſſors, the caſe is ſadly altered, their diſcourſe is become like other Mens: If they come among you now, they may (to allude to that, *Acts* 2. 6.) *Hear every Man ſpeak in his own language.* And truly I have little hope to ſee this evil redreſſed, and the credit of Religion again repaired; till Chriſtians fall to their old work, till they ply heart-work cloſer: When the Salt of heavenly mindedneſs is again caſt into the Spring, the Streams will run clearer and ſweeter.

4. The comfort of our Souls doth much depend upon the keeping of our Hearts, for he that is negligent in attending his own Heart, is (ordinarily) a great ſtranger to aſſurance, and the ſweet comforts flowing from it.

Indeed, if the *Antinomian* Doctrine were true, which teaches you to reject all marks and ſigns for the trial of your conditions, telling you it is only the Spirit that immediately aſſures you by witneſſing your Adoption directly without them, then you might be careleſs of your Hearts, yea, ſtrangers to them, and yet no ſtrangers to comfort: But ſince both Scripture and Experience do confute this dotage, I hope you will never look for comfort in that unſcriptural way. I deny not but it is the work and office of the Spi to aſſure you, and yet do confidently affirm, tha if ever you attain Aſſurance in the ordinary wa wherein God diſpenſes it, you muſt take pa with your own Hearts; you may expect your comforts upon eaſier terms; but I am miſtaken, if ever you enjoy them upon any other: *Give all diligence, prove your ſelves:* This is the Scripture way. I remember Mr. *Roberts* in his Treatiſe of the Covenant, tells us, That he knew a Chriſtian who in the Infancy of his Chriſtianity, ſo vehemently panted after the infallible Aſſurance of God's Love, that for a long time together he earneſtly deſired ſome voice from Heaven; yea, ſometimes walking in the ſolitary Fields, earneſtly deſired ſome miraculous voice from the Trees and Stones there; this, after many deſires and longings was denied him: But in time a better was afforded in the ordinary way of ſearching the Word, and his own Heart. An inſtance of the like nature the Learned *Gerſon* gives us, Of one that was driven, by Temptation, upon the very borders of deſperation; at laſt being ſweetly ſetled and aſſured, one asked him, How he attained it? He anſwered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione,* &c. Not by any extraordinary Revelation, but by ſubjecting his underſtanding to the Scriptures, and comparing his own Heart with them. The Spirit indeed aſſures by witneſſing our Adoption; and he witneſſeth two ways.

(1.) Objectively, (*i. e.*) by working thoſe Graces in our Souls which are the Conditions of the Promiſe, and ſo the Spirit and his Graces in us are all one; the Spirit of God dwelling in us, is a mark of our Adoption. Now the Spirit cannot be diſcerned in his Eſſence, but in his Operations; and to diſcern theſe, is to diſcern the Spirit; and how theſe ſhould be diſcerned, without ſerious ſearching, and diligent watching of the Heart, I cannot imagine.

(2.) The other way of the Spirits witneſſing is effectively, (*i. e.*) by irradiating the Soul with a Grace-diſcovering Light, ſhining upon his own work; and this in order of nature follows the former work: He firſt infuſes the Grace, and then opens the Eye of the Soul to ſee it. Now ſince the Heart is the ſubject of that infuſed Grace, even this way of the Spirit's witneſſing alſo includes the neceſſity of keeping carefully our own Hearts: For,

(1.) A neglected Heart is ſo confuſed and dark, that the little Grace which is in it, is not ordinarily diſcernable: The moſt accurate and laborious Chriſtians, that take moſt pains, and ſpend moſt time about their hearts, do yet find it very difficult to diſcover the pure and genuine workings of the Spirit there: How then ſhall the Chriſtian which is (comparatively) negligent and remiſs about heart-work, be ever able to diſcover it? Sincerity, which is the *quæſitum*, the thing ſought for, lies in the heart like a ſmall piece of Gold in the bottom of a River, he that will find it muſt ſtay till the water be clear and ſettled, and then he ſhall ſee it ſparkling at the bottom; and that the heart may be clear and ſettled, How much pains and watching, care and diligence will it coſt?

(2.) God doth not uſually indulge lazy and negligent Souls with the Comforts of Aſſurance, he will not ſo much as ſeem to patronize ſloth and careleſneſs; he will give it, but it ſhall be in his own way: His command hath united our care and comfort together; they are miſtaken that think the beautiful Child of Aſſurance may be born without pangs: Ah, how many ſolitary hours have the People of God ſpent in heart-examination? How many times have they looked into the Word, and then into their hearts? Sometime they thought they diſcovered Sincerity, and were even ready to draw forth the triumphant concluſion of Aſſurance; then comes a doubt they cannot reſolve, and daſhes all again; many hopes and fears, doubtings and reaſonings they have had in their own breaſts, before they arrived at a comfortable ſettlement.

To conclude, Suppoſe it poſſible for a careleſs Chriſtian to attain Aſſurance, yet its impoſſible he ſhould long retain it; for it is with thoſe whoſe hearts are big with the joys of Aſſurance, as with a pregnant Woman ſubject to miſcarriages; if extraordinary care be not uſed, it is a thouſand to one if ever ſhe embrace a living Child: So 'tis here, a little pride, vanity, careleſneſs, daſhes all that for which thou haſt been labouring a long time in many a weary Duty. Since then the joy of our life, the comfort of our Souls, riſes and falls with our diligence in this work; keep your hearts with all diligence.

5. The Improvement of our Graces depends on the keeping of our hearts; I never knew Grace thrive in a negligent and careleſs Soul; the habits and roots of Grace are planted in the heart; and the dependency is radicated there, the more thriving and flouriſhing Grace is: In *Eph.* 3. 17. We read of *being rooted in Grace:* Grace in the heart is the root of every gracious word in the mouth, and of every holy work in the hand, *Pſal.* 116. 10. 2 *Cor.* 4. 13. 'Tis true, Chriſt is the root of a Chriſtian; but Chriſt is *Origo originans,* the originating Root, and Grace *Origo originata,* a root originated, planted and influenced by Chriſt; according as this thrives under Divine Influences, ſo the acts of Grace are more or leſs fruitful or vigorous: Now in a heart not kept with care and diligence, theſe fructifying influences are ſtopt and cut off, multitudes of vanities break in upon it, and devour its ſtrength; the heart is as it were the Paſture, in which multitudes of thoughts are fed every day; a gracious heart diligently kept, feeds many precious thoughts of God in a day, *Pſal.* 139. 17. *How precious are thy thoughts to me, O God! How great is the ſum of them? If I ſhould count them, they are more in number then the ſand; and when I awake, I am ſtill with thee.* And as the gracious heart feeds and nouriſhes them, ſo they refreſh and feaſt the heart, *Pſal.* 63. 5, 6. *My ſoul is filled as with marrow and fatneſs whilſt I think upon thee,* &c. But in the diſregarded heart, ſwarms of vain and fooliſh thoughts are perpetually working, and juſtle out thoſe ſpiritual Idea's and thoughts of God, by which the Soul ſhould be refreſhed.

Beſides, the careleſs heart makes nothing out of any Duty or Ordinance it performs or attends on, and yet theſe are the Conduits of Heaven from whence Grace is watered and made fruitful: A man may go with an heedleſs ſpirit from Ordinance to Ordinance, abide all his days under the choiceſt teaching, and yet never be improved by them; for heart-neglect is a leak in the bottom, no heavenly influences, how rich ſoever, abide in that Soul, *Math.* 13. 3, 4. The heart that lies open and common, like the Highway, free for all Paſſengers, when the Seed fell on it, the Fowls came and devoured it. Alas! it is not enough to hear, unleſs we take heed how we hear; A man may pray, and never the better, unleſs we watch unto Prayer. In a word, all Ordinances, Means and Duties are bleſſed unto the improvement of Grace, according to the care and ſtrictneſs we uſe in keeping our hearts in them.

6. Laſtly, The ſtability of our Souls in the hour of Temptation, will be much according to the care and conſcience we have of keeping our hearts; the careleſs heart is an eaſie Prey to Satan in the hour of Temptation, his main Batteries are raiſed againſt that Fort-Royal, the Heart; if he wins that, he wins all, for it commands the whole man; and alas, how eaſie a conqueſt is a neglected heart? 'tis no more difficult to ſurpriſe it, than for an Enemy to enter that City, whoſe Gates are open and unguarded; 'tis the watchful heart that diſcovers and ſuppreſſes the Temptation before it comes to its ſtrength. Divines obſerve this to be the method in which Temptations are ripened and brought to their full ſtrength.

ὄρεξις. There is (1.) The irritation of the Object, or that power is hath to work upon and provoke our corrupt Nature; which is either done by the real preſence of the Object, or elſe by Speculation, when the Object (though abſent) is held out by the Phantaſie before the Soul.

ὁρμὴ. (2.) Then follows the motion of the ſenſitive Appetite, which is ſtirred and provoked by the Phantaſie, repreſenting it as a ſenſual good, as having profit or pleaſure in it.

βούλησις. (3.) Then there is a conſultation in the Mind about it, deliberating about the likelieſt means of accompliſhing it.

αἵρησις. (4.) Next follows the election or choice of the Will.

βούλημα. (5.) And laſtly, The deſire or full engagement of the Will to it; all this may be done in a few moments, for the debates of the Soul are quick, and ſoon ended: When it comes thus far, then the Heart is won, Satan hath entred victoriouſly, and diſplayed his Colours upon the Walls of that Royal Fort; but had the Heart been well guarded at firſt, it had never come to this height; the Temptation had been ſtopt in the firſt or ſecond act; and indeed there it's ſtopt eaſily; for it is in the motions of a tempted Soul to Sin, as in the motion of a Stone falling from the Brow of an Hill, its eaſily ſtopt at firſt, but when once it's ſet a going, *Vires acquirit eundo*: And therefore it's the greateſt Wiſdom in the World to obſerve the firſt motions of the Heart, to check and ſtop ſin there: The motions of ſin are weakeſt at firſt; a little care and watchfulneſs may prevent much miſchief now, which the careleſs Heart not heeding, is brought within the power of Temptation; as the *Syrians* were brought blindfold into the midſt of *Samaria*, before they knew where they were.

By this time, Reader, I hope thou art fully ſatisfied how conſequential and neceſſary a work the keeping of the Heart is, it being a Duty that wraps up ſo many dear Intereſts of the Soul in it.

3. Next, according to the method propounded, I proceed to point out thoſe ſpecial Seaſons in the Life of a Chriſtian, which require and call for our utmoſt diligence in keeping the Heart: For though (as was obſerved before) the Duty binds *ad ſemper* and there be no time or condition of Life in which we may be excuſed from this work; yet there are ſome ſignal Seaſons, critical Hours, requiring more than a common vigilance over the Heart.

And the firſt,

1. *Seaſon.* “ Is the time of Proſperity, when
“ Providence ſmiles upon us, and dandles us up-
“ on her knee. Now Chriſtian, keep thy Heart
“ with all diligence; for now 'twill be exceed-
“ ing apt to grow ſecure, proud and earthly,
“ *Rara virtus eſt humilitas honorata* (ſaith *Ber-*
“ *nard* (to ſee a man humble under Proſperity,
“ is one of the greateſt Rarities in the World.
“ Even a good *Hezekiah* could not hide a vain-
“ glorious Temper under his Temptation, and
“ hence that Caution to *Iſrael*, Deut. 6. 10, 11, 12.
“ *And it ſhall be when the Lord thy God ſhall have*
“ *brought thee into the Land which he ſware to thy*
“ *Fathers, to* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob, *to give*
“ *thee great and goodly Cities which thou buildeſt not,*
“ *and houſes full of all good things which thou filleſt*
“ *not*, &c. *Then beware leſt thou forget the Lord:* And
“ indeed ſo it fell out, *for* Jeſurun *waxed fat and*
“ *kicked*, Deut. 32. 15.

Now then, the firſt Caſe will be this, *viz.*

1. Caſe. *How a Chriſtian may keep his Heart from Pride and carnal Security under the ſmiles of Providence, and confluence of Creature-comforts?*

There are ſeven choice helps to ſecure the Heart from the dangerous Snares of Proſperity; the firſt is this.

1. *To conſider the dangerous inſnaring Temptations attending a pleaſant and proſperous condition; few, yea, very few of thoſe that live in the pleaſures and proſperity of this World, eſcape everlaſting perdition*, Matth. 19. 24. *'Tis eaſier* (ſaith Chriſt) *for a Camel to paſs through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven*, and 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. *Not many mighty, not many noble are called.* It might juſtly make us tremble when the Scripture tells us in general, that few ſhall be ſaved; much more when it tell us, that of that rank and ſort of which we are, but few ſhall be ſaved. When *Joſhuah* called all the Tribes of *Iſrael* to Lot upon them for the diſcovery of *Achan*, doubtleſs *Achan* feared; when the Tribe of *Judah* was taken, his fear increaſed; but when the Family of the *Zarhites* was taken, it was time then to tremble. So when the Scripture comes ſo near as to tell us that of ſuch a ſort of Men very few ſhall eſcape, 'tis time to look about; *miror ſi poteſt ſervari aliquis rectorum*, ſaith *Chryſoſtom*; I ſhould wonder if any of the *Rulers* be ſaved. Oh how many have been Coached to Hell in the Chariots of earthly Pleaſures, whilſt others have been Whipt to Heaven by the Rod of Affliction? How few, like the Daughter of *Tyre*, come to Chriſt with a gift! How few among the Rich intreat his favour!

2. *It may yet keep us more humble and watchful in Proſperity, if we conſider that among Chriſtians many have been much the worſe for it*; How good had it been for ſome of them if they had never known Proſperity! When they were in a low condition, how humble, ſpiritual and heavenly

were they; but when advanced, what an apparent alteration hath been upon their Spirits? 'Twas ſo with *Iſrael*; when they were in a low condition in the Wilderneſs, then *Iſrael* was *Holineſs to the Lord*, Jer. 2. 23. But when they came into *Canaan*, and were fed in a fat paſture, then, *We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee*, ver. 31. Outward Gains are ordinarily attended with inward Loſſes, as in a low condition, their civil Imployments were wont to have a tang and ſavour of their Duties, ſo in an exalted condition their Duties commonly have a tang of the world. He indeed is rich in Grace, whoſe Graces are not hindred by his Riches; there are but few *Jehoſaphat's* in the World, of whom it is ſaid, 2 *Chron.* 17. 5, 6. *He had ſilver and gold in abundance, and his heart was lifted up in the way of God's commands:* Will not this keep thy Heart humble in Proſperity, to think how dear many godly Men have paid for their Riches, that through them they have loſt that which all the World cannot purchaſe? Then in the next place,

3. Keep down thy vain heart by this Conſideration, *That God values no man a jot the more for theſe things.* God values no Man by outward Excellencies, but by inward Graces, they are the internal Ornaments of the Spirit, which are of great price in God's Eyes, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. he deſpiſes all wordly Glory, and excepts no Man's perſon, *but in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him,* Acts 10. 35. Indeed if the Judgment of God went by the ſame Rule that Man's doth, we might value our ſelves by theſe things, and ſtand upon them. But as one ſaid (when dying) I ſhall not appear before God as a Doctor, but as a Man; *tantus quiſquis eſt, quantus eſt apud Deum.* So much every Man is, and no more, as he is in the Judgment of God. Doth thy Heart yet ſwell? And will neither of the former Conſiderations keep it humble?

4. Then Fourthly, Conſider *how bitterly many Perſons have bewailed their folly when they came to die, that ever they ſet their Hearts upon theſe things, and heartily wiſh that they had never known them.* What a ſad Story was that of *Pius Quintus*, who dying, cried out deſpairingly, When I was in a low condition, I had ſome hopes of Salvation, but when I was advanced to be a Cardinal, I greatly doubted it, but ſince I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all. Mr. *Spencer* alſo tells us a real, but ſad Story, of a Rich Oppreſſor, who had ſcraped up a great Eſtate for his only Son; when he came to die, he called his Son to him, and ſaid, Son, do you indeed love me? The Son anſwered, That Nature, beſides his paternal Indulgence, obliged him to that; then ſaid the Father, Expreſs it by this, hold thy Finger in the Candle as long as I am ſaying a *Pater Noſter*; the Son attempted, but could not endure it; upon that the Father brake out into theſe Expreſſions, Thou canſt not ſuffer the burning of thy Finger for me, but to get this Wealth, I have hazarded my Soul for thee, and muſt burn Body and Soul in Hell for thy ſake; thy pains would have been but for a moment, but mine will be unquenchable Fire.

5. The Heart may be kept humble, by conſidering *of what a clogging nature earthly things are to a Soul heartily engaged in the way to Heaven*, they ſhut out much of Heaven from us at preſent, though they may not ſhut us out of Heaven at laſt. If thou conſider they ſelf under the notion of a Stranger in this World, travelling for Heaven, and ſeeking a better Countrey, thou haſt then as much reaſon to be taken and delighted with theſe things, as a weary Horſe hath with a heavy Cloak-bag: There was a ſerious truth in that Atheiſtical Scoff of *Julian*, when he took away the Chriſtians Eſtates, and told them, It was to make them fitter for the Kingdom of Heaven.

6. Is thy Spirit for all this flatulent and lofty, then urge upon it *the conſideration of that aweful day of Reckoning, wherein according to our receipts of Mercies ſhall be our accompts for them:* And methinks this ſhould awe and humble the vaineſt Heart that ever was in the Breaſt of a Saint. Know for certain, that the Lord records all the Mercies that ever he gave thee, from the begining, to the end of thy Life, *Micah* 6. 4. *Remember O my people; from* Shittim *unto* Gilgal, *&c.* Yea, they are exactly numbred, and recorded in order to an account; and thy account will be ſuitable, *Luke* 12. 48. *To whomſoever much is given, of him much ſhall be required.* You are but Stewards, and your Lord will come to take an account of you; And what a great account have you to make who have much of this World in your hands? What ſwift Witneſſes will your Mercies be againſt you, if this be the beſt fruits of them?

7. It is a very humbling Conſideration, *That the Mercies of God ſhould work otherwiſe upon my Spirit than they uſe to do upon the Spirits of others, to whom they come as ſanctified Mercies from the Love of God.* Ah Lord! What a ſad conſideration is this? Enough to lay me in the duſt: When I conſider,

(1.) That their Mercies have greatly humbled them; the higher God hath raiſed them, the lower they have laid themſelves before God. Thus did *Jacob* when God had given him much ſubſtance, *Gen.* 22. 5, 10. *And* Jacob *ſaid, I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy Mercies, and all the truth which thou haſt ſhewed thy ſervant; for with my ſtaff I paſſed over this* Jordan, *and now am become two bands.* And thus it was with holy *David*, 2 Sam. 7. 18. When God had confirmed the Promiſe to him, to build him a Houſe, and not reject him as he did *Saul*, he goes in before the Lord, and ſaith, *Who am I? And what is my Fathers houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?* And ſo indeed God required, *Deut.* 26. 5. when *Iſrael* was to bring to God the Firſt Fruits of *Canaan*, *A* Syrian *ready to periſh was my Father*, &c. Do others raiſe God the higher for raiſing them? And the more God raiſes me, the more ſhall I abuſe him and exalt my ſelf? Oh what a ſad thing is this!

(2.) Others have freely aſcribed the glory of all their Enjoyments to God, and magnified not themſelves, but him, for their Mercies: So *David*, 2 Sam. 7. 26. *Let thy name be magnified, and the houſe of thy ſervant be eſtabliſhed.* He doth not fly upon the Mercy, and ſuck out the ſweetneſs of it, looking no farther than his own comfort; no, he cares for no Mercy except God be magnified in it. So *Pſalm.* 18. 2. when God had delivered him from all his Enemies, *The Lord* (ſaith he) *is my ſtrength, and my rock, he is become my ſalvation.* They did not put the Crown upon their own Heads, as I do.

(3) The Mercies of God have been melting Mercies unto others, melting their Souls in love

to the God of their Mercies. So *Hannah*, 1 Sam. 2. 1. when ſhe received the Mercy of a Son, *My Soul* (ſaith ſhe) *rejoyceth in the Lord*, not in the Mercy, but in the God of the Mercy: And ſo *Mary*, Luke 1. 46. *My ſoul doth magnifie the Lord, my ſpirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour*; the word ſignifies, to make more room for God: Their Hearts were not contracted, but the more inlarged to God.

(4.) The Mercies of God have been mighty reſtraints to keep others from ſin. So *Ezra* 9. 13. *Seeing thou our God haſt given us ſuch a deliverance as this, ſhould we again break thy Commandments*? Ingenuous Souls have felt the force of the Obligations of Love, and Mercy upon them.

(5.) To conclude, the Mercies of God to others have been as Oyl to the Wheels of their Obedience, and make them fitter for ſervice, 2 *Chron.* 17. 5. Now if Mercies work contrarily upon my Heart, what cauſe have I to be afraid that they come not to me in love? I tell you, this is enough to damp the Spirit of any Saint, to ſee what ſweet effects they have had on others, and what ſad effects on him.

2. *Seaſon.* “ The ſecond ſpecial Seaſon in the
“ Life of a Chriſtian, requiring more than a com-
“ mon diligence to keep his Heart, is *the time of*
“ *adverſity*; when Providence frowns upon you,
“ and blaſts your outward Comforts, then look
“ to your Hearts, keep them with all diligence
“ from repining againſt God, or fainting under
“ his Hand; for troubles, though ſanctified, are
“ Troubles ſtill; even Sweet-briar, and holy
“ Thiſtle have their prickles. *Jonah* was a good
“ Man, and yet how pettiſh was his Heart under
“ Affliction? *Job* was the Mirrour of Patience,
“ yet how was his Heart diſcompoſed by trouble?
“ You will find it as hard to get a compoſed Spi-
“ rit under great afflictions, as it is to fix Quick-
“ ſilver: Oh the hurries and tumults which they
“ occaſion even in the beſt Hearts! Well then,
“ the ſecond Caſe will be this.

2. Caſe. *How a Chriſtian under great afflictions may keep his Heart from repining or diſponding under the Hand of God?* Now there are Nine ſpecial Helps I ſhall here offer, to keep thy Heart in this condition; and the firſt ſhall be this, To work upon your Hearts this great Truth.

1. *That by theſe croſs Providences, God is faithfully purſuing the great deſign of Electing Love upon the Souls of his People, and orders all theſe afflictions as means ſanctified to that end.*

Afflictions fall not out by *Caſualty*, but by *Counſel*, Job. 5. 6. Eph. 1. 11. by this Counſel of God they are ordained as means of much ſpiritual good to Saints, *Iſa.* 27. 9. *By this ſhall the iniquity of* Jacob *be purged*, &c. *Heb.* 12. 10. *But he for our profit*, &c. *Rom.* 8. 38. *All things work together for good*; they are God's Workmen upon our Hearts, to pull down the Pride and carnal Security of them; and being ſo, their Nature is changed; they are turned into Bleſſings and Benefits, *Pſal.* 119. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* And ſure then, thou haſt no reaſon to quarrel with, but rather to admire that God ſhould concern himſelf ſo much in thy good, to uſe any means for the accompliſhing of it, *Philip.* 3. 11. Paul *could bleſs God, if by any means he might attain the reſurrection of the dead. My Brethren,* (ſaith James) *count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations,* Jam. 1. 2, 3. My Father is about a deſign of Love upon my Soul, and do I well to be angry with him? All that he doth is in purſuance of, and reference to ſome Eternal Glorious Ends upon my Soul. O 'tis my ignorance of God's deſign, that makes me quarrel with him! He ſaith to thee in this caſe, as to *Peter, What I do thou knoweſt not now, but hereafter thou ſhalt know it.*

2. Help. *Though God hath reſerved to himſelf a liberty of afflicting his People, yet he hath tyed up his own hands by promiſe, never to take away his loving kindneſs from them.* Can I look that Scripture in the Face with a repining diſcontented Spirit, 2 *Sam.* 7. 14. *I will be his Father, and he ſhall be my ſon; if he commit iniquity, I will chaſten him with the rod of men, and with the ſtripes of the children of men: nevertheleſs my mercy ſhall not depart away from him.* O my Heart, my haughty Heart; doſt thou well to be diſcontented, when God hath given thee the whole Tree, with all the cluſters of comfort growing on it, becauſe he ſuffers the Wind to blow down a few Leaves? Chriſtians have two ſorts of Goods, the Goods of the Throne, and the Goods of the Footſtool; Moveables and Immoveables; if God have ſecured theſe, never let my Heart be troubled at the loſs of thoſe: Indeed, if he had cut off his Love, or diſcovenanted my Soul, I had reaſon to be caſt down; but this he hath not, he cannot do.

3. *Help.* It is of marvellous efficacy to keep the Heart from ſinking under affliction, *to call to mind, that thine own Father hath the ordering of them:* Not a Creature moves Hand or Tongue againſt thee, but by his permiſſion. Suppoſe the Cup be a bitter Cup, yet 'tis the Cup which thy Father hath given thee to drink; and canſt thou ſuſpect Poiſon to be in that Cup which he delivers thee? Fooliſh Man, put home the caſe to thine own Heart, conſult with thine own Bowels; canſt thou find in thy Heart to give thy Child that which would hurt and undo him? No, thou wouldſt as ſoon hurt thy ſelf as him; *If thou then being evil, knoweſt how to give good gifts to thy children,* how much more doth God? *Matth.* 7. 11. The very conſideration of his Nature, a God of Love, Pity, and tender Mercies, or of his relation to thee, as a Father, Husband, Friend; might be ſecurity enough, if he had not ſpoken a word, to quiet thee in this caſe; and yet you have his word too, *Jer.* 25. 6. *I will do you no hurt.* You lye too near his Heart to hurt you, nothing grieves him more than our groundleſs and unworthy ſuſpicions of his deſigns do; would it not grieve a faithful tender-hearted Phyſician, when he hath ſtudied the Caſe of his Patient, prepared the moſt excellent Receipts to ſave his Life, to hear him cry out, Oh he hath undone me! he hath poiſoned me; becauſe it gripes and pains him in the Operation? O when will you be Ingenuous!

4. Help. *God reſpects you as much in a low, as in a high condition; and therefore it need not ſo much trouble you to be made low*; nay, to ſpeak home, he manifeſts more of his Love, Grace, and Tenderneſs, in the time of Affliction than Proſperity. As God did not at firſt chuſe you becauſe you were high, ſo he will not forſake you becauſe you are low: Men may look ſhy upon you, and alter their reſpects, as your condition is altered: When Providence hath blaſted your Eſtates, your Summer Friends may grow ſtrange, as fearing you may be troubleſome to them; but will God do ſo? No, no; *I will never leave thee*

*nor forſake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. Indeed if adverſity and poverty could bar you from acceſs to God, it were a ſad condition; but you may go to God as freely as ever, *My God* (ſaith the Church) *will hear me*, Micah 7. Poor *David*, when ſtript out of all earthly Comforts, could encourage himſelf in the Lord his God, and why cannot you? Suppoſe your Husband or Child had loſt all at Sea, and ſhould come to you in Rags; could you deny the Relation, or refuſe to entertain him? If you would not, much leſs will God: Why then are you ſo troubled? Though your condition be changed, your Fathers love and reſpects are not changed.

5 Help. *And what if by the loſs of outward Comforts, God will preſerve your Souls from the ruining power of Temptation? Sure then, you have little cauſe to ſink your Hearts, by ſuch ſad Thoughts about them.* Are not theſe earthly Enjoyments the things that make Men ſhrink and warp in times of trial? For the love of theſe many have forſaken Chriſt in ſuch an hour, *Matth.* 19. 22. *He went away ſorrowful, for he had great Poſſeſſions:* And if this be God's deſign; what have I done in quarrelling with him about it? We ſee Mariners in a Storm, can throw over-board rich Bales of Silk, and precious things, to preſerve the Veſſel and their Lives with it; and every one ſaith they act prudently; we know 'tis uſual for Soldiers in a City Beſieg'd, to batter down or burn the faireſt Buildings without the Walls, in which the Enemy may ſhelter in the Siege; and no Man doubts but 'tis wiſely done: Such as have Gangreened Legs or Arms can willingly ſtretch them out to be cut off, and not only thank, but pay the Chyrurgion for his pains; And muſt God only be repined at, for caſting over what would ſink you in a ſtorm? For pulling down that which would advantage your Enemy in the Siege of Temptation? For cutting off what would endanger your everlaſting Life? O inconſiderate, ingrateful Man! Are not theſe things for which thou grieveſt, the very things that have ruin'd thouſands of Souls? Well, what Chriſt doth in this, thou knoweſt not now, but hereafter thou maiſt.

6. *Help.* It would much ſtay the Heart under adverſity, to conſider, *That God by ſuch humbling Providences, may be accompliſhing that for which you have long prayed and waited:* And ſhould you be troubled at that? Say Chriſtian, haſt thou not many Prayers depending before God upon ſuch accounts as theſe; that he would keep thee from Sin, diſcover to thee the emptineſs and inſufficiency of the Creature; that he would kill and mortifie thy Luſts, that thy Heart may never find reſt in any enjoyment but Chriſt? Why now, by ſuch humbling and improveriſhing ſtrokes, God may be fulfilling thy deſire: Wouldſt thou be kept from Sin? Lo, *he hath hedged up thy way with thorns:* Wouldſt thou ſee the Creatures Vanity? Thy affliction is a fair Glaſs to diſcover it: for the Vanity of the Creature is never ſo effectually and ſenſibly diſcovered, as in our own experience of it: Wouldſt thou have thy Corruptions mortified? This is the way: Now God takes away the Food and Fewel that maintain'd them; for as proſperity begat and fed them, ſo adverſity, when ſanctified, is a means to kill them. Wouldſt thou have thy Heart to reſt no where but in the Boſom of God? What better way canſt thou imagine Providence ſhould take to accompliſh thy deſire, than by pulling from under thy Head, that ſoft Pillow of Creature-delights on which thou reſtedſt before? And yet you fret at this, peeviſh Child, how doſt thou exerciſe thy Father patience! If he delay to anſwer thy Prayers, thou art ready to ſay he regards thee not; if he do that which really anſwers the ſcope and main end of them, but not in the way thou expectedſt, thou quarrelleſt with him for that; as if inſtead of anſwering, he were croſſing all thy hopes and aims; is this ingenuous? Is it not enough that God is ſo gracious to do what thou deſireſt, but thou muſt be ſo impudent to expect he ſhould do it in the way which thou preſcribeſt?

7. *Help.* Again, It may ſtay thy Heart, if thou conſider; *That in theſe troubles, God is about that work, which if thou didſt ſee the deſign of, thy Soul would rejoyce.* We poor Creatures are bemiſted with much ignorance, and are not able to diſcern how particular Providences work towards God's end; and therefore, like *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, are often murmuring, becauſe Providence leads us about in a howling Deſart, where we are expoſed to ſtraits; though yet, then he led them, and is now leading us, *by the right way, to a City of Habitations*: If you could but ſee how God in his ſecret Counſel hath exactly laid the whole plot and deſign of thy Salvation; even to the ſmalleſt means and circumſtances; this way, and by theſe means, ſuch a one ſhall be ſaved, and by no other; ſuch a number of afflictions I appoint for this Man, at this time, and in this order; they ſhall befall him thus, and thus they ſhall work for him; could you I ſay, but diſcern the admirable harmony of Divine Diſpenſations, their mutual relations to each other; together with the general reſpect and influence they all have into the laſt end; of all the conditions in the World, you would chuſe that you are now in, had you liberty to make your own choice. Providence is like a curious piece of Arras, made up of a thouſand ſhreds; which ſingle we know not what to make of, but put together and ſtitch'd up orderly, they repreſent a beautiful Hiſtory to the Eye: As God works all things according to the Counſel of his own Will, ſo that Counſel of God hath ordained this, as the beſt way to bring about thy Salvation: Such a one hath a proud Heart, ſo many humbling Providences I appoint for him, ſuch a one an earthly Heart; ſo many impoveriſhing Providences for him: Did you but ſee this, I need ſay no more to ſupport the moſt dejected Heart.

8. *Help.* Farther, It would much conduce to the ſettlement of your Hearts, to conſider, *That by fretting and diſcontent, you do your ſelves more injury than all the afflictions you lye under could do*; your own diſcontent is that which arms your troubles with a ſting, 'tis you that makes your burthen heavy, by ſtrugling under it: Could you but lye quiet under the Hand of God, your condition would be much eaſier and ſweeter than it is: *Impatiens ægrotus crudelem facit Medicum.* This makes God lay on more ſtrokes, as a Father will upon a ſtubborn Child that receives not Correction.

Beſides, it unfits the Soul to pray over its troubles, or take in the ſenſe of that good which God intends by them: Affliction is a Pill, which being rapt up in Patience, and quiet Submiſſion, may be eaſily ſwallowed; but Diſcontent chews the Pill, and ſo imbitters the Soul: God throws away ſome comfort which he ſaw would hurt you, and you will throw away your Peace after it; he ſhoots an Arrow which ſticks in yonr Cloaths, and was never intended to hurt, but only to fright you from Sin: And you will thruſt it onward to the piercing of your very Hearts, by deſpondency and diſcontent.

9. *Help.* Laſtly, if all this will not do, but thy Heart (like *Rachel*) ſtill refuſes to be comforted, or quieted, then conſider one thing more, which if ſeriouſly pondered, will doubtleſs do the work, and that is this, *Compare the condition thou art now in (and art ſo much diſſatisfied with) with that condition others are, and thy ſelf deſerveſt to be in:* Others are roaring in Flames, howling under the ſcourge of Vengeance, and amongſt them I deſerve to be. O my Soul! Is this Hell? Is my condition as bad as the Damned? O what would thouſands now in Hell give, to change conditions with me? It is a famous inſtance which Dr. *Taylor* gives us of the Duke of *Conde*, I have read (ſaith he) that when the Duke of *Conde* had entred voluntarily into the incommodities of a religious Poverty, he was one day eſpied and pitied by a Lord of *Italy*, who out of tenderneſs, wiſhed him to be more careful and nutritive of his Perſon: The good Duke anſwered, Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided of conveniencies, for I ſend an *Harbinger* before me, who makes ready my Lodgings, and takes care that I be Royally Entertained. The Lord asked him who was his *Harbinger*? He anſwered, The knowledge of my ſelf, and the conſideration of what I deſerve for my Sins, which is Eternal Torments; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my Lodging, how unprovided ſoever I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deſerve. *Why doth the living man complain?* And thus the Heart may be kept from deſponding or repining under Adverſity.

*Great Exemp.* p 310.

3. *Seaſon.* “ The third Seaſon calling for more
“ than ordinary diligence to keep the Heart is the
“ time of Sion's trouble: When the Church,
“ like the Ship in which Chriſt and his Diſciples
“ were, is oppreſſed and ready to periſh in the
“ waves of Perſecution, then good Souls are ready
“ to ſink, and be ſhipwrackt too upon the Bil-
“ lows of their own fear. I confeſs moſt Men
“ rather need the Spur, than the Reins in this
“ caſe, and yet ſome ſit down as over-weighed
“ with the Senſe of the Churches Troubles; the
“ loſs of the *Ark* coſt old *Eli* his Life, the ſad po-
“ ſture *Jeruſalem* lay in, made good *Nehemiah*'s
“ Countenance change in the midſt of all the plea-
“ ſures and accommodations of the Court, *Neh.*
“ 2. 2. Ah this goes cloſe to honeſt Hearts.

“ But though God allow, yea, command the
“ moſt awakened apprehenſions of theſe Calami-
“ ties, and in *ſuch a day calls to mourning, weeping,*
“ *and girding with ſackcloth,* Iſa. 22. 12. and ſe-
“ verely threatens the inſenſible, *Amos* 6. 1. yet
“ it will not pleaſe him to ſee you ſit like penſive
“ *Elijah* under the Juniper-tree, 1 *Kings* 19. 4.
“ *Ah Lord God! it is enough, take away my life*
“ *alſo:* No, Mourners in *Sion*, you may, and ought
“ to be; but ſelf-tormentors you muſt not be:
“ Complain to God you may, but to complain of
“ God (though but by an unſuitable Carriage and
“ the Language of your Actions) you muſt not.

3. *Caſe.* The third Caſe that comes next to be ſpoken to is this, *How publick and tender Hearts may be relieved and ſupported when they are even over-weighed with the burdenſome ſenſe of* Sion*'s troubles?* “ I grant, it is hard for him that pre-
“ ferreth *Sion* to his chief joy, to keep his Heart
“ that it ſink not below the due ſenſe of its trou-
“ bles; and yet this ought and may be done by
“ the uſe of ſuch Heart-eſtabliſhing Directions as
“ theſe.

1. Direct. *Settle this great truth in your hearts, That no trouble befalls* Sion, *but by the permiſſion of* Sion*'s God; and he permits nothing out of which he will not bring much good at laſt to his people.*

There is as truly a principle of quietneſs in the permitting, as in the commanding Will of God. See it in *David*, 2 Sam. 16. 10. *Let him alone, it may be God hath bidden him:* And in Chriſt, *Joh.* 19. 11. *Thou couldſt have no power againſt me, except it were given thee from above;* it ſhould much calm our Spirits, that it is the will of God to ſuffer it; and had he not ſuffered it, it could never have been as it is.

This very conſideration quieted *Job*, *Eli*, *David* and *Hezekiah*; that the Lord did it, was enough to them, And why ſhould it not be ſo to us? If the Lord will have Sion plowed as a Field, and her goodly Stones lye in the duſt; if it be his pleaſure that *Antichriſt* ſhall rage yet longer, and wear out the Saints of the moſt High; if it be his will, that a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of Hoſts ſhall be upon the Valley of Viſion, that the wicked ſhall devour the Man that is more righteous than he, What are we that we ſhould conteſt with God? Fit it is that we ſhould be reſigned up to that Will whence we proceeded; and he that made us ſhould diſpoſe of us as he pleaſeth: He may do what ſeemeth him good without our conſent: Doth poor Man ſtand upon equal ground, that he ſhould capitulate with his Creator, or that God ſhould render him an account of any of his matters? It's every way as reaſonable we be content however God diſpoſe of us, as that we be obedient to whatever he commands us.

But then, if we purſue this Argument further, by conſidering that God's permiſſions do all meet at laſt in the real good of his people, this will much more quiet our Spirits. Do the Enemies carry away the good Figs, even the beſt among the people into Captivity? This looks like a ſad Providence: But yet, God ſends them thither for their good, *Jer.* 24. 5. Doth God take the *Aſſyrian* as a ſtaff in his Hand to beat his people with? Thoſe blows are ſmart, and make them cry; but the end of his ſo doing is, *That he may accompliſh his whole work upon Mount* Sion, *Iſa.* 10. 12. If God can bring much good out of the worſt and greateſt evil of Sin, much more out of temporal afflictions; and it is as evident that he will, as that he can do ſo. For it is inconſiſtent with the wiſdom of a common Agent, to permit any thing (which he might prevent if he pleaſed) to croſs his great deſign and end; and can it be imagined that the moſt wiſe God ſhould do ſo?

Well then, as *Luther* told *Melancthon*, *Deſinat Philippus eſſe rector mundi:* So ſay I to you, let Infinite Wiſdom, Power and Love alone, for by theſe all Creatures are ſwayed, and actions guided, in reference to the Church. It's none of our work to rule the World, but to ſubmit to him that doth, *non cæco impetu volvuntur rotæ*, the motions of Providence are all judicious, the Wheels are full of Eyes: It is enough that the Affairs of *Sion* are in a good Hand.

2. *Direct.* Ponder this Heart-ſupporting Truth in reference to *Sion*'s trouble. *That how man*

*trou*

*troubles ſoever are upon her, yet her King is in her.*

What? Hath the Lord forſaken his Churches? Hath he ſold them into the Enemies hand? Doth he not regard what evil befalls them? That our Hearts ſink at this rate? Is it not too ſhameful an undervaluing of the great God? And too much magnifying of poor impotent Men, to fear and tremble at Creatures, whilſt God is in the midſt of us? The Churches Enemies are many and mighty, let that be granted; yet that Argument with which *Caleb* and *Joſhuah* ſtrove to raiſe their own Hearts, is of as much force now as it was then: *The Lord is with us, fear them not*, Numb. 14. 9. The *Hiſtorian* tell us, that when *Antigonus* over-heard his Souldiers reckoning how many their Enemies were, and ſo diſcouraging one another; he ſuddenly ſteps in among them with this Queſtion, *And how many* (ſaid he) *do you reckon me for*? Diſcouraged Souls, How many do you reckon the Lord for? Is he not an overmatch for all his Enemies? Is not one Almighty more than many Mighties? Doth his preſence ſtand for nothing with us? *If God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom. 8. 31. What think you was the reaſon of that great Exploration *Gideon* made in *Judges* 6. He queſtions, *ver.* 12, 13. he deſires a ſign, *v.* 17. and after that another, *v.* 36. and what was the end of all this? But that he might but write this Motto upon his Enſign, *The ſword of the Lord, and of* Gideon. So then, if you can be well aſſured, the Lord is with his people, you will get thereby above all your diſcouragements: And that he is ſo, you need not (with him) deſire a ſign from Heaven, lo, you have a ſign before you, even their marvellous preſervation amidſt all their Enemies. If God be not with his people, how is it they are not ſwallowed up quick? Do their Enemies want malice, power, or opportunity? No, but there is an inviſible Hand upon them. Well then, as it is, *Exod.* 33. 14. Let his Preſence give us reſt; and though the Mountains be hurled into the Sea, though Heaven and Earth mingle together, fear not, God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved.

3. Direct. *Ponder the great advantages attending the people of God in an afflicted condition.* If a low and an afflicted ſtate in the World be really beſt for the Church, then your dejections are not only irrational but ungrateful; indeed, if ye eſtimate the happineſs of the Church by its worldly eaſe, ſplendor and proſperity, then ſuch times will ſeem bad for it; but, if you reckon its glory to conſiſt in its humility, faith, patience and heavenly-mindedneſs, no condition in the World abounds with advantages for theſe, as an afflicted condition doth. It was not Perſecutions and Priſons, but worldlineſs and wantonneſs, that was the Poyſon of the Church; neither was it the earthly Glory of its Profeſſors, but the Blood of its Martyrs, that was the Seed of the Church. The Power of Godlineſs did never thrive better than in Affliction, and never ran lower than in times of greateſt Proſperity; when *we are left a poor and an afflicted people, then we learn to truſt in the Name of the Lord*, Zeph. 3. 12. What ſay ye Sirs? Is it indeed for the Saints advantage to be weaned from the loves and delights of enſnaring worldly Vanities? To be quickned and prickt forward with more haſte to Heaven, to have clearer diſcoveries of their own Hearts, to be taught to Pray more fervently, frequently, ſpiritually; to look and long for the Reſt to come, more ardently? If this he for their advantage, experience teacheth us, that no condition is ordinarily bleſt with ſuch Fruits as theſe, like an afflicted Condition.

And is it well done then to repine and droop, becauſe your Father conſults more the advantage of your Souls, than the pleaſing of your Humours? Becauſe he will bring you a nearer way to Heaven than you are willing to go? Is this a due requital of his Love, who is pleaſed ſo much to concern himſelf in your welfare? Which is more then he will do for Thouſands in the World, upon whom he will not lay a Rod, or ſpend an Affliction for their good, *Hoſ.* 4. 17. *Matth.* 15. 14. But alas! we judge by ſenſe, and reckon things good or evil, according to what we for the preſent can taſte and feel in them.

4. Direct. *Take heed that you overlook not the many precious Mercies which the People of God enjoy amidſt all their trouble.*

'Tis pity that our Tears upon the account of our Troubles, ſhould ſo blear and blind our Eyes, that we ſhould not ſee our Mercies and Grounds of Comfort. I will not inſiſt upon the Mercy of having your lives given you for a prey, nor yet upon the many outward Comforts, temporal Conveniences, and Accommodations, which you enjoy even above what Chriſt and his precious Servants, of whom the World was not worthy, ever had.

But what ſay you to pardon of Sin? Intereſt in Chriſt? The Covenant of Promiſe? And an Eternity of Happineſs in the preſence of God after a few days are over? O that ever a people Intitled to ſuch Mercies as theſe, ſhould droop under any temporal Affliction, or be ſo much concerned for the Frowns of Men, and loſs of Trifles! You have not the ſmiles of great Men, but you have the favour of the great God: You are it may be caſt back in your Eſtates, but thereby farthered in Spirituals. You cannot live ſo bravely, plentifully, and eaſily as before, but ſtill you may live as holy and heavenly as ever. Will you then grieve ſo much for theſe Circumſtantials, as to forget your Subſtantials? Shall light troubles make you forget weighty mercies? Remember the Churches true Riches are laid out of the reach of all its Enemies: They may make you poor, but not miſerable. What though God do not diſtinguiſh in his outward Diſpenſations betwixt his own and others? Yea, what though his Judgments ſingle out the beſt, and ſpare the worſt? What though an *Abel* be killed in Love, and a *Cain* ſurvive in Hatred, a bloody *Dionyſius* die in his Bed, and a good *Joſiah* fall in Battel? What though the Belly of the wicked be filled with hid Treaſures, and the Teeth of the Saints broken with Gravel-ſtones, yet ſtill here is much matter of praiſe: For electing Love hath diſtinguiſhed, though common Providence did not; and whilſt proſperity and impunity ſlay the wicked, even ſlaying aud adverſity ſhall benefit and ſave the righteous.

5. Direct. *Believe, that how low ſoever the Church be plunged under the waters of adverſity, it ſhall aſſuredly riſe again.* Fear not, for as ſure as Chriſt aroſe the third day, notwithſtanding the Seal and Watch that was upon him; ſo ſure the Church ſhall ariſe out of all her Troubles, and lift up its victorious Head over all its Enemies: There's no fear of ruining that People that thrive by

their Loſſes, and multiply by being diminiſhed. O be not too quick to bury the Church before ſhe be dead! Stay till Chriſt hath tryed his skill before you give it up for loſt; the Buſh may be all in a flame, but ſhall never be conſumed, and that becauſe of the good will of him that dwelleth in the Buſh.

6 Direct. *Record the famous inſtances of God*'s *care and tenderneſs over his people in former ſtraits.* Chriſt hath not ſuffered it to be be devoured yet; for above theſe 1700 years the Chriſtian Church hath lived in affliction, and yet it is not conſumed: Many a Wave of Perſecution hath gone over it, and yet it is not drowned; many deſigns to ruin it, and hitherto none hath proſpered: This is not the firſt time that *Haman*'s and *Achitophel*'s have plotted its ruin; that an *Herod* hath ſtretched out his hand to vex it. Still it hath been preſerved from, ſupported under, or delivered out of all its troubles: And is it not as dear to God as ever? Is he not as able to ſave it now as formerly? Though we know not whence deliverancc ſhould ariſe, *Yet the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations*, 2 Peter 2. 9.

7. *Direct.* If you can fetch no comfort from any of the former Arguments, then in the laſt Place, *Try whether you cannot draw ſome comfort out of your very troubles.* Surely this trouble of yours is a good Argument of your integrity; union is the ground of ſympathy, if you had not ſome rich adventnre in that Ship, you would not tremble as you do when it is in danger: Beſides, this frame of Spirit may afford you this Argument, that if you be ſo ſenſible of the Churches Troubles, Jeſus Chriſt is much more ſenſible of, and ſolicitous about it than you can be; and he will caſt an Eye of favour upon them that mourn for it, *Iſa.* 57. 18.

4. *Seaſon.* “ The fourth ſpecial Seaſon of expreſſing
“ our uttmoſt diligence in keeping our
“ Hearts, is the time of danger and publick diſtraction:
“ In ſuch times the beſt Hearts are but too
“ apt to be ſurpriſed by ſlaviſh fear, it is not eaſie
“ to ſecure the Heart againſt Diſtraction in times
“ of common Deſtruction: If *Syria* be Confederate
“ with *Ephraim*, how do the Hearts of
“ the Houſe of *David* ſhake; even as the Trees of
“ the Wood which are ſhaken with the Wind,
“ *Iſa.* 7. 2. When there are ominous ſigns in the
“ Heavens, on the Earth diſtreſs of Nations, with
“ perplexity; the Sea and Waves roaring, then
“ the Hearts of Men fail for fear, and for looking
“ after thoſe things which are coming on the
“ Earth, *Luke* 21. 25, 26. Even a *Paul* himſelf
“ may *ſometimes complain of fightings within, when*
“ *there are fears without*, 2 Cor. 7. 5.

But my Brethren, theſe things ought not to be ſo; Saiuts ſhould be of a more raiſed Spirit: So was *David* when his Heart was kept in a good frame, *Pſal.* 27. 1. *The Lord is my light and my ſalvation; whom ſhall I fear? The Lord is the ſtrength of my life, of whom ſhall I be afraid?* Let none but the Servants of ſin be the Slaves of fear, let them that have delighted in evil, fear evil, *impius tantum metuit, quantum nocuit.* O let not that which God hath threatned as a Judgment upon the Wicked, ever ſeize upon the Breaſts of the Righteous; *I will ſend* (ſaith God ( *faintneſs into their hearts in the land of their enemies, and the ſound of a ſhaking leaf ſhall chaſe them*, Lev. 26. 36. O what poor ſpirited Men are theſe, to fly at a ſhaking leaf! which makes a pleaſant, and not a terrible noiſe, and is in it ſelf a kind of natural Muſick; but to a guilty Conſcience, the whiſtling leaves are Drums and Trumpets: *But God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear, but of love, and of a ſound mind*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. A ſound Mind as it ſtands there in oppoſition to the Spirit of fear, is an unwounded Conſcience, not infirm'd by guilt: And this ſhould make a man as bold as a Lion. I know it cannot be ſaid of a Saint, what God ſpake of *Leviathan*, that he is made without fear: There is a natural fear in every Man, and it's as impoſſible to be wholly put off, as the Body it ſelf is: *'Tis a perturbation of the mind, riſing from the apprehenſion of approaching danger*; and as long as dangers can approach us, we ſhall find ſome perturbations within us. 'Tis not my purpoſe to commend to you a Stoical Apathy, nor yet to take you off from ſuch a degree of cautional preventive fear as may fit you for trouble, and be ſerviceable to your Souls. There is a provident fear that opens our Eyes to foreſee danger and quickens to a prudent and lawful uſe of means to prevent it: Such was *Jacob*'s fear, *Gen.* 32. 7, 9, 10, *&c.* But it is the fear of diffirence, I perſwade you to keep your Hearts from that Tyrannical Paſſion which invades the Heart in times of danger, diſtracts, weakens, and unfit the Heart for Duty drives Men upon unlawful means, and brings a ſnare with it. Well then, the fourth Caſe will be this.

4. Caſe. *How a Chriſtian may keep his Heart from diſtracting and tormenting fears in times of great and threatning Dangers.*

Now there are fourteen excellent Rules or helps for the keeping of the Heart from ſinful fear when eminent Dangers threaten us: And the firſt is this.

1. Rule. *Look upon all the Creatures as in the Hand of God, who manages them in all their motions; limiting, reſtraining, and determining them all at his pleſure.*

Get this great Truth well ſetled by Faith in your hearts, it will marvellouſly guard them againſt ſlaviſh fears; the firſt of *Ezkiel* contains an admirable Scheme or Draught of Providence; there you may ſee the Living Creatures who move the Wheels, *viz.* the great Affairs and Turnings of things here below, coming unto Chriſt, who ſits upon the Throne to receive new Orders and Inſtructions from him, *v.* 24, 25, 26. And in *Rev.* 6. you read of white, black, and red Horſes, which are nothing elſe but the Inſtruments which God imploys in executing his Judgments in the World, as Wars, Peſtilence and Death: But when theſe Horſes are prancing and trampling up and down the world? here is that may quiet our Hearts, that God hath the Reins in his Hand. Wicked Men are ſometimes like mad Horſes, they would ſtamp the People of God under their Feet, but that the Bridle of Providence is in their Lips, *Joh.* 19. 11, 12. A Lion at liberty is terrible to meet; But who is afraid of the Lion in the Kepers hand?

2. Rule. *Remember that this God in whoſe hand all the Creatures are, is your Father, and is much more tender over you, than you are or can be over your ſelves; He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye*, *Zech.* 2. 8. Let me ask the moſt timerous Woman, whether there be not a vaſt difference between the ſight of a drawn Sword in the Hand of a bloody Ruffian, and the ſame Sword in the Hand of her own tender Husband? As

great a difference there is in looking upon Creatures by an Eye of Senſe, and looking on them as in the Hand of your God by an Eye of Faith; that is a ſweet Scripture to this purpoſe, *Iſa.* 54.5. *Thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name*; he is Lord of all the Hoſts of Creatures in the World: Who would be afraid to paſs through an Army, though all the Soldiers ſhould turn their Swords and Guns towards him, if the General of that Army were his Friend or Father? I have met with an excellent Story of a Religious young Man, who being at Sea with many other Paſſengers in a great Storm, and they being half dead with fear, he only was obſerved to be very chearful, as if he had been but little concerned in that danger; one of them demanding a reaſon of his chearfulneſs, *Oh*, ſaid he, *'tis becauſe the Pilot of the Ship is my Father.* Conſider Chriſt, firſt as the King and Supream Lord over the Providential Kingdom, and then as your Head, Husband and Friend, and thou wilt quickly ſay, *Return unto thy reſt, O my Soul.* This truth will make you ceaſe trembling, and fall a ſighing in the midſt of dangers, *Pſal.* 47. 7. *The Lord is King of all the earth, ſing ye praiſe with underſtanding*, or as the Hebrew word is, *Every one that hath underſtanding*, *viz.* of this Heart-reviving and eſtabliſhing Doctrine of the Dominion of our Father over all the Creatures.

3 Rule. *Urge upon your Hearts the expreſs prohibitions of Chriſt in this Caſe; and let your Hearts ſtand in awe of the violations of them.*

He hath charged you not to fear, *Luke* 21. 9. *When ye ſhall hear of wars and commotions, ſee that ye be not terrified.* And Phil. 1. 28. *In nothing be terrified by your Adverſaries*: Yea, in *Mat.* 10. 26, 28, 31. and within the compaſs of ſix Verſes, our Saviour commands us thrice, *not to fear Man.* Doth every big word of proud Duſt and Aſhes make thee afraid? Doth the voice of a Man make thee tremble? And ſhall not the voice of God? If thou art of ſuch a fearful and timerous Spirit, How is it that thou feareſt not to diſobey the flat commands of Jeſus Chriſt? Methinks the command of Chriſt ſhould have as much power to calm, as the voice of a poor Worm to terrifie thy Heart, *Iſa.* 51. 12, 13. *I, even I am he that comforteth you; Who art thou, that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a Man that ſhall die, and of the Son of Man, that ſhall be made as the Graſs, and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker?* We cannot fear Creatures ſinfully, till we have forgotten God; did we remember what he is, and what he hath ſaid, we ſhould not be of ſuch feeble Spirits: Bring thy Heart then to this *Dilemma* in times of danger; if I let into my Heart the ſlaviſh fear of Man, I muſt let out the reverential awe and fear of God; And dare I caſt off the fear of the Almighty, for the frowns of a Man? Shall I lift up proud Duſt above the great God? Shall I run upon a certain ſin, to ſhun a probable danger? Oh keep thy Heart by this Conſideration.

4 Rule. *Remember how much needleſs trouble your vain fears have brought upon you formerly, and how you have diſquieted your ſelves to no purpoſe.*

Iſa. 51. 13. *And haſt feared continually becauſe of the oppreſſor, as if he were ready to devour; and where is the fury of the oppreſſor?* He ſeem'd ready to devour, but yet you are not devoured; I have not brought upon you the thing that ye feared; you have waſted your Spirits, diſordered your Souls, and Weakened your hands, and all this to no purpoſe. You might have all this while enjoyed your Peace, and poſſeſſed your Souls in patience. And here I cannot but obſerve a very deep policy of Satan managing a deſign againſt the Soul by theſe vain fears: I call them vain, in regard of the fruſtration of them by Providence; but certainly they are not in vain, as to the end Satan aims at in raiſing them, for herein he acts as Soldiers uſe to do in the Siege of a Garriſon, who on purpoſe to wear out the Baſieged by conſtant watchings, and thereby unfit them to make reſiſtance when they ſtorm it in earneſt, do every night give them falſe Allarms, which though they come to nothing, yet doth notably ſerve this further deſign of the Enemy. O when will you beware of Satan's Devices?

5 Rule. Conſider Solemnly, *That though the things you fear ſhould really fall out, yet there is more evil in your own fear, than in the thing feared.*

And that not only as the leaſt evil of ſin, is worſe than the greateſt evil of ſuffering; but as this ſinful fear hath really more torment and trouble in it, than is in that condition you are ſo much afraid of, fear is both a multiplying and a tormenting Paſſion; it repreſents troubles much greater then they are, and ſo tortures and wracks the Soul much worſe then when the ſuffering it ſelf comes. So it was with *Iſrael* at the Red Sea, they cried out, and were ſore afraid till they put foot into the Water, and then a paſſage was opened through thoſe Waters which they thought would have drowned them. Thus it is with us, we looking through the Glaſs of carnal fear, upon the waters of Trouble, the ſwellings of *Jordan*, cry out, Oh they are unfordable! We muſt needs periſh in them: But when we come into the midſt of thoſe Floods indeed, we find the promiſe made good, *God will make a way to eſcape*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. Thus it was with bleſſed *Bilney*, when he would make a trial by putting his Finger to the Candle, and not able to endure that, he cried out, What? cannot I bear the burning of a Finger? How then ſhall I be able to bear the burning of my whole Body to morrow? And yet when that morrow came, he could go chearfully into the Flames, with that Scripture in his Mouth, *Iſa.* 43. 1, 2, 3. *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine; when thou paſſeſt though the waters, I will be with thee; when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt.*

6 Rule. *Conſult the many precious Promiſes which are written for your ſupport and comfort in all dangers.*

Theſe are your Refuges to which you may fly and be ſafe: *When the arrows of danger fly by night and deſtruction waſteth at noon-day.* There are particular Promiſes ſuited to particular Caſes and Exigencies, and there are general Promiſes, reaching all Caſes and Conditions; ſuch are theſe, Rom. 8. 28. *All things ſhall work together for Good*, &c. And *Eccl.* 8. 12. *Though a ſinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet it ſhall be well with them that fear the Lord*, &c. *Could you but believe the Promiſes, your hearts ſhould be eſtabliſhed*, 2 Chron. 20. 29. Could you but plead them with God, as *Jacob* did, *Gen.* 32. 22. *Thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good*, &c. they would relieve you in every diſtreſs.

Object. *But that Promiſe was made perſonally, and by name to him, ſo are not theſe to me.*

*Anſw.* If *Jacob*'s God be your God, you have as good an intereſt in them as he had. The Church a Thouſand Years after that Tranſaction betwixt God and *Jacob*, applied that which God ſpake to him, as if it had been ſpoken to themſelves, *Hoſ.* 12.1. *He found him in* Bethel,*and there he ſpake with us.*

7 Rule. *Quiet your trembling Hearts by recording and conſulting your paſt experiences of the care and faithfulneſs of God in former Diſtreſſes.*

Theſe Experiences are Food for your Faith in a Wilderneſs Condition, *Pſalm*. 74. 14. By this *David* kept his Heart in time of Danger, 1 *Sam.* 17. 37. and *Paul* his, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. It was ſweetly anſwered by *Silentiarius*, when one told him, that his Enemies way-laid him to take away his Life, *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* If God take no care of me, how have I eſcaped hitherto? You may plead with God old experiences to procure new ones, for it is in pleading with God for new Deliverances, as it is in pleading for new Pardons. Now mark how *Moſes* pleads on that account with God, *Numb.* 14. 19. *Pardon, I beſeech thee, the iniquity of this people, as thou haſt forgiven them from* Egypt *until now.* He doth noth ſay as Men do, Lord this is the firſt fault, thou haſt not been troubled before to ſign their Pardon: But Lord, becauſe thou haſt pardoned them ſo often; I beſeech thee pardon them once again. So in new ſtraits, Lord, thou haſt often heard, helpt and ſaved, in former fears, therefore now help again, for with thee there is plenteous Redemption, and thine Arm is not ſhortned.

8 Rule. *Be well ſatisfied that you are in the way of your Duty, and that will beget holy Courage in times of danger.*

*Who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?* 1 Pet. 3. 13. Or, if any dare attempt it, *you may boldly commit your ſelves to God in well-doing*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. 'Twas this conſideration that raiſed *Luther*'s Spirit above all fear: In the cauſe of God (ſaid he) I ever am, and ever ſhall be ſtout; herein I aſſume this Title, *Cedo nulli*, a good cauſe will bear up a Man's Spirit bravely. Hear the ſaying of a Heathen, to the ſhame of cowardly Chriſtians: ‘When the Emperor *Veſpaſian* had commanded *Fluidius Priſcus* not to come to the Senate, or if he did, to ſpeak nothing but what he would have him; *the Senator return'd this noble* Anſwer, “That as he was a Senator, it was fit he ſhould be at the Senate; and if being there he were required to give his advice, he would ſpeak freely that which his Conſcience commanded him; the Emperour threatning, that then he ſhould die; *he anſwered*, Did I ever tell you that I was immortal? Do you what you will, and I will do what I ought; it is in your power to put me to death unjuſtly, and in me to die conſtantly.

*Char.* of Wiſdom, p. 358.

Righteouſneſs is a Breſt-plate, the Cauſe of God will pay all your Expences, let them tremble whom danger finds out of the way of Duty.

9 Rule. *Get your Conſciences ſprinkled with the Blood of Chriſt from all guilt, and that will ſet your Hearts above all fear.*

'Tis guilt upon the Conſcience that ſoftens and cowardizes our Spirits: *The Righteous is bold as a Lion*, Prov. 28. 1. 'Twas guilt in *Cain*'s Conſcience that made him cry, *Every one that meets me will ſlay me*, Gen 4. 14. A guilty Conſcience is more terrified with conceited dangers, than a pure Conſcience is with real ones. A guilty Sinner carries a Witneſs againſt himſelf in his own Boſom. 'Twas guilty *Herod* cried out, *John Baptiſt is riſen from the dead.* Such a Conſcience is the Devil's Anvil, on which he fabricates all thoſe Swords and Spears, with which the guilty Sinner pierces and wounds himſelf. Guilt is to Danger, what Fire is to Gun-powder; a Men need not fear to walk among many Barrels of Powder, if he have no Fire about him.

10 Rule. *Exerciſe holy truſt, in times of great diſtreſs.*

Make it your Buſineſs to truſt God with your Lives and Comforts, and then your Hearts will be at reſt about them. So did *David*, Pſal. 57. 3. *At what time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee*; q. d. Lord, if at any time a Storm riſe, I will make bold to ſhelter from it under the Covert of thy Wings. Go to God by acts of Faith and Truſt, and never doubt but he will ſecure you, *Iſa.* 62. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſteth in thee*; God takes it well when thou comeſt to him thus; Father, my Life, my Liberty, or Eſtate, are hunted after, and I cannot ſecure them; O let me leave them in thy Hand: *The poor leaveth himſelf with thee*; and doth his God fail him? No, *Thou art the helper of the fatherleſs*, Pſal. 10. 14. that is, thou art the helper of the deſtitute one, that hath none to go to but God. And that is a ſweet Scripture, *Pſal.* 112. 7. *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tydings, his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord*; he doth not ſay, his Ear ſhall be priviledged from the report of evil tydings, he may hear as ſad tydings as other Men; but his Heart ſhall be priviledged from the terrour of thoſe tydings, *his heart is fixed.*

11 Rule. *Conſult the honour of Religion more, and your perſonal ſafety leſs.*

Is it for the honour of Religion, (think you) that Chriſtians ſhould be as timerous as Hares, to ſtart at every ſound? Will not this tempt the World to think, that whatever you talk, yet your Principles are no better than other Mens? O what michief may the diſcoveries of your fears before them do? 'Twas a Noble ſaying of *Nehemiah*, Chap. 6. 11. *Should ſuch a man as I flee? And who being as I am would flee?* Were it not better you ſhould die, than that the World ſhould be prejudiced againſt Chriſt by your example? For alas! how apt is the World (who judge more by what they ſee in your Practices, than by what they underſtand of your Principles) to conclude from your timerouſneſs, that how much ſoever you commend Faith, and talk of Aſſurance, yet you dare truſt to theſe things no more than they, when it comes to the trial. O let not your fears lay ſuch a ſtumbling-block before the blind World.

12 Rule. *He that will ſecure his Heart from fear, muſt firſt ſecure the Eternal Intereſt of his Soul in the hands of Jeſus Chriſt.*

When this is done, then you may ſay, *Now World do thy worſt.* You will not be very ſolicitous about a vile Body, when you are once aſſured it ſhall be well to all Eternity with your precious Souls. *Fear not them* (ſaith Chriſt) *that can kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do.* The aſſured Chriſtian may ſmile with contempt upon all his Enemies, and ſay, Is this the the worſt that you can do? What ſay you Chriſtians? Are you aſſured that your Souls are ſafe; that within a few moments of your diſſolution, they ſhall be received by Chriſt into Everlaſting Habitations? Well, if you be ſure of that, never trouble you ſelves about the inſtruments and means of your diſſolution.

Object. *O, but a violent Death is terrible to Nature?*

*Anſw.* But what matter is it, when thy Soul is in Heaven; whether it were let out at thy Mouth, or at thy Throat? Whether thy familiar Friends, or barbarous Enemies ſtand about thy dead Body, and cloſe thine Eyes? Alas, it it not worth the making ſo much ado about, *Nihil corpus ſentit in nervo cum anima ſit in cœlo,* thy Soul ſhall not be ſenſible in Heaven how they Body is uſed on Earth; no, it ſhall be ſwallowed up in Life.

13 Rule. *Learn to quench all ſlaviſh Creature fears, in the reverential fear of God.*

This is a Cure by diverſion: 'Tis a rare piece of Chriſtian Wiſdom to turn thoſe Paſſions of the Soul which moſt predominate, into Spiritual Channels; to turn natural Anger into ſpiritual Zeal, natural Mirth into holy Chearfulneſs, and natural Fear into an holy Dread and Awe of God. This method of Cure Chriſt preſcribes in that forementioned place, *Mat.* 10. like to which is that in *Iſa.* 1. 12, 13. *Fear not their fear*; but how ſhall we help it? Why, *ſanctifie the Lord of Hoſts himſelf, and let him be your fear and your dread.* Natural fear may be allayed for the preſent by natural reaſon, or the removal of the occaſion, but then 'tis but like a Candle blown out with a puff of breath, which is eaſily blown in again; but if the fear of God extinguiſh it, then 'tis like a Candle quencht in Water, which cannot eaſily be rekindled.

14 Rule. Laſtly, *Pour out thoſe fears to God in Prayer, which the Devil and your own unbelief, pour in upon you in times of danger.*

Prayer is the beſt outlet to fear; where is the Chriſtian that cannot ſet his *Probatum eſt* to this direction? I will give you the greateſt Example in the World to encourage you in the uſe of it, even the Example of Jeſus Chriſt, *Mark* 14. 22. When the hour of his Danger and Death drew nigh, he gets into the Garden, ſeparates from the Diſciples, and there wreſtles mightily with God in Prayer, even unto an Agony: In reference to which the Apoſtle ſaith, *Heb.* 5. 7. *Who in the days of his fleſh, when he had offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong cries and tears, to him that was able to ſave him from death, and was heard in that he feared.* He was heard as to ſtrength and ſupport to carry him through it, though not as to deliverance, or exemption from it.

Now, O that theſe things might abide with you, and be reduced to practice in theſe evil days, that many trembling Souls may be eſtabliſhed by them.

5 *Seaſon.* “ The Fifth Seaſon to exert this “ diligence in keeping the Heart, is the time of “ ſtraits and outward pinching wants; although “ at ſuch times we ſhould complain to God, and “ not of God, (the Throne of Grace being erected for a time of need, *Heb.* 4. 16.) yet when “ the Waters of Relief run low, and Wants begin “ to pinch hard, how prone are the beſt hearts to “ diſtruſt the Fountain! when the Meal in the “ Barrel, and the Oyl in the Cruiſe are almoſt “ ſpent, our Faith and Patience are almoſt ſpent “ too. Now 'tis difficult to keep down the proud “ and unbelieving Heart in an holy quietude and “ ſweet ſubmiſſion at the Foot of God. 'Tis an eaſie thing to talk of truſting God for daily Bread “ while we have a full Barn or Purſe; but to ſay “ as the Prophet, *Hab.* 3. 17. *Though the fig-tree* “ *ſhould not bloſſom, neither fruit be in the vine,* &c. “ *yet will I rejoyce in the Lord*; Sure this is not eaſie. The fifth Caſe therefore ſhall be this.

5 Caſe. *How a Chriſtian may keep his Heart from diſtruſting God, or repining againſt him, when outward wants are either felt or feared.*

This caſe deſerves to be ſeriouſly pondred, and eſpecially to be ſtudied now, ſince it ſeems to be the deſign of Providence to empty the People of God of their Creature-fulneſs, and acquaint them with thoſe ſtraits which hitherto they have been altogether ſtrangers to.

Now, to ſecure the Heart from the fore-mentioned dangers attending this condition, theſe following Conſiderations, through the bleſſing of the Spirit may prove effectual. And the firſt is this,

1 Conſid. *That if God reduce you to ſtraits and neceſſities, yet he deals no otherwiſe therein with you, than he hath done with ſome of the choiceſt and holieſt Men that ever lived.*

Your condition is not ſingular, though; you have hitherto been ſtrangers to Wants, other Saints have daily converſed, and been familiarly acquainted with them. Hear what bleſſed *Paul* ſpeaks, not of himſelf only, but in the names of other Saints reduc'd to like exigencies, 1 *Cor.* 4. 11. *Even to this preſent hour we both hunger and thirſt, and are naked, and buffetted, and have no certain dwelling place.* To ſee ſuch a Man as *Paul* going up and down the World with a naked Back, and empty Belly, and not a Houſe to put his Head in, one that was ſo far above thee in Grace and Holineſs, one that did more Service for God in a day, then perhaps thou haſt done him all thy days, and yet thou repine as if hardly dealt with! Have you forgot what neceſſities and ſtraits, even a *David* hath ſuffered? How great were his ſtraits and neceſſities? 1 *Sam.* 25. 8. *Give I pray thee* (ſaith he to *Nabal*) *whatſoever cometh to thy hand, to thy ſervants and to thy Son* David. Renowned *Muſculus* was forced to dig in the Town-ditch for a Maintenance. Famous *Ainſworth* (as I have been credibly informed) was forced to ſell the Bed he lay on to buy Bread. But what ſpeak I of theſe? Behold a greater than any of them, even the Son of God, *who is the Heir of all things, and by whom the Worlds were made.* Yet ſometimes would have been glad of anything, having nothing to eat, *Mark* 11. 12. *And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry; and ſeeing a Fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came if happily he might find* [ *any thing* ] *thereon.*

Well then, Hereby God hath ſet no mark of Hatred upon you; neither can you infer the want of *Love* from the want of *Bread.* When thy repining Heart puts the Queſtion, Was there ever any Sorrow like unto mine? Ask theſe Worthies, and they will tell thee, though they did not complain and fret as thou doſt, yet they were driven to as great ſtraits as thou art.

2 Conſid. *If God leave you not in this neceſſitous condition without a promiſe, you have no reaſon to repine or deſpond under it.*

That is a ſad condition indeed, to which no Promiſe belongs. I remember Mr. *Calvin* upon thoſe words, *Iſa.* 9. 1. *Nevertheleſs the dimneſs ſhall not be ſuch as was in her vexation,* &c. ſolves the Doubt, in what ſenſe the darkneſs of the Captivity was not ſo great, as the leſſer Incurſions made by *Tiglath Pileſer*. In the Captivity the City was deſtroyed, and the Temple burnt with Fire, there was no compariſon in the Affliction; but yet the darkneſs ſhould not be ſuch, and the reaſon (ſaith he) is this: *Huic certam promiſſionem eſſe additam, cum in prioribus nulla eſſet*; (*i. e.*) there was a certain Promiſe made to this, but none to the other.

'Tis better be as low as Hell with a Promiſe, than in Paradiſe without one. Even the darkneſs of Hell it ſelf would be comparatively no darkneſs at all, were there but a Promiſe to enlighten it. Now God hath left many ſweet Promiſes for the Faith of his Poor People to feed on in this condition, ſuch are theſe: *Pſal.* 34. 9, 10. *O fear the Lord, ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him; the Lyons do lack and ſuffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord ſhall want nothing that is good.* Pſal. 33. 18, 19. *The eye of the Lord is upon the righteous, to keep them alive in Famine.* Pſal. 84. 11. *No good thing will be with-held from them that walk uprightly.* Rom. 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things.* Iſa. 41. 17. *When the poor and the needy ſeek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of* Iſrael *will not forſake them.* Here you ſee, firſt, their extream Wants, Water being put even for the Neceſſaries of Life, (2.) their certain Relief, *I the Lord will hear them*; in which it is ſuppoſed, that they cry unto him in their ſtraits; and he hears their cry.

Having therefore theſe Promiſes, why ſhould not your diſtruſtful Hearts conclude like *David*'s, Pſal. 23. 1. *The Lord is my Shepherd, I ſhall not want.*

Obj. *But theſe Promiſes imply Conditions; if they were Abſolute, they would afford more ſatisfaction.*

*Sol.* What are thoſe tacite conditions you ſpeak of, but theſe: (1.) That either he will ſupply or ſanctifie your Wants; (2.) That you ſhall have ſo much as God ſees fit for you. And doth this trouble you? Would you have the Mercy whether Sanctified or no? Whether God ſees it fit for you or no? Methinks the appetites of Saints after earthly things ſhould not be ſo ravenous, to ſeize greedily upon any enjoyment, not caring how they have it.

But Oh, when Wants pinch, and wee ſee not whence ſupplies ſhould come, then our Faith in the Promiſe ſhakes, and we, like murmuring *Iſrael*, cry, *He gave Bread, can he give Water alſo*? O unbelieving Hearts! When did his Promiſe fail? Who ever truſted them, and was aſhamed? May not God upbraid thee with thine unreaſonable Infidelity, as *Jer.* 2. 31. *Have I been a Wilderneſs unto you?* &c. Or as Chriſt ſaid to the Diſciples, *Since I was with you, lacked ye any thing?* Yea, may you not upbraid your ſelves, may you not ſay with good old *Polycarp*, Thus many years I have ſerved Chriſt, and found him a good Maſter? Indeed he may deny what your *wantonneſs*, but not what your real *wants* call for: He will not regard the cry of your *Luſts*, nor yet deſpiſe the cry of your *Faith*; though he will not indulge and humour your *wanton Appetites*, yet he will not violate his own *faithfull Promiſes*. Theſe Promiſes are your beſt ſecurity for Eternal Life; and 'tis ſtrange if they ſhould not ſatisfie you for *daily Bread*: Remember ye the words of the Lord, and ſolace your Hearts with them amidſt all your wants. 'Tis ſaid of *Epicurus*, that in the dreadful fits of the *Collick*, he often refreſhed himſelf, *Ob memoriam inventorum*, by calling to mind his Inventions in Philoſophy: And of *Poſſidonius* the *Philoſopher*, that in a great Fit of the Stone, he ſolaced himſelf with Diſcourſes of Moral Virtue: And when the pain twinged him, he would ſay, *Nihil agis dolor quamvis ſis moleſtus numquam confitebor te eſſe malum*: O Pain, thou doſt nothing; though thou art a little troubleſome, I will never confeſs thee to be evil. If upon ſuch grounds as theſe, they could ſupport themſelves under ſuch grinding and racking Pains, and even delude their Diſeaſes by them, How much rather ſhould the precious Promiſes of God, and the ſweet Experiences which have gone along ſtep by ſtep with them, make you to forget all your wants, and comfort you over every ſtrait?

3. Conſid. *If it be bad now, it might have been worſe; hath God denied thee the comforts of this Life? He might have denied thee Chriſt, Peace and Pardon alſo, and then thy Caſe had been woful indeed.* You know God hath done ſo to millions in the World: How many ſuch wretched Objects may our Eyes behold every day, that have no comfort in *hand*, nor yet in *hope*, are miſerable here, and will be ſo to eternity; that have a bitter cup, and nothing to ſweeten it; no, not ſo much as any hope that it will be better. But it is not ſo with you, though you be poor in this World, *yet rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which God hath promiſed*, Jam. 2. 5. O learn to ſet ſpiritual Riches over againſt temporal Poverty. Ballance all your preſent Troubles with your ſpiritual Priviledges. Indeed, if God had denied your Souls the Robes of Righteouſneſs to cloath them, the hidden Manna to feed them; the Heavenly Manſions to receive them; if your Souls were left deſtitute, as well as your Bodies, you might well be penſive; but this conſideration hath enough to bring the conſidering Soul to reſt under any outward ſtrait. 'Twas bravely ſaid by *Luther*, when Want began to pinch him, *Let us be contented with our hard fare*, (ſaid he) *for do we not feaſt with Angels upon Chriſt the Bread of Life? And bleſſed be God* (ſaid *Paul*) *who hath abounded to us in all ſpiritual Bleſſings*, Epheſ. 1. 3.

4. Conſid. *This affliction, though great is not ſuch an affliction, but God hath far greater, with which he chaſtiſes the dearly beloved of his Soul in this World; and ſhould he remove this, and inflict thoſe, you would account your preſent ſtate a very comfortable ſtate, and bleſs God to be as now you are.*

What think ye Sirs? Should God remove your preſent Troubles, ſupply all your outward Wants, give you the deſire of your Hearts in Creature-comforts, but hide his Face from you, ſhoot his Arrows into your Souls, and cauſe the Venome of them to drink up your Spirits? Should he leave you but a few days to the buffeting of Satan, and his Blaſphemous Injections, Should he hold your Eyes but a few nights waking with horrors of Conſcience, toſſing to and fro till the dawning of the day, Should he lead you through the Chambers of Death, ſhew you the viſions of darkneſs? and make his Terrors ſet themſelves in array againſt you? Then tell me if you would not count it a choice mercy to be back again in your former neceſſitous condition, with Peace of Conſcience; and count Bread and Water, with God's Favour, a happy ſtate? O then! take heed of repining.

Say not God deals hardly with you, leſt you provoke him to convince you, by your own ſenſe and feeling, that he hath worſe Rods than theſe for unſubmiſſive and froward Children.

5. Conſid. *If it be bad now, it will be better ſhortly.*

O keep thy Heart by that conſideration: The Meal in the Barrel is almoſt ſpent; well, be it ſo, why ſhould that trouble me, if I am almoſt beyond the need and uſe of all theſe things. The Traveller hath ſpent almoſt all his Money, but a ſhilling or two left; Well, (ſaith he) though my Money be almoſt ſpent, yet my Journey is almoſt finiſh'd too; I am near home, and then ſhall be fully ſupply'd. If there be no Candles in the Houſe, yet 'tis a comfort to think, that its almoſt day, and then there will be no need of Candles. I am afraid, Chriſtian, thou miſreckoneſt thy ſelf, when thou think'ſt, my Proviſion is almoſt ſpent, and I have a great way to travel; many years to live, and nothing to live upon; it may be not half ſo many as thou ſuppoſeſt; in this be confident, if thy Proviſion be ſpent, either freſh Supplies are coming (though thou ſeeſt not from whence) or thou art nearer thy Journeys end than thou reckoneſt thy ſelf to be. Deſponding Soul, doth it become a Man or Woman travelling upon the Road to that Heavenly City, and almoſt arriv'd there, within a few days Journey of his Father's Houſe, where all his Wants ſhall be ſupplied, to take on thus about a little Meat, Drink, or Cloaths, which he fears he ſhall want by the way? It was a noble ſaying of the Forty *Martyrs*, famous in the *Eccleſiaſtical Story*, when turned out naked in a Froſty night to be ſtarved to death, with theſe words they comforted one another *δριμυς ὁ χεῖμων, &c.* The Winter indeed is ſharp and cold, but Heaven is warm and comfortable; here we ſhiver for cold, but *Abraham*'s boſome will make amends for all.

Obj. 1. *But I may dye for want.*

*Sol.* (1.) Who ever did ſo? Where were the Righteous forſaken? (2.) If ſo, your Journey is ended, and you fully ſupply'd.

Obj. 2. *But I am not ſure of that, were I ſure of Heaven, it were another matter.*

*Sol.* Are you not ſure of that? Then you have other Matters to trouble your ſelves about than theſe; Methinks this ſhould be the leaſt of all your Cares; I do not find that Souls perplexed and troubled about the want of Chriſt, pardon of Sin, *&c.* are uſually very anxious, or ſolicitous about theſe things. He that ſeriouſly puts ſuch Queſtions as theſe, What ſhall I do to be ſaved? How ſhall I know my Sin is pardon'd? doth not uſually trouble himſelf with, What ſhall I eat, what ſhall I drink, or wherewith ſhall I be cloathed?

6. Conſid. *Doth it become the Children of ſuch a Father to diſtruſt his All-ſufficiency, or repine againſt any of his Diſpenſations?*

Do you well to queſtion his care and love upon every new Exigence? Say, Have you not been aſhamed of this formerly? Hath not your Fathers ſeaſonable Proviſions for you in former ſtraits, put you to the bluſh, and made you reſolve never to queſtion his love and care any more, and yet will you renew your unworthy ſuſpicions of him again? Diſ-ingenuous Child! reaſon thus with thy ſelf; If I periſh for want of what is good and needfull for me, it muſt either be becauſe my Father knows not my Wants, or hath not wherewith to ſupply them: Or elſe regards not what becomes of me. Which of theſe ſhall I charge upon him? Not the firſt; for, *Mark* 6. 32. *My Father knows what I have need of*, my condition is not hid from him: Nor the ſecond, *For the earth is the Lords, and the fullneſs of it*, Pſal. 24. 1. His Name is *God All-ſufficient*, Gen. 17. 1. Not the laſt, for, *as a Father pities his Children, ſo the Lord pities them that fear him*, Pſal. 103. 13. *The Lord is exceeding pittiful, and of tender mercy*, Jam. 5. 11. *He hears the young ravens when they cry*, Job 38. 41. And will he not hear me? *Conſider* (ſaith Chriſt) *the fowls of the air*, Matth. 6. 26. Not the Fowls at the door, that are every day fed by hand; but the Fowls of the Air, that have none to provide for them. Doth he feed and cloath his Enemies, and will he forget his Children? He heard the very cry of *Iſhmael* in diſtreſs, *Gen.* 21. 17. O my unbelieving Heart! doſt thou yet doubt? Remember *Hagar* and the Child.

7. Conſid. *Your poverty is not your ſin, but your affliction only! if by ſinful means you have not brought it upon your ſelves; and if it be but an affliction, it may be born the eaſier for that.*

'Tis hard indeed to bear an affliction coming upon us as the fruit and puniſhment of ſin, when Men are under trouble upon that account; they uſe to ſay, O! if it were but a ſingle affliction coming from the Hand of God by way of tryal, I could bear it, but I have brought it upon my ſelf by ſin, it comes as the puniſhment of ſin; the marks of Gods Diſpleaſure are upon it; 'tis the guilt within that troubles and galls more, than the want without.

But it is not ſo here, and therefore you have no reaſon to be caſt down under it.

Object. *But though there be no ſting of guilt, yet this condition wants not other ſtings: As firſt, the diſcredit of Religion; I cannot comply with mine engagements in the world, and thereby Religion is like to ſuffer.*

*Sol.* 'Tis well you have an Heart to Diſcharge every Duty, yet if God diſable you by Providence, 'tis no diſcredit to your Profeſſion, becauſe you do not that which you cannot do, ſo long as it is your deſire and endeavour to do what you can and ought to do; and in this caſe God's Will is, that lenity and forbearance be exerciſed towards you, *Deut.* 24. 12, 13.

2. Object. *But it grieves me to behold the neceſſities of others whom I was wont to relieve and refreſh, but now cannot.*

*Sol.* If you cannot, it ceaſes to be your Duty, and God accepts the drawing out of your Soul to the hungry in compaſſion and deſire to help them, though you cannot draw forth a full purſe to relieve and ſupply them.

3. Object. *But I find ſuch a condition full of temptations, a ſore clog in the way to Heaven.*

*Sol.* Every condition in the World hath its clogs and attending temptations; and were you in a proſperous condition, you might there meet with more temptations and fewer advantages than you now have: For though I confeſs Poverty hath its Temptations as well as Proſperity, yet I am confident Proſperity hath not thoſe excellent Advantages that Poverty hath: For here you have an opportunity to diſcover the ſincerity of your love to God, when you can live upon him, find enough in him, and conſtantly follow him, even when all external inducements and motives fail. And thus I have ſhewed you how to keep your

Hearts from the temptations and dangers attending a poor and low condition in the World, when want pinches, and the Heart begins to ſink, then improve and bleſs God for theſe helps to keep it.

6. *Seaſon.* “ The ſixth Seaſon of expreſſing “ this diligence in keeping the Heart, is the Sea- “ ſon of Duty; when we draw nigh to God in “ publick, private, or ſecret Duties, then 'tis “ time to look to the Heart; for the vanity of the “ Heart ſeldom diſcovers it ſelf more than at ſuch “ times. How oft doth the poor ſoul cry out, “ O Lord, how fain would I ſerve thee, but vain “ thoughts will not let me; I came to open my “ Heart to thee, to delight my Soul in commu- “ nion with thee, but my Corruptions have ſet “ upon me: Lord, raſe off theſe vain thoughts, “ and ſuffer them not to proſtitute the Soul, “ which is eſpouſed to thee, before thy face. The “ ſixth Caſe then is this.

6 Caſe. *How the Heart may be kept from diſtractions by vain thoughts, in the time of Duty.*

There is a twofold diſtraction or wandring of the Heart in Duty: (1.) Voluntary and habitual, *Pſal.* 78. 8. *They ſet not their hearts aright, and their ſpirit was not ſtedfaſt with God.* This is the caſe of Formaliſts, and it proceeds from the want of an holy bent and inclination of the Heart to God; their Hearts are under the Power of their Luſts, and therefore 'tis no wonder they go after their luſts, even when they are about holy things, *Ezek.* 33. 31. (2.) Involuntary and lamented diſtractions, *Rom.* 7. 21. 24. *I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me; O wretched man that I am,* &c. This proceeds not from the want of a holy bent and aim, but from the weakneſs and imperfection of Grace. And in this caſe the Soul may make the like complaint againſt its own Corruptions that *Abijah* did againſt *Jeroboam*, 2 Chr. 13. 6, 7. *Yet* Jeroboam *the ſon of* Nebat *is riſen up againſt his Lord, when* Rehoboam *was young and tender-hearted, and could not withſtand them, and there are gathered unto him vain men, the Children of* Belial; Grace hath a dominion, but Luſts are mutinous and ſeditious, during the infancy thereof. But it is not my buſineſs to ſhew you how theſe diſtractions come into the Heart, but rather how to get and keep them out of the Heart; in order whereto take theſe ten following Helps.

1 *Help.* Sequeſter your ſelves from all earthly Employments, and ſet apart ſome time for ſolemn preparation to meet God in Duty: you cannot come reeking hot out of the World into God's preſence, but you will find a tang of it in your Duties: It is with the Heart a few minutes ſince plunged in the World, now at the feet of God, juſt as with the Sea after a Storm, which ſtill continues working, muddy, and diſquiet, though the wind be laid, and ſtorm over: Thy Heart muſt have ſome time to ſettle. There are few Muſicians that can take down a Lute or Viol, and play preſently upon it, without ſome time to tune it; there are few Chriſtians can preſently ſay, as *Pſal.* 57. 7. *O God, my heart is fixed, it is fixed.* O when then goeſt to God in any Duty, take thy Heart aſide, and ſay, O my Soul, I am now addreſſing my ſelf to the greateſt work that ever a Creature was employed about: I am going into the awful preſence of God about buſineſs of everlaſting Life.

Oh my Soul, leave trifling now, be compoſed, watchful, ſerious, this is no common Work; 'tis God-work, Soul-work; Eternity-work, I am now going forth bearing ſeed, which will bring forth fruit to life or death in the World to come; pauſe a while upon thy Sins, Wants, Troubles; ſteep thy thoughts a while in theſe before thou addreſs thy ſelf to Duty. *David* firſt muſed, and then ſpake with his Tongue, *Pſal.* 39. 3, 4. So *Pſal.* 45. 1. *My Heart is inditing*, &c.

2 *Help.* Having compoſed thy Heart by previous meditation, preſently ſet a guard upon thy Senſes: How often are poor Chriſtians in danger of loſing the eyes of their mind by thoſe of their body, for this *David* prayed, *Pſal.* 119. 37. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.* This may ſerve to expound that myſtical *Arabian Proverb*, which adviſes to *ſhut the windows, that the houſe may be light*: 'Twere excellent if you could ſay in your Onſets upon Duty, as an holy Man once did, when he came off from Duty: *Claudimini oculi mei claudimini*, &c. *Be ſhut, O mine eyes, be ſhut: For it is impoſſible you ſhould ever ſee ſuch beauty and glory in any Creature, as I have now ſeen in God.* You had need avoid all occaſions of diſtraction from without; for be ſure you will meet enough from within, intention of Spirit in the work of God, locks up the eye and ear againſt vanity. When *Marcellus* entred the gates of *Syracuſe*, *Archimedes* was ſo intent about his Mathematical Scheme, that he took no notice of the Soldiers when they entred his very Study with drawn *Swords*; a *fervent*, cannot be a *vagrant* Heart.

3 Help. *Beg of God a mortified Fancy.* A working Fancy (ſaith one) how much ſoever it be extoll'd among Men, is a great ſnare to the Soul; except it work in Fellowſhip with right Reaſon, and a ſanctified Heart: The phantaſie is a power of the Soul placed between the Senſes and the Underſtanding, 'tis that which firſt ſtirs its ſelf in the Soul, and by its motion the other powers are ſtirred; 'tis the common Shop where Thoughts are firſt forged and framed, and as this is, ſo are they; if Imaginations be not firſt caſt down, 'tis impoſſible that every thought of the Heart ſhould be brought into obedience to Chriſt 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. This Fancy is naturally the wildeſt and moſt untameable power in the Soul. Some Chriſtians (eſpecially ſuch as are of hot and dry Conſtitutions) have much to do with it.

And truly, the more ſpiritual the Heart is, the more 'tis troubled about the vanity and wildneſs of it. O what a ſad thing it is! that thy nobler Soul muſt Lackey up and down after a vain roving Fancy, that ſuch a Beggar ſhould ride on Horſeback, and ſuch a Prince run after it on Foot; that it ſhould call off the Soul from attendance upon God, when it is moſt ſweetly engag'd in Communion with him, to proſecute ſuch vanities as it will ſtart at ſuch times before it! Beg earneſtly of God that the power of Sanctification may once come upon it. Some Chriſtians have attained ſuch a degree of Sanctification of their Fancies, that they have had much ſweetneſs left upon their Hearts by the ſpiritual workings of it in the Night Seaſon: When thy Fancy is more mortified, thy Thoughts will be more orderly and fixed.

4 Help. *If thou wouldſt keep thy Heart from thoſe*

*vain excurſions, realize to thy ſelf by faith, the holy and awful preſence of God in duties.*

If the preſence of a grave man will compoſe us to ſeriouſneſs, how much more the preſence of an holy God? Thinkſt thou, thy Soul durſt be ſo gariſh and light, if the Senſe of a Divine Eye were upon it? Remember the place where thou art, is the place of his feet, *Iſa.* 60. 13. act faith upon the *Omniſciency* of God, *All the Churches ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the heart, and tryeth the reins, and I will give to every one of you according to your works,* Rev. 2. 23. *All things are naked and open to the Eyes of him with whom we have to do.* Heb. 4. 12. Realize his infinite *Holineſs*; into what a ſerious compoſed frame did the ſight of God in his holineſs put the ſpirit of the Prophet? *Iſa.* 6. 5. Labour to get alſo upon thy heart due apprehenſions of the greatneſs of God, how tender he is over his Worſhip, *Lev.* 10. 3. *And* Moſes *ſaid unto* Aaron, *This is that the Lord ſpake, ſaying, I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.*

“ A man that is praying (*ſaith* Bernard) ſhould behave himſelf as if he were entring into the Court of Heaven, where he ſees the Lord upon his Throne, ſurrounded with ten thouſand of his Angels and Saints miniſtring unto him. When thou comeſt from a duty in which thy heart hath been toying and wandring, thou mayſt ſay, Verily God was in this place, and I knew it not. Suppoſe all the impertinences and vanities which have paſt through thine heart in a duty were written out, and interlined with thy petitions, couldſt thou have the face to preſent it to God? Should thy tongue but utter all the thoughts of thy heart in Prayer, would not men abhor thee? Why, thy thoughts are vocal to God, *Pſal.* 139. 2. If thou wert petitioning the King for thy Life, would it not provoke him to ſee thee playing with thy Band-ſtrings, or catching every Fly that lights upon thy cloaths whilſt thou art ſpeaking to him about ſuch ſerious matters? O think ſadly upon that Scripture, *Pſal.* 87. 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the Aſſemblies of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.* Why did God deſcend in Thundrings and Lightnings, and dark Clouds upon *Sinai?* Exod. 19. 16, 18. Why did the Mountains ſmoak under him? The People quake and tremble round about him, yea *Moſes* himſelf not exempted, but to teach the People that Great Truth, *Heb.* 12. 28, 29. *Let us have grace, whereby we my ſerve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a conſuming fire?* Preſent God thus before thee, and thy vain heart will quickly be reduced to a more ſerious frame.

5. Help. *Maintain a praying frame of heart in the intervals of duty:* What is the reaſon our hearts are ſo dull, careleſs and wandring, when we come to hear or pray, but becauſe there have been ſuch long intermiſſions in our communion with God; by reaſon whereof the heart is out of a praying frame? If that ſpiritual warmth, thoſe holy impreſſions we carry from God in one duty, were but preſerved to kindle another duty; it would be of marvellous advantage to keep the heart intent and ſerious with God.

To this purpoſe thoſe intermediate ejaculations, betwixt ſtated and ſolemn duties, are of moſt ſweet and excellent uſe; by theſe, one duty is as it were linked to another, and ſo the Soul as it were wraps up it ſelf in a chain of duties. That Chriſtian ſeldom miſſes his mark in ſolemn duty, that ſhoots up many of theſe darts in the intervals of duty; 'tis an excellent commendation Chriſt beſtows upon the Spouſe, *Cant.* 4. 11. *Thy lips, O my Spouſe, drop as the honey comb:* Upon which Text one gives this ſweet note, the honey-comb drops actually but ſometimes, but it always hangs full of ſweet drops ready to fall; if our ejaculations were more, our lamentations upon this account would be fewer.

6 Help. *Endeavour to engage and raiſe thy affections to God in duty, if thou wouldſt have thy diſtractions cured.*

A dropping eye, and a melting heart, are ſeldom troubled as others upon this account: When the Soul is intent about any work, it gathers in its ſtrength, and bends all the thoughts about it; and when it is deeply affected, it will be intent, the affections command the thoughts to go after them, deadneſs cauſes diſtraction, and diſtraction increaſes deadneſs; could you but look upon duties as the Galleries of Communion in which you walk with God, where your Souls may be filled with thoſe raviſhing, and matchleſs delights that are in his preſence, your Soul would not offer to ſtir from thence.

It is with the heart in duty, as it is with thoſe that dig for Gold Ore; they try here, and finding none, try there; and ſo go from place to place, till at laſt they hit upon the rich Vein, and there they ſit down. If thy heart could but once hit the rich Vein in duty, it would dwell and abide there with delight and conſtancy. *O how I love thy Law, it is my Meditation day and night!* Pſal. 119. 97. The Soul could dwell day and night upon its knees, when once its delights, loves, and deſires are engaged. What's the reaſon your hearts are ſo ſhuffling, eſpecially in ſecret duties? Why are you ready to be gone almoſt as ſoon as you are come into the preſence of God, but becauſe your affections are not ingaged?

7 Help. *Mourn over the matter to God, and call in aſſiſtance from Heaven, when vain thoughts aſſault thy heart in duty.*

When the meſſenger of Satan buffeted *Paul* by wicked injections, as is ſuppoſed, he goes to God, and mourns over it before him, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. never ſlight wandring thoughts in duty as ſmall matters, follow every vain thought with a deep ſigh, turn thee to God with ſuch words as theſe, Lord I came hither to ſpeak with thee, and here a buſie Devil, and a vain heart conſpiring together have ſet upon me. O my God! what an heart have I? Shall I never wait upon thee without diſtraction! When ſhall I enjoy an hour of free communion with thee? Help me, my God, this once; do but diſplay thy glory before mine eyes, and my heart ſhall quickly be recovered: Thou knoweſt I came hither to enjoy thee, and ſhall I go away without thee? See, how the heart of thy poor child works towards thee! Strives to get near thee, but cannot: My heart is aground, *come thou North wind, blow South wind,* O for a freſh gale now from thy Spirit, to ſet my affections afloat! Couldſt thou but thus affectionately bewail thy diſtractions to God, thou mighteſt obtain help and deliverance from them: He would ſay to Satan, and thine imperious luſts, as *Ahaſhuerus* ſaid of *Haman,* What! Will he force the Queen before my face? Who are theſe, that ſet upon my child in my work, and preſence?

8 Help. *Look upon the ſucceſs and ſweetneſs of thy duties,*

*duties, as very much depending upon the keeping of thy heart cloſe with God in them.*

Theſe two things, the ſucceſs, and ſweetneſs of duty, are as dear to a Chriſtians as his two eyes; and both of theſe muſt neceſſarily be loſt, if the heart be loſt in duty, *Job.* 25. 13. *Surely God heareth not vanity, neither doth the Almighty regard it*: The promiſe is made to an heart ingaged, *Jer.* 29. 13. *Then ſhall you ſeek me, and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your heart.* Well then, when thou findeſt thy heart under the power of deadneſs and diſtraction, ſay to thy Soul, O what do I loſe by a careleſs heart now! My praying times are the choiceſt parts, the golden ſpots of all my time: could I but get up this heart with God, I might now obtain ſuch mercies as would be matter for a ſong to all eternity.

9 Help. *Look upon it as a great diſcovery of the ſincerity, or hypocriſie of your hearts, according as you find them careful, or careleſs, in this matter.*

Nothing will ſtartle an upright heart more than this: What, ſhall I give way to a cuſtomary wandring of heart from God? Shall the ſpot of the hypocrite appear upon my Soul? They indeed can drudge on, in the round of duty, never regarding the frames of their Hearts, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. but ſhall I do ſo? When men come into the Preſence-Chamber, and the King is not there, they bow to the empty Chair. O never let me be ſatisfied with empty Duties! Never let me take my leave of a duty, *until mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of hoſts.*

10 Help. *Laſtly, 'Twill be of ſpecial uſe to keep thine heart with God in duties, to conſider what influence all thy duties have into thy Eternity.*

Theſe are your ſeed times, and what you ſow in your Duties in this World, you muſt look to reap the fruit of it in another World, *Gal.* 6. 7, 8. If you ſow to the fleſh, of that you ſhall reap corruption; but if to the Spirit, life everlaſting. O my Soul, anſwer ſeriouſly; Wouldſt thou be willing to reap the fruit of vanity, in the World to come? Dareſt thou ſay, when thy thought are roving to the ends of the earth in duty, when thou ſcarce mindeſt what thou ſayeſt or heareſt, Now Lord, I am ſowing to the Spirit, now I am providing and laying up for Eternity, now I am ſeeking for glory, honour, and immortality, now I am ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait gate, now I am taking the Kingdom of Heaven by an holy violence? O ſuch a conſideration as this, ſhould make the multitudes of vain thoughts that preſs in upon thy heart in duty, to fly ſeven ways before it. And thus I have ſhown you how to keep your hearts, in the times of Duty.

7 *Seaſon.* “The Seventh ſeaſon calling for “more than common diligence to keep the Heart, “is, when we receive injuries and abuſes from “Men. Such is the depravedneſs and corruption “of Man in his collapſed ſtate, that *homo homini* “*lupus*, one Man is become a *Wolf*, a *Tiger*, to ano“ther; they are as the Prophet complains, *Hab.* 1. “24. *as the fiſhes of the Sea, and as the creeping things* “*that have no ruler over them*; and as wicked “Men are cruel and oppreſſive one to another, “ſo they conſpire together to abuſe and wrong “the people of God, as the ſame Prophet com“plains, *ver.* 13. *The wicked devoureth the man* “*that is more righteous than he.* Now when we “are thus abuſed and wronged, 'tis hard to keep “the heart from revengful motions; to make “it meekly and quietly to commit the cauſe to “him that judgeth righteouſly; to exerciſe no “other affection but pity towards them that a“buſe us. Surely the ſpirit that is in us luſteth “to revenge, but it muſt not be ſo; you have “choyce helps in the Goſpel to keep down your “hearts from ſuch ſinful motions againſt your e“nemies, and to ſweeten your imbitter'd Spi“rits. The ſeventh caſe then ſhall be this.

7 Caſe. *How a Chriſtian may keep his heart from revengeful motions, under the greateſt injuries and abuſes from men?*

The Goſpel indeed allows a liberty to vindicate our innocency, and aſſert our rights; but not to vent our corruptions, and invade Gods right; when therefore thou findeſt thy heart begin to be inflamed by revengful motions, preſently apply the following remedies; and the firſt is this.

1 Rem. *Urge upon thy heart the ſevere prohibitions of revenge by the law of God.* Remember that this is forbidden fruit, how pleaſing and luſcious ſoever it be to our vitiated appetites. O ſaith Nature, revenge is ſweet; O but, ſaith God, the effects thereof ſhall be bitter: How plainly hath God interdicted this fleſh pleaſing ſin, *Prov.* 20. 22. *Say not, I will recompence evil*, Prov. 24. 29. *Say not I will do ſo to him as he hath done to me.* Rom. 12. 27. *Recompenſe to no man evil for evil*, and ver. 19. *Avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place to wrath:* Nay, that's not all; but Prov. 25. 21. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink.* The Word feed him, as *Criticks* obſerve, ſignifies to feed chearfully and tenderly, as Birds do their young ones: The Scripture is a great friend to the Peace and Tranquility of humane Societies, which can never be preſerved, if Revenge be not depoſed: It was wont to be an argument urged by the Chriſtians to prove their Religion to be ſupernatural and pure, that it forbids Revenge which is ſo ſweet to Nature; and verily 'tis a Thouſand pities ſuch an Argument ſhould be loſt. Well then, awe your hearts with the authority of God in theſe Scriptures; and when carnal Reaſon ſaith mine Enemie deſerves to be hated, let Conſcience reply, But doth God deſerve to be diſobeyed? Thus, and thus hath he done, and ſo he hath wronged me; but what hath God done, that I ſhould wrong him? If he dare be ſo bold to break the *Peace*, ſhall I be ſo wicked to break the *Precept*? If he fears not to wrong me, ſhall not I fear to wrong God? O let the fear of Gods threatnings repreſs ſuch ſinful motions.

2 Rem. *Set before your eyes the moſt eminent Patterns of Meekneſs and Forgiveneſs, that your Soul may fall in love with it.*

This is the way to cut off thoſe common Pleas of the fleſh for Revenge: As thus, No man would bear ſuch an affront; yes, ſuch and ſuch have born as bad and worſe: I ſhall be reckoned a coward, a fool, if I paſs by this; no matter, as long as I follow the Examples of the wiſeſt and holieſt of Men: Never did any ſuffe more and greater abuſes from Men than Chri did, and never did any carry it more peaceabl and forgivingly, *Iſa.* 53. 7. *He was oppreſſed, and h was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he wa brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter*, &c. Th Pattern the Apoſtle ſets before you for yo imitation, 1 Pet. 2. 21, 22, 23. *For even he unto are you called, becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffe* *for us, leaving us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps: Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.* To be of a meek forgiving ſpirit is Chriſt-like, God-like; *then ſhall you be the Children of your Father, which is in Heaven, for he maketh his ſun to riſe upon the evil, and upon the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt, and on the unjuſt, Mat.* 5. 45. How eminently alſo did this Spirit of Chriſt reſt upon his Apoſtles? Never were there ſuch men upon Earth for true excellency of Spirit. None were ever abuſed more, or ſuffered their abuſes better: *Being reviled,* (ſay they) *we bleſs; being perſecuted, we ſuffer it; being defam'd, we intreat;* 1 *Cor.* 4. 12, 13. Mr. *Calvin* though a man of a quick ſpirit, yet had attained ſuch a degree of this Chriſt-like forgiveneſs, that when *Luther* had uſed ſome opprobrious language of him, the good man ſaid no more but this, "Although he ſhould call me Devil, yet I will acknowledge him to be an eminent ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt.

I Have often heard it Reported of Holy Mr. *Dod*, that when one, inraged at his cloſe convincing Doctrine, pick'd a quarrel with him, ſmote him on the face, and daſht out two of his Teeth; this meek ſervant of Chriſt ſpat out the Teeth and Blood into his hand, and ſaid, See here, you have knockt out two my Teeth, and that without any juſt provocation; but on condition I might do your Soul good, I would give you leave to daſh out all the reſt: Here is the the excellency of a Chriſtians Spirit, above all the attainments of Moral Heathens: Though they were excellent at many other things, yet they could never attain this forgiving Spirit. It is the firſt Office of Juſtice (ſaid *Tully*) to hurt no body, unleſs firſt provoked by an injury; whereupon *Lactantius, O quam ſimplicem veramque ſententiam duorum verborum, adjectione corrupit!* What a dainty Sentence ſpoiled the Oratour by adding thoſe two laſt words! Strive then for this excellency of Spirit, which is the proper excellency of Chriſtians, do ſome ſingular thing that others cannot do, and then you will have a teſtimony in their Conſciences: When *Moſes* outdid the *Magicians*, they were forced to confeſs the finger of God in that buſineſs.

3 Remed. *Conſider well the quality of the perſon that hath wronged thee;* either he is a good man or a wicked man, that hath done thee the injury; if he be a good man, there is light and tenderneſs in his Conſcience, and that will bring him at laſt to a ſenſe of the evil he hath done; however Chriſt hath forgiven him greater injuries than theſe, and why ſhouldſt not thou? Will not Chriſt upbraid him with any of thoſe wrongs done to him, but frankly forgives him all, and wilt thou take him by the throat for ſome petty abuſe that he hath done to thee?

Or is he a wicked man? If ſo, truly you have more need to exerciſe pity, than revenge towards him, and that upon a double account: For (1.) He is beſide himſelf, ſo indeed is every unconverted ſinner, *Luke* 15. 17. Should you go into *Bedlam*, and there hear one rail at you, another mock you, and a third threaten you, would you ſay I will be revenged upon them? No, you would rather go away pitying them. Alas, poor Creatures! They are out of their Wits, and know not what they do. Beſides, (2.) There is a day a coming, if they repent not, when they will have more Miſery than you can find in your hearts to wiſh them; you need not ſtudy revenge, Gods Vengeance ſleepeth not; and will ſhortly take place upon them, and is not that enough? Have they not an Eternity of Miſery coming? If they Repent not, this muſt be the Portion of their Cup; and if ever they do repent, they will be ready to make you reparation.

4 Rem. *Keep down thy Heart by this Conſideration, that by Revenge thou canſt but ſatisfie a Luſt, but by Forgiveneſs thou ſhalt Conquer a Luſt.*

Suppoſe, by Revenge thou ſhouldſt deſtroy one Enemy, I will ſhew thee how by forgiving thou ſhalt Conquer Three: Thine own Luſt, the Devils *Temptation*, and thine Enemies *Heart*; and is not this a more glorious Conqueſt? If by revenge thou overcome thine Enemy, yet (as *Barnard* ſaith) *Infelix victoria, ubi ſuperans virum ſuccumbit vitio:* Unhappy Victory, when by overcoming another Man, thou art overcome by thine own Corruption; but this way you may obtain a Glorious Conqueſt indeed. What an Honourable and dry Victory did *David* this way obtain over *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 24. 16, 17. *And it came to paſs when David had made an end of ſpeaking theſe Words, that Saul lift up his Voice and Wept; And he ſaid to David, Thou art more Righteous than I.*

It muſt be a very Diſ-ingenuous nature indeed, upon which meekneſs and forgiveneſs will not Work; A ſtony Heart which this fire will not Melt: To this ſenſe is that, Prov. 25. 21. *If thine Enemy Hunger, Feed him; If he thirſt, give him Drink; For in ſo doing thou ſhalt Heap Coals of fire upon his Head.* Some will have it a ſin-puniſhing fire, but others, an Heart Melting fire: To be ſure, 'twill either Melt his Heart, or Aggravate his Miſery. *Auguſtine* thinks that *Stephens* Prayer for his Enemies, was the great means of *Paul's* converſion.

5 Rem. *Seriouſly propund this Queſtion to thy own Heart, Have I got any good by the Wrongs and Injuries received, or have I not?* If they have done you no good, turn the Revenge upon your ſelves. O that I ſhould have ſuch a bad Heart, that can get no good out of ſuch Troubles. O that my Spirit ſhould be ſo unlike to Chriſts! The Patience and Meekneſs of other Chriſtians have turned all the injuries thrown at them, into Precious Stones; the Spirits of others have been raiſed in Bleſſing God, when they have been loaded with Reproaches by the World, they have bound them as an Ornament to their Necks. *Superbus fio* (ſaid *Luther*) *Quod video nomen peſſimum mihi creſcere.* I could even be Proud upon it, that I have a bad name among Wicked Men: to the ſame purpoſe *Jerome* ſweetly, *Gratias ago Deo meo quod dignus ſum quem mundus oderit.* I thank my God, that I am Worthy to be hated of the World; Thus their Hearts were provoked by injuries to Magnifie God, and bleſs him for them; If it work contrary with me, I have cauſe enough to be filled with ſelf-diſplacency.

If you have got any good by them, if the Reproaches and Wrongs you have Received, have made you ſearch your Hearts the more, watch your ways the more narrowly; If their wronging you, have made you ſee how you have wronged ed God, then let me ſay for them as *Paul* did for himſelf, pray forgive them this Wrong.

What, can you not find an Heart to forgive one that hath beeu inſtrumental of ſo much good to you? That's ſtrange! What though they meant it for evil? Yet if God hath turned it to good, you have no more Reaſon to rage againſt the Inſtrument, than he had who received a Wound from his Enemy, which onely brake, and let out that impoſthume, which otherwiſe had been his death.

6 Rem. *'Tis of excellent Uſe to keep the Heart from Revenge, to look up and eye the firſt Cauſe by which all our Troubles are ordered.*

This will calm and meeken our Spirits quickly; never did a wicked Tongue try the Patience of a Saint more than *David*'s was tryed by that railing *Shimei*: Yet the Spirit of this good Man was not at all poiſoned with Revenge, though he goes along curſing and caſting Stones at him all the way: Yea, though *Abiſhai* offered *David*, if he pleaſed, the Head of that Enemy; but the King ſaid, *What have I to do with you, ye Sons of Zerviah? So let him curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, Curſe* David; *Who ſhall then ſay, Wherefore haſt thou done ſo?* It may be God uſes him as his Rod to laſh me, becauſe I by my ſin made his Enemies to blaſpheme him: And ſhall I be angry with the Rod? How irrational were that? This alſo was it that quieted *Job*; he doth not rail, and vow Revenge upon the *Caldeans* and *Sabeans*, but eyes God as the Orderer of thoſe Troubles, and is quiet: *The Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be his Name*, Job 1. 21.

*Object.* But you will ſay, *To turn aſide the Right of a Man, to ſubvert a Man in his Cauſe, the Lord approveth not*, Lam. 3. 36.

*Anſ.* True, but though it fall not under his Approving, yet it doth under his Permitting will, and there is a great Argument for quiet Submiſſion in that: Nay, he hath not only the permitting, but the ordering of all thoſe Troubles; did we ſee more of an holy God, we ſhould ſhow leſs of a corrupt Nature in ſuch Tryals.

7 Rem. *Conſider how you daily wrong God, and you will not be ſo eaſily inflamed with Revenge againſt others that have wronged you.*

You are daily grieving and wronging God, and yet he bears, forgives, and will not take Vengeance upon you; and will you be ſo quick in avenging your ſelves upon others? O what a ſharp and terrible Rebuke is that, *Matt.* 18. 32, 33? *O thou wicked and ſloathful Servant! I forgave thee all that Debt becauſe thou deſiredſt me, ſhouldſt not thou alſo have had Compaſſion on thy fellow Servant, even as I had pity on thee?* None ſhould be filled with bowels of pity, forbearance, and mercy, to ſuch as wrong them, as thoſe ſhould be that have experienced the riches of mercy themſelves; methinks the Mercy of God to us, ſhould melt our very bowels into Mercy over others; 'tis impoſſible we can be *cruel* to others, except we forget how kind Chriſt has been to us; thoſe that have found Mercy, ſhould ſhew Mercy; if kindneſs cannot work, methinks Fear ſhould: *If ye forgive not men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive you your Treſpaſſes*, Mat. 6. 15.

8 Rem. Laſtly, *Let the Conſideration of the Day of the Lord, which draweth nigh, with-hold your Hearts from anticipating it by Acts of Revenge.*

Why are you ſo quick? Is not the Lord at hand, to avenge all his abuſed Servants? *Be patient therefore, my Brethren, unto the coming of the Lord: Behold the Husbandman waiteth*, &c. *Be ye alſo patient, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh: Grudg not one againſt another, Brethren, leaſt ye be condemned. Behold the Judge ſtandeth at the door*, Jam. 5. 7, 8, 9. This Text affords three Arguments againſt Revenge. (1) The Lords near approach. (2) The Example of the Husbandmans Patience. (3) The Danger we draw upon our ſelves by anticipating God's Judgment: *Vengeance is mine*, ſaith the Lord; he will diſtribute Juſtice more equally and impartially than you can; they that believe they have a God to right them, will not ſo much wrong themſelves as to avenge their own Wrongs.

1 *Obj.* But Fleſh and Blood are not able to bear ſuch Abuſes.

*Sol.* If you reſolve to conſult Fleſh and Blood in ſuch Caſes, and do no more but what that will enable you to do: Never pretend to Religion. Chriſtians muſt do ſingular and ſupernatural Things.

2 *Obj.* But if I pack up ſuch Abuſes, I ſhall be reckoned a Fool, and every one will trample upon me.

*Sol.* (1) You may be reckoned ſo among Fools, but God and good Men will account it your Wiſdom, and the Excellency of your Spirits. (2) It muſt be a baſe Spirit indeed that will trample upon a meek and forgiving Chriſtian: And thus learn to keep your Hearts from Revenge under all your Provocations.

8 *Seaſon.* "The next Seaſon is which we are in Danger of loſing our Hearts, is, when we meet with great Croſſes and Provocations; then ſinful paſſion is apt to tranſport the Heart; 'tis the Fault of many good Men to be of haſty and quick Spirits when provoked; tho' they dare not concoct Anger into Malice, for that would be a note of Wichedneſs, yet are they very incident to ſudden Anger, which is a ſign of *Weakneſs*. Beza, in the Life of *Calvin* obſerves, that he was of a keen and haſty Spirit: And he that writes the Life of Great *Cameron*, ſaith, that his Anger was ſoon ſtirred towards his near and familiar Friends, but then he would eaſily depoſe it, and acknowledg his Weakneſs; alas, when Provocations, and Tryals of our Patience come, we know not what Spirits we are of. The eighth Caſe therefore is this.

*Bez. in Vit. Cal. p.* 100.

*Icon. Cameronis.*

8 Caſe. *How the Heart may be kept meek and patient under great Croſſes and Provocations.*

There are three Sorts of Anger, *natural*, *holy*, and *ſinful* Anger. (1) *Natural*, which is nothing elſe but the Motion of the iraſcible Appetite towards an offenſive Object: And this in it ſelf is no ſin, they are Propaſſions rather than Paſſions; the Infelicities rather than the Sins of Nature, as *Jerom* calls them; Reaſon (ſaith *Plutarch*) is the *Driver*, the Soul is the *Chariot*, and the two Horſes that draw it on in all its Motions, are the concupiſcible and iraſcible Appetites; whileſt theſe are rightly managed by Reaſon, they are not only lawful, but very uſeful to the Soul. God would not have us to be ſtupid and inſenſate, though he would have us to be meek and patient: In *Eph.* 4. 26. He allows the natural motion, but forbids the ſinful exorbitancy. (2) Holy Anger, which is a pure flame, kindled by an heavenly ſpark of Love to God, and in Scripture is called *Zeal*, which is (as one ſaith) the Dagger which Love draws in God's Quarrel. Such was *Lot*'s againſt the *Sodomites*, and that of *Moſes* againſt the Idolatrous *Iſraelites*. When *Servetus* condemned *Zwinglius* for his harſhneſs, his anſwer was, *In aliis manſuetus ero, in blaſphemiis in Chriſtum, non ita*; In other caſes I will be mild, but in the cauſe of Chriſt, not ſo. That which the World calls moderation and mildneſs here, is in Gods account ſtupidity and cowardlineſs; neither of theſe are that which I am now perſwading you to keep your hearts againſt. But (3) There is ſinfull Paſſion, that's the thing which endangers you. Now Anger becomes ſinful when 'tis either *Cauſleſs*, Matth. 5. 22. *or Exceſſive*; and that either in meaſure or time, exceeding the value of the impulſive cauſe, be it more tranſient or abiding, yet 'tis a ſin and is matter of humiliation before God. Now the means to keep the heart from it under provocations, are theſe.

1 Means. *Get low and humble thoughts of your ſelves, and then you will have meek Spirits, and peaceab'e deportments towards others.*

The humble, is ever the patient man; Pride is the root of Paſſion, a lofty, will be a ſurly Spirit; Bladders blown up with wind, will not lie cloſe together; but prick them, and you may pack a thouſand in a ſmall room: *Only by pride cometh Contention*, Prov. 13. 10. When we over-rate our ſelves, then we think we are unworthily treated by others, and that provokes; and here (by the way) take notice of one great benefit of acquaintance with your own Hearts, even the meekning and calming of your Spirits. Chriſtian, methinks thou ſhouldſt know ſo much by thy ſelf, that 'tis impoſſible any ſhould lay thee lower, or have baſer thoughts of thee, than thou haſt of thy ſelf. Some render the original of that Text, *Hab.* 2. 5. thus: *The proud man is as he that tranſgreſſeth by Wine*; and Drunkards, you know, are quarrelſome: O get more Humility, and that will bring you more Peace.

2 Means. *Be often ſweetning your Spirits in Communion with God, and they will not eaſily be imbittered with wrath toward men.*

A quiet *Conſcience* never produced an unquiet *Converſation*: The Peace of God doth βραβεύειν, rule in the Heart, as an Umpire in appeaſing ſtriſes, for ſo much that Word, *Col.* 3. 15. Imports; Wrath and Striſe are hugely oppoſite to the Frame and Temper of a ſpiritual Heart, becauſe inconſiſtent with the delight and contentment of that Dove-like Spirit, which loves a ſedate and quiet Breſt. O, ſaith a Soul, that feeds upon the ſweet Communion of the Spirit, ſhall the Sparkles of Provocations now catch in my Paſſions, and raiſe ſuch a Smoke in my Soul as will offend and drive away the Comforter from me? This is ſo effectual a Remedy againſt Paſſion, that I durſt almoſt venture, in a Chriſtian of a haſty Nature, to make long ſuffering a ſign of Communion with God. Seeſt thou ſuch a Chriſtian quiet and calm under Provocations, 'tis very like his Soul feeds upon ſuch Sweetneſs in God as he is loth to leave: And on the other ſide, ſeeſt thou a Chriſtian Turbulent and Clamorous, doubtleſs all is not well within; his Spirit is like a Bone out of joynt, which cannot move without Pain and Trouble.

3 Means. *Get due Apprehenſions of the evil Nature and Effects of ſinful Anger*: Ira furor brevis, *Anger is a ſhort Madneſs* (ſaith one:) Ira animæ febris, (ſaith another) *Anger is the Feaver of the Soul*; 'Tis the *Interregnum and Eclipſe of Reaſon* (ſaith a third.)

The Effects of it are alſo very ſad,

(1) *It grieves the Spirit of God*, Eph. 4. 30. Baniſhes him from that Breaſt in which it rages and tumultuates, God is the God of Peace; the Preſence and Comforts of God are only injoyed in a Calm: 'Tis a golden Note one gives upon the fore-cited Text, God doth not uſually bleſs with Peace of Conſcience, ſuch as make no Conſcience of Peace. (2) It gives Advantage to the Devil, *Eph.* 4. 26, 27. Satan is an angry and diſcontented Spirit, and finds no reſt but in reſtleſs Hearts; he lives like the *Salamander* in Fires of Contention; he beſtirs himſelf when the Spirits are in a Commotion, ſometimes he fills the Heart with revengeful Thoughts, ſometimes he fills the Lips, and inflames the Tongue with undecent Language; even a meek *Moſes* ſometimes ſpake unadviſedly with his Lips. (3) It diſ-tunes the Spirit for Duty; upon this Account the Apoſtle diſſwades Husbands and Wives from jarring Carriages and Contentions, that their Prayers be not hindered, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. All Acts of Worſhip muſt be ſuitable to the Object of Worſhip; but God is the God of Peace, the God of Love. (4) To mention no more, it diſparages the Chriſtian Religion. How would *Plato* and *Pythagoras* ſhame us, if they were now living? Chriſt was a Lamb for meekneſs, and doth it become his Followers to be like Lyons? O keep your Hearts, or you will at once loſe, not onely your own Peace, but the credit of Religion.

4 Means. *Conſider how ſweet a thing it is to a Chriſtian to conquer his Corruptions and carry away the Spoils of them.*

*He that is ſlow to Anger, is better than the Mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City*, Prov. 16. 32. Is there any content in venting a Paſſion? How much more in mortifying it? When thou comeſt in a Calm mood, or upon a Death-bed to review thy Life, how comfortable then will it be, to reflect upon the Conqueſts thou haſt got by the Fear of God, over the evil Propenſions of thine own Heart! 'Twas a memorable ſaying of *Valentinian* the Emperour, when he came to die: 'Amongſt all my Conqueſts '(ſaid he) there is but one that now comforts me; 'and being asked what that was, he anſwered, I 'have overcome my worſt Enemy, mine own 'naughty Heart.

5 Means. *Shame your ſelves by ſetting before you thoſe eminent patterns that have been moſt excellent for meekneſs.*

Above all, compare your Spirits with the Spirit of Chriſt; *Learn of me* (ſaith he) *for I am meek and lowly*, Matt. 11. 29. Chriſt was meek and lowly, but I am proud and paſſionate; it was the high Commendation of *Moſes*, Numb. 12. 3. *Now the Man* Moſes *was meek above all the Men of the Earth: And this was the Man that knew*

*God face to face.* 'Tis ſaid of *Calvin* and *Urſin*, that they both were of cholerick natures, but yet had ſo learned the meekneſs of Chriſt, as not to utter one word, under the greateſt provocation, unbeſeeming Religion. When I read the pretty ſtories of the very Heathens, that never had the advantages we have, how the *Pythagorians*, what ever fewds had been among them in the day, would huſh all, by ſending to each other this meſſage, *The Sun is almoſt ſet*; and that of *Plato* to his Scholar, *I would beat thee, if I were not angry.*

When I read what lenity and tenderneſs *Lycurgus* ſhewed to an inſolent fellow that had ſtruck out one of his eyes; I am aſhamed to ſee how much Chriſtians are out-ſhot by Heathens: who by meer moral Arguments and Precepts, had thus meekned their Spirits and conquered their Paſſions; the dim light of Nature could teach *Seneca* to ſay, That Anger will hurt a man more than the Offence; for there is a certain bound in the Offence, but I know not how far mine Anger will carry me. 'Tis a ſhame that theſe men who come far behind us in means and advantages, ſhould ſo far out-ſtrip us in meekneſs and patience.

Means 6. Laſtly, *Avoid all irritating occaſions.*

He that will not hear the Clapper, muſt not pull the Rope: *Grievous words ſtir up anger*, (ſaith *Solomon*) Prov. 15. 1. Do not only pray, and reſolve againſt it, but get as far as you can out of the way of it; 'tis true Spiritual Valour, to run as faſt, and far as we can, out of ſins way: If you can but avoid Anger in its firſt riſe, there is no great fear of it afterwards; for it is not with this ſin as it is with other ſins; other ſins grow to their full ſtrength by degrees, their firſt motions are the weakeſt; but this ſin is born in its full ſtrength, 'tis ſtrongeſt at firſt; withſtand it then, and it falls before you. Thus learn to keep your hearts when provocations ariſe.

9 *Seaſon.* The ninth Seaſon of exerting our greateſt diligence, "Is the critical hour of temp-
" tation, wherein Satan lays cloſe Siege to the
" Fort-Royal of a Chriſtians heart, and often
" ſurpriſes it for want of watchfulneſs: To keep
" thy heart now, is no leſs a Mercy than a Duty;
" few Chriſtians are ſo well skilled in detecting
" the fallacies, and retorting the arguments by
" which Satan uſes to draw them to ſin, as to
" come off ſafe in thoſe Encounters. *Watch and*
" *Pray* (ſaith our Lord) *leſt ye enter into tempta-*
" *tion*, Mark 14. 38. Even an eminent *David*,
" and a wiſe *Solomon*, have ſmarted for their care-
" leſneſs at ſuch a time as this. The ninth Caſe
" therefore ſhall be this.

Caſe 9. *How a Chriſtian when ſtrongly ſolicited by the Devil to ſin, may keep his heart from yielding to the temptation?*

Now there are ſix ſpecial Arguments by which Satan ſubtilly inſinuates and winds in the temptation; in all which I ſhall offer thee ſome help for the keeping of thy heart; and the firſt is this:

*Arg.* 1. The firſt Argument is drawn from the pleaſure of ſin: O (ſaith Satan) here is pleaſure to be enjoyed; the temptation comes with a ſmiling countenance, and charming Voice: What, art thou ſo flegmatick and dull a ſoul, as not to feel the powerful charmes of pleaſure? Who can with-hold himſelf from ſuch delights?

Now thine heart may be kept from the danger of this temptation, by retorting this Argument of pleaſure upon the Tempter; which is done two wayes.

1. Thou telleſt me, Satan, that ſin is pleaſant; be it ſo: But are the gripes of Conſcience, and the flames of Hell, ſo too? Is it pleaſant to feel the wounds and throbs of Conſcience? If ſo, Why did *Peter* weep ſo bitterly? *Mat.* 26. 75. Why did *David* cry out of broken bones? *Pſal.* 51. I hear what thou ſayeſt of the pleaſure of ſin, and I have read what *David* hath ſaid of the terrible effects of ſin in his Pſalm to bring to remembrance, *Pſal.* 38. *ver.* 2. *Thine Arrowes ſtick faſt in me, and thy Hand preſſeth me ſore:* Ver. 3. *There is no ſoundneſs in my fleſh, becauſe of thine anger; neither is there any reſt in my bones becauſe of my ſin.* Ver. 4. *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head as an heavy burden; they are too heavy for me:* Ver. 5. *My wounds ſtink and are corrupt, becauſe of my fooliſhneſs:* Ver. 6. *I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long:* Ver. 7. *My loins are filled with a loathſome Diſeaſe, and there is no ſoundneſs in my fleſh:* Ver. 8. *I am feeble and ſore broken, I have roared by reaſon of the diſquietneſs of my heart.*

Here I ſee the true face of ſin; if I yield to thy temptation, I muſt either feel theſe pangs of Conſcience, or the flames of Hell.

2. What talkeſt thou of the pleaſure of ſin, when by experience I know there is more true pleaſure in the mortification, than can be in the commiſſion of ſin? O how ſweet is it to pleaſe God, to obey Conſcience, to preſerve inward Peace! To be able to ſay, In this tryal I have diſcovered the ſincerity of my heart; now I know I fear the Lord, now I ſee that I truly hate ſin. Hath ſin any ſuch delight as this? This will choak that temptation.

*Arg.* 2. The ſecond Argument is drawn from the Secreſie of ſin: O (ſaith Satan) this ſin will never diſgrace thee abroad, none ſhall know it.

This Argument may be retorted, and the heart ſecured thus: Thou ſayeſt, None ſhall know it; but Satan canſt thou find a place void of the Divine Preſence for me to ſin in? Thus *Job* ſecured his heart from this temptation, *Job* 13. 4. *Doth he not ſee my wayes, and count all my ſteps?* Therefore he makes a Covenant with his eyes, *ver.* 1. After the ſame manner *Solomon* teaches us to retort this temptation, *Prov.* 5. 20, 21. *And why, my Son, wilt thou be raviſhed with a ſtrange woman, and embrace the boſome of a ſtranger? For the ways of man are before the Eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.* What if I hide it from the eyes of all the world for the preſent? I cannot hide it from God; and the time is at hand, when all the world ſhall know it too; for the Word aſſures me, *Luke* 8. 17. *That what is done now in ſecret, ſhall be proclaimetd as upon the houſe top.* Beſides, is not my Conſcience as a thouſand witneſſes? Do I owe no reverence to my ſelf? Could the Heathen men ſay, *Turpe quid auſurus, te ſine teſte time*; When thou are tempted to commit ſin, fear thy ſelf without any other witneſs: And ſhall not I be afraid to ſin before mine own Conſcience, which always hath a Reproof in its Mouth, or a Pen in its Hand, to record my moſt ſecret Actions?

*Arg.* 3. The third Argument by which Satan tempteth to ſin, is taken from the gain and profit ariſing out of it: Why ſo nice and ſcrupulous? 'Tis but ſtretch Conſcience a little, and thou mayeſt make thy ſelf; Now is thy opportunity.

The heart may be kept from falling into this dangerous ſnare, by retorting the temptation thus: But what profit will it be, if a Man ſhould gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul! Shall I hazard thee for all the good that is in this World? There is an immortal Spirit dwelling in this fleſhly Tabernacle, of more value than all earthly things, which muſt live to all Eternity, when this World ſhall lie in white aſhes: A Soul for which Jeſus Chriſt ſhed his precious and invaluable blood. I was ſent into this World to provide for this Soul; indeed God hath alſo committed to me the care of my Body, but (as one happily expreſſes it) with this difference; a Maſter commits two things to a Servant, the Child and the Childs cloaths: Will the Maſter thank the Servant, if he plead, I have kept the Cloaths, but I have neglected the Life of the Child?

*Goſpel Glaſs*, p. 3.

*Arg.* 4 The fourth Argument is drawn from the ſmalneſs of the ſin; 'Tis but a little one, a ſmall matter, a trifle; who would ſtand upon ſuch niceties?

This Argument may be retorted three ways.

1. But is the Majeſty of Heaven a little one too? If I commit this ſin, I muſt offend and wrong a great God, *Iſa.* 40. 15, 16, 17, 22.

2. Is there any little Hell to torment little ſinners in? Are not the leaſt ſinners there filled with the fulneſs of Wrath? O there is great Wrath treaſured up for ſuch as the World counts little ſinners.

3. The leſs the ſin, the leſs the inducement to commit it: What, ſhall I break with God for a trifle? Deſtroy my peace, wound my Conſcience, grieve the Spirit, and all this for nothing? O what madneſs is this?

*Arg.* 5. A Fifth Argument is drawn from the Grace of God, and hopes of Pardon: Come, God will paſs by this as an Infirmity, he will not be extream to mark it.

But ſtay my Heart,

1. Where do I find a Promiſe of Mercy to Preſumptuous ſinners? Indeed for involuntary ſurpriſals, unavoidable and lamented infirmities, there is a Pardon of courſe; But where is the Promiſe to a daring ſinner, that ſins upon Preſumption of Pardon? Pauſe a while, my Soul, upon that Scripture, *Numb.* 15. 27. 30. *And if a Soul ſin through Ignorance, then he ſhall bring a She-Goat, of the firſt year for a Sin-offering*, &c. *But the Soul that doth ought Preſumptuouſly, the ſame reproacheth the Lord, and that Soul ſhall be cut off from among his People.*

2. If God be a God of ſo much Mercy, How an I abuſe ſo good a God? Shall I take ſo glorious an Attribute as the Mercy of God is, and buſe it unto ſin? Shall I wrong him becauſe he is ood? or ſhould not rather the goodneſs of God ead me to repentance? *Rom.* 2. 4. *There is ercy with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared*, Pſal. 30. 4.

*Arg.* 6. Laſtly, Sometimes Satan incourages to ſin from the examples of good and holy men; thus, and thus they have ſinned, and been reſtored, therefore this may conſiſt with grace; and thou be ſaved nevertheleſs. The danger of this temptation is avoided, and the heart ſecured; by retorting the Argument theſe three ways:

1. Though good men may commit the ſame ſin materially, which I am tempted to, yet did ever any good men venture to ſin, upon ſuch a ground and incouragement as this?

2. Did God record theſe Examples for my imitation, or for my warning? Are they not ſet up as Sea-marks, that I might avoid the rocks upon which they ſplit? 1 *Cor.* 10. 6. *Now theſe were our examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as they alſo luſted.*

3. Am I willing to feel what they felt for ſin? O I dare not follow them in the ways of ſin! *quia me veſtigia terrent*; Leſt God ſhould plunge me into the deeps of horror, into which he caſt them.

Thus learn to keep your hearts in the hour of temptation to ſin.

10 *Seaſon.* "The tenth ſpecial Seaſon to keep the heart with all diligence, is the time of ſpiritual darkneſs and doubting when it is with the Soul, as it was with *Paul* in his dangerous voyage, neither Sun, nor Moon, nor Star appears for many days: When by reaſon of the hidings of Gods face, the prevalency of corruption, and the inevidence of grace, the Soul is even ready to give up all its hopes and comforts for loſt; to draw ſad and deſperate concluſions upon it ſelf; to call its former comforts vain deluſions; its grace hypocriſie. When the ſerene and clear Heavens are overcaſt with dark clouds, yea filled with Thunders, and horrible Tempeſts, when the poor penſive Soul ſits down and weeps forth this ſad Lamentation, *My hope is periſhed from the Lord!* Now to keep the heart from ſinking in ſuch a day as this, to enable it to maintain its own ſincerity, is a matter of great difficulty. The tenth Caſe then will be this.

Caſe 10. *How the people of God in dark and doubting Seaſons, may keep their hearts from entertaining ſuch ſad concluſions about their eſtates, as deſtroy their Peace, and unfit them for their Duty.*

There are two general heads, to which the grounds of doubting our ſincerity may be reduced. (1) Gods carriage towards the Soul, either in the time of ſome *extraordinary affliction*, or of ſome long and *ſad deſertion*. Or, (2) The Soul's carriage towards God: And here it uſually argues againſt the truth of its own graces, either (1) From its relapſes into the ſame ſins, from which it hath formerly riſen, with ſhame and ſorrow. Or, (2) From the ſenſible declining of its affections from God. Or, (3) From the exceſs of the affections towards creature-comforts and enjoyments. Or, (4) From its enlargements in publick and often ſtraitnings in private Duties. Or, (5) From ſome horrid injections of Satan, with which the Soul is greatly perplexed. Or, Laſtly, from Gods ſilence, and ſeeming denyal of its long depending Suits and Prayers.

Theſe are the common grounds of thoſe ſad concluſions: Now in order to the eſtabliſhment and ſupport of the heart in this condition, it will be neceſſary,

1. That you be acquainted with ſome general Truths, which have a tendency to the ſettlement of a trembling and doubting Soul.

2. That you be rightly inſtructed about the forementiond Particulars, which are the grounds of your doubting.

The general truths requiſite for poor doubting ſouls to be acquainted with, are theſe :

1. *That every working and appearance of hypocriſie doth not preſently prove the perſon in whom it is, to be an hypocrite.* You muſt carefully diſtinguiſh between the *preſence* and *predominancy* of hypocriſie : There are remains of deceitfulneſs in the beſt hearts ; *David* and *Peter* had ſad experience of it, yet the ſtanding frame and general bent of the heart being upright, it did not denominate them hypocrites.

2. *That we ought as well to hear what can be ſaid for us, as againſt us :* It is the ſin of upright hearts ſometimes to uſe an over rigid, and mercileſs ſeverity againſt themſelves : They do not indifferently conſider the caſe of their own Souls : It is in this caſe, as *Solomon* ſpeaks in another, *Prov.* 12. 7. *There is that maketh himſelf rich, and yet hath nothing ; and there is that maketh himſelf poor, and yet hath great riches.* 'Tis the damning ſin of the ſelf-flattering hypocrite, to make his condition better than 'tis : And it is the ſin and folly of ſome upright ones, to make their condition worſe than indeed it is. Why ſhould you be ſuch enemies to your own peace? To read over the evidences of Gods love to your Souls, as a man doth a Book which he intends to confute? Why do you ſtudy to find evaſions, to turn off thoſe comforts which are due to you? 'Tis ſaid of *Joſeph*, that he was minded to put away his eſpouſed *Mary*, not knowing that that holy thing which was conceived in her, was by the holy Ghoſt : And this may be your caſe. A third truth is this,

3. *That many a Saint hath charged and condemned himſelf for that, which God will never charge him with, nor condemn him for. Why haſt thou hardned our Hearts from thy Fear* ( ſaith the Church ) *Iſa.* 63. 17. and yet the verſe before manifeſts, that their hearts were not ſo hardned : Godly *Bradford* wrote himſelf an hypocrite, a painted ſepulchre ; yet doubtleſs God acquitted him of that charge.

4. *Every thing which is a ground of grief to the people of God, is not a ſufficient ground of queſtioning their ſincerity.* There are many more things to *trouble* you, than there are to *ſtumble* you : If upon every ſlip and failing through infirmity, you ſhould queſtion all that ever was wrought upon you, your life muſt be made up of doubtings and fears : You can never attain a ſettled peace, nor live that life of praiſe and thankfulneſs, the Goſpel calls for.

5. *The Soul is not at all times fit to paſs judgment upon its own condition :* To be ſure in the dark day of deſertion, when the Soul is benighted ; and in the ſtormy day of temptation, when the Soul is a hurry ; 'tis utterly unfit to judge its eſtate : *Examine your Hearts upon your Beds, and be ſtill, Pſal.* 4. This is rather a Seaſon for watching and reſiſting, than for judging and determining.

6. *That every breach of peace with God, is not a breach of Covenant with God.* The wife hath many weakneſſes and failings, often grieves and diſpleaſes her Husband ; yet in the main is faithful, and truly loves him : Theſe failings may cauſe him to alter his carriage, but not to withdraw his Love, or deny his Relation. *Return, O blackſliding* Iſrael, *for I am Marryed unto you.*

7. *Laſtly, Whatever our ſin, or trouble be, it ſhould rather drive us to God, than from God.* Pardon my ſin for it is great, *Pſal.* 25. 11. Suppoſe it be true, that thou haſt ſo and ſo ſinned, that thou art thus long and ſadly deſerted : Yet 'tis a falſe Inference, that therefore thou ſhouldeſt be diſcouraged, as if there were no help for thee in thy God. When you have well digeſted theſe ſeven eſtabliſhing Truths, if ſtill the doubt remain, then conſider, what may be replyed to the particular grounds of thoſe Doubts. As,

1. You doubt, and are ready to conclude, the Lord hath no regard or love for your Souls, becauſe of ſome extraordinary affliction which is come upon you : But I would not have thy Soul ſo to conclude, till thou be able ſatisfactorily to Anſwer theſe Three Queſtions.

1 *Queſt.* If great troubles and afflictions be marks of Gods hatred, Why ſhould not impunity and conſtant proſperity be tokens of his love? For *contrariorum contraria eſt ratio & conſequentia?* of contrary things, there is a contrary reaſon and conſequence : But is this ſo indeed? or ſaith not the Scripture quite otherwiſe? *Prov.* 1. 32. *The proſperity of fools deſtroy them.* So *Pſal.* 73. 5.

2 *Queſt.* Dare I draw the ſame concluſion upon all others that have been as much, yea more afflicted than my ſelf? If this Argument conclude againſt thee, then ſo it doth againſt every one in thy condition ; yea, the greater the affliction of any Child of God hath been, the more ſtrongly the Argument ſtill concludes : And then woe to *David, Job, Heman, Paul*, and all that have been afflicted as they were.

3. *Queſt.* Had God extempted you only from thoſe Troubles, which all other his People feel, would not that have been a greater ground of doubting to you than this? Eſpecially ſince the Scripture ſaith, *Heb.* 12. 8. *If ye be without Chaſtenings, whereof all are partakers, then are ye Baſtards, and not Sons.*

Oh how is our Father put to it by froward Children! If he afflicts, then one crys he loves me not : If he exempt from Affliction, others queſtion his love upon that ground. Surely you have other work to do under the Rod, than this.

2. Or do you raſhly infer the Lord hath no love for you, becauſe he hides his Face from you ; that your condition is miſerable, becauſe dark and uncomfortable? Before you draw ſuch raſh Concluſions, ſee what Anſwer you can give to theſe Four following Queries.

1 Quer. *If any Action of God towards his People will bear a favourable, as well as a harſh and ſevere conſtruction, Why ſhould not his People interpret it in the beſt ſenſe?* And is not this ſuch? May he not have a deſign of Love, as well as of Hatred, in this Diſpenſation? May he not depart for a Seaſon, and not for ever ; yea, that he might not depart for ever? You are not the firſt that have miſtaken God's ends in Deſertion, *Iſa.* 49. 14. *Sion ſaid, the Lord hath forſaken me, my God hath forgotten me:* Was it ſo indeed? Nothing leſs, *Ver.* 15. *Can a Mother forget,* &c.

2 Quer. *Do you find the marks of an abſulute, total and final Deſertion upon your own Spirits, that you are ſo apt to conclude yours to be ſuch?* Do you find your heart inclined to forſake God? Have you loſt your conſcientious tenderneſs in point of ſin?

If ſo, ſad Characters appear upon you indeed; but if in this dark Hour you are as tender of Sin as ever‘ as much reſolved to cleave to God as ever; I cannot, I will not forſake God, let him do what he will with me; Oh no, I cannot. If your Hearts work thus, it can be but a partial, limited, and temporary Deſertion; by this he ſtill keeps his Intereſt in your Hearts, a ſure ſign he will return, and viſit you again.

3 Quer. *Is Senſe and Feeling a competent Judge of God's Actions and Deſigns?* Or may a Man ſafely rely upon its Teſtimony after ſo many Diſcoveries of the Infallibility of it? Is this a ſound Argument? If God had any Love for my Soul, if it were not quite gone, I ſhould feel it now as well as in former times; but I cannot feel it, therefore it's quite gone. Do not you know the Sun ſtill keeps on his Courſe in the Heavens, even in full and cloſe Weather, when you cannot ſee it? And may it not be ſo with the Love of God? Read *Iſa.* 50. 10. May not I as well conclude in Winter, when the Flowers have hid their beautiful Heads under Ground, they are quite dead and gone, becauſe I cannot find them in *December*, where I ſaw them in *May*?

4 *Quer.* Think you the Lord cares not to break his Childrens Hearts, and his own Promiſe too? Hath he no more Regard to either? If he return no more, theſe muſt be the conſequents, *Iſa.* 57. 16, 17. *Heb.* 13. 5.

Well then, from God's Carriage towards you, either in Affliction or Deſertion, no ſuch Diſcouraging, Heart-ſinking Concluſions can be inferr'd. Next let us ſee whether they may not be inferr'd from our Carriage towards God: And here the principal Grounds of Doubting are ſuch as theſe:

1. I have fallen again into the ſame Sin from which I have formerly riſen with Repentance and Reſolution, therefore my Sinning is cuſtomary Sinning, a Spot that is not the Spot of God's Children: Hence the upright Soul trembles; upon this 'tis ready to affirm, that all its former Humiliations for, and Oppoſitions unto Sin, were but Acts of Hypocriſie. But ſtay, poor trembling Heart:

1 Quer. *If this be ſo, how comes it to paſs that Chriſt put ſuch a favourable Conſtruction upon the Diſciples ſleeping the third time, when he had as often reproved them for it?* Matth. 26. 40, 41. And how is it that we find in Scripture ſo many Promiſes made not only to the ſirſt Sins, but alſo to the Backſlidings of God's People? *Jer.* 3. 22. *Hoſ.* 14. 4.

2 Quer. *Is not your Repentance and Care renewed as often as your Guilt is renewed?* Yea, the oftner you ſin, the more you are troubled; it is not ſo in Cuſtomary Sinning, the riſe whereof *Bernard* excellently diſcovers: 1. (ſaith he) when a Man accuſtomed to good, ſinneth grievouſly, it ſeems inſupportable, ea, he ſeems to deſcend alive into Hell. 2. In Proceſs of Time it ſeems not inſupportable, but eavy; and betwixt inſupportable and heavy, there s no ſmall Deſcent. 3 Next it becomes Light, his onſcience ſmites but faintly, and he feels not he Stripes of it. 4. Then there is not only a otal Inſenſibleneſs of it, but that which was itter and diſpleaſing, is now become ſweet and leaſing in ſome Degree. 5. Then 'tis turned in Cuſtom, and not only pleaſes, but daily pleaſes. Laſtly, Cuſtom is turned into Nature, he cannot be pulled away from it; but defends and pleads for it: This is Cuſtomary Sinning, this is the Way of the wicked; but the quite contrary is our Condition.

*Lib. de Conſc.* 1. 109.

3 Quer. *Are you ſure from Scripture Grounds, that a good Man may not relapſe again and again into the ſame Sin?* 'Tis true, as for groſs Sins, they do not uſe to relapſe into them. *David* committed Adultery no more: *Paul* perſecuted the Church no more: *Peter* denyed Chriſt no more: But I ſpeak of ordinary Infirmities: *Job*'s Friends were good Men, yet (ſaith he) *Chap* 19. 3. *Theſe ten times have ye reproached me.* So then, no ſuch Concluſions follow from this firſt Ground of Doubting.

2 *The ſecond Ground is, the Declining and Withering of our Affections to ſpiritual Things.* O! (ſaith the upright Soul) if ever I had been planted a right Seed, I ſhould have been as a green Olive-Tree in the Houſe of my God; but my Branches wither, therefore my Root is naught. But ſtay,

1 Quer. *May you not be miſtaken about the decay of Grace, and fading of your Affections?* What if they be not ſo quick and raviſhing as at firſt; May not that be recompenſed in the Spirituality and Solidity of them now? *Phil.* 1. 9. *I pray God your Love may abound more and more in all Judgment:* It may be more ſolid, though not ſo *ferverous*: Or do you not miſtake, by looking forward to what you would be, rather than backward to what once you were? 'Tis a good Note of *Ames*: We diſcern the Growth of Grace, as the Growth of Plants, which we preceive rather *Creviſſe quam Creſcere*, to have grown, than to grow.

2 *Quer.* But grant it be ſo indeed as you affirm, muſt it needs follow, that the Root of the Matter is not in you? *David*'s laſt Ways are diſtinguiſhed from his firſt, 2 *Chr.* 17. 3. and yet both firſt and laſt, a Holy Man. The Church of *Epheſus* is charged by Chriſt for leaving her Firſt Love, and yet a Golden Candelſtick, many precious Saints in that Church, *Rev.* 2. 2, 3, 4.

3. A Third Ground of theſe ſad Concluſions, is, The Exceſs of our Affections to ſome Creature Enjoyments. I fear, I love the Creature more than God; and if ſo, my Love is but Hypocritical: I ſometimes feel ſtronger, and more ſenſible Motions of my Heart, to Earthly Comforts, than I do to Heavenly Objects; Therefore my Soul is not upright in me. But ſtay Soul,

1 Quer. *May not a Man love God, more ſolidly and ſtrongly, than the Creature, and yet his Affections to the Creatures be ſometimes moved more violently and ſenſibly than toward God?* As rooted Malice argues a ſtronger Hatred, than a ſudden, though more violent Paſſion: So we muſt meaſure our Love, not by a violent Motion of it, now and then, but by the depth of the Root, and Conſtancy of its Actings; becauſe *David* was ſo paſſionately moved for *Abſalom*, *Joab* concludes, that if he had lived, and all the People dyed, *it would have pleaſed him well*, 2 Sam. 19. 7. But that was argued more like a *Souldier* than a *Logician*.

2 Quer. *If you indeed love the Creature for it ſelf, if you make it your End, and Religion but a means, then the Concluſion is rightly drawn upon you.*

But if you love the Creature in reference to God, and ſee nothing in it ſeparated from him, though ſometimes your Affections offend in the exceſs; This is conſiſtent with ſincere Love to God. To Love the Creature inordinately, *(i. e.)* to put it in God's room, and make it a Mans end; This is the Love of a Carnal Heart; To Love it Immoderately, that is, to let out more Affection to it than we ought, is ſometimes the ſin of the beſt Hearts.

3 Quer. *Have not many Souls feared as you do, that when Chriſt and Creatures ſhould ſtand as Competitors in ſome eminent Tryal, they ſhould forſaek Chriſt rather than the Creature; and yet when brought to that Dilemma, have been able to caſt all the World at their Heels for Chriſt?* Many of the *Martyrs* had ſuch fears, and thus they were ſatisfied: The Prevalency of Love is beſt ſeen at Parting; There may be more Love to Chriſt in thy Soul than thou art now aware of; And if God bring thee to ſuch a pinch, thou mayſt ſee it.

4. A Fourth Ground of theſe ſad Concluſions is from hence, That we find our Hearts ſometimes more ſtraitned in private, than in Publick Duties. Oh if my Soul were ſincere, its actings in Duty would be uniform. I fear I am but a *Phariſee* upon this Ground. 'Tis ſad indeed we ſhould at any time find our Hearts ſtraitned in Private; But

1 Query *Do not all thine Enlargements in Duty whether Publick, or Private, depend upon the Spirit, who is the Lord of Influences, and according as he gives out, or holds back thoſe Influences, ſo art thou inlarged or ſtraitned?* And what if ſometimes he pleaſe to give that in a publick, which he withholds in a private Duty, as long as thy Soul is ſatisfied in neither, without Communion with God, and the ſtraitneſs of thy Heart is indeed its Burden? Doth that argue thee to be an Hypocrite?

2 Quer. *Doſt thou not make Conſcience of Private Duties, and ſet thy ſelf as before the Lord in them?* Indeed, if thou live in the conſtant neglect or careleſs performance of them, if thou art *curious* about Publick, and *careleſs* about Private Duties, that would be a ſad ſign: But when you have Conſcientiouſly performed, and often met with God in them, it will not follow you are inſincere, becauſe that Communion is ſometimes interrupted. Beſides,

3 Quer. *May there not be ſomething at ſometimes in a Publick, which is wanting in a Private Duty, to raiſe and advantage thine affections?* God may ſometimes make uſe of the melting affections of them with whom thou heareſt or prayeſt, as petty Inſtruments to move thy affections; this advantage is wanting in private: Therefore from hence (the caſe ſo ſtanding) no ſuch inference can be drawn.

5. Another ground is from thoſe horrid injections of Satan, with which, the Soul is greatly perplexed; by theſe I may ſee, what an Heart I have: Can grace be where theſe are?

Yes, Grace may be where ſuch thoughts are, though not where they are lodg'd and conſented to; Doſt thou cry out under the Burthen? Enter thy proteſt in Heaven againſt them; Strive to keep up holy and Reverend Thoughts of God? then 'tis a *Rape*, not a Voluntary *Proſtitution.*

6. The laſt Ground of theſe ſad Concluſions, is the Lords long ſilence, and ſeeming denyal of our long depending ſuits and Prayers. O if God had any regard to my Soul, he would have heard my cries before now! But I have no anſwer from him, therefore no intereſt in him. But ſtay doubting Soul.

1 Quer. *Have not many Saints ſtumbled upon this ſtone before thee?* Pſal. 31:22. *I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thine Eyes: Nevertheleſs thou heardeſt the Voice of my Supplication.* So the Church, *Lam.* 3. 44. "Thou covereſt thy ſelf "with a Cloud, that our Prayers ſhould not paſs "through. *Jonah* 2. 4. Then ſaid I, I am caſt out of thy ſight. And may not you be miſtaken in this matter as well as they?

2 Quer. Though Gods abhoring, and final rejecting prayer, be an Argument of his abhorring the perſon that prays; Yet dare we conclude ſo from a meer ſuſpenſion of the anſwer? *God may bear long with his own Elect, that cry unto him Day and Night,* Luke 18. 7.

3 Quer. *Can you deny but that there are ſome ſigns appearing in your Souls, even whilſt God ſuſpends his anſwer, that argue your Prayers are not rejected by him?* as (1.) Though no anſwer come, yet you are ſtill reſolved to wait: You dare not ſay as that profane wretch did, 2 *Kings* 6. 33. *This evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I wait for him any longer?* (2.) Yo can clear and juſtify God ſtill, and lay the reaſon and cauſe of his ſilence upon your ſelves. So did *David, Pſal.* 22. 2, 3. *O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou heareſt not; and in the Night, and am not ſilent, but thou art holy,* &c. (3.) The ſuſpenſion of Gods anſwer makes you inquiſitive into your own Hearts, what evils are there that obſtruct your Prayers? So the Church, *Lam.* 3. 8. *He ſhutteth out my Prayer:* And how doth he this Work? You may ſee, *v.* 40. *Let us ſearch and try our ways:* Well then, neither from hence may you conclude that God hath no love for your Souls.

And thus I have ſhewn you, how to keep your Hearts in a dark and doubting ſeaſon from thoſe deſperate concluſions of unbelief. God forbid any falſe heart ſhould incourage it ſelf from theſe things, 'tis our unhappineſs, that when we give Saints and ſinners their proper portions, that each of them are ſo prone to take up the others part.

*Caution.*

11 *Seaſon.* "The eleventh ſpecial ſeaſon calling "for this Diligence to keep our Hearts, is, "when ſufferings for Religion come to an height, "then look to your Hearts. *Mat.* 24. 8, 9, 10 "*All theſe are the begining of ſorrows, and they "ſhall deliver you up to be afflicted, and ſhall ki "you; and ye ſhall be hated of all Nations for m "names ſake: and THEN ſhall many be Offend- "ded.* When ſufferings for Religion grow hot "then Bleſſed is he that is not offended in Chriſt "troubles are then at an height. (1.) When "mans neareſt Friends and Relations forſake an "leave him, *Micha.* 7. 5, 6. 2 *Tim.* 4. 16. Whe "a Man is ingaged alone. (2.) When it come "to reſiſting to Blood, *Heb.* 12. 4. (3.) Whe "temptations are preſented to us in our ſuffering "*Heb.* 11. 37. (4.) When eminent Perſons f "profeſſion turn aſide, and deſert the cauſe "Chriſt, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. (5.) When God hid "his face in a ſuffering hour, *Jer.* 17. 17. (6. "When Satan falls upon us with ſtrong Temp "tions, to Queſtion the grounds of our Suffering "or the Souls Intereſt in Chriſt: Now "hard to Keeep the Heart from Turni

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"back, and the ſteps from declining God's ways.
"The Eleventh Queſtion then ſhall be this:

11 Caſe. *How the Heart may be Kept from relapſing under the greateſt ſufferings for Religion?* If the bitterneſs of ſufferings at any time cauſe thy Soul to diſtaſte the way of God, and take up thoughts of forſaking it, ſtay thine heart under that Temptation, by propounding theſe Eight Queſtions ſolemnly to it.

1 Queſt. *What reproach and diſhonour ſhall I pour upon Chriſt and Religion, by deſerting him at ſuch a time as this?* This will proclaim to all the World, that how much ſoever I have boaſted of the Promiſes, yet when it comes to the Tryal, I dare hazard nothing upon the credit of them: And how will this open the Mouths of Chriſt's Enemies to Blaſpheme? O better had I never been Born, than that Worthy Name ſhould be Blaſphemed through me! Shall I furniſh the Triumphs of the Uncircumciſed? Shall I make Mirth in Hell? O if I did but value the Name of Chriſt as much as many a Wicked Man values his own Name, I would never endure to ſee it expoſed in ſuch Contempt! Will proud duſt and aſhes venture Death, yea Hell, rather than a blot upon their Name? And ſhall I venture nothing to ſalve the Honour and Reputation of Chriſt?

2 Queſt. *Dare I Violate my Conſcience to ſave my fleſh? Who ſhall comfort me when Conſcieucc wounds me?* What comfort is there in Life, Liberty, or Friends, when Peace is taken away from the Inner Man? When *Conſtantius* threatned to cut off *Samoſatenus* his Right hand, if he would not ſubſcribe ſomewhat that was againſt his Conſcience, he held up both his hands to the Meſſenger that was ſent, ſaying, He ſhall cut off both rather than I will do it: Farewell all Peace, joy and comfort, from that day forward; *Had Zimri peace that ſlew his Maſter?* ſaid *Jezebel*: So ſay I here, Had *Judas* peace? Had *Spira* peace? And ſhall you have peace, if you tread in their ſteps? O conſider what you do!

3 Queſt. *Is not the publick intereſt of Chriſt and Religion, infinitely more than any private intereſt of my own?* 'Tis a famous paſſage that of *Terentius*, Captain to *Adrian* the Emperour, he preſented a Petition to *Adrian*, That the Chriſtians might have a Temple by themſelves to Worſhip God apart from the *Arians*: The Emperour tore his Petition and threw it away, bidding him to ask ſomewhat for himſelf, and it ſhould be granted: But he Modeſtly gathered up the pieces of his Petition again, and told him, *If he could not be heard in God's cauſe, he would never ask any thing for himſelf.* Yea, even *Tully*, though an Heathen, could ſay, *Ne immortalitatem quidem contra rem publicam.* He would not except even of Immortality it ſelf againſt the Common-Wealth. O if we had more Publick, we ſhould not have ſuch Cowardly Spirits!

4 Queſt. *Did Jeſus Chriſt ſerve me ſo, when for my ſake he expoſed himſelf to far greater ſufferings than can be, before me?* His ſufferings were great indeed, he ſuffered from all Hands, in all his Offices, in every Member, not only in his Body, but in his Soul; yea, the ſufferings of his Soul, were the very Soul of his ſufferings: Witneſs the bloody ſweat in the Garden, Witneſs that Heart-Melting and Heaven-Rending out-cry upon the Croſs, *My God, My God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* and yet he flinched not, *he endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame.* Alas! what are my ſufferings compar'd with Chriſts? he hath drunk up all that Vinegar and Gall that would make my ſufferings bitter. When one of the Martyrs was asked, Why he was ſo merry at his Death? Oh ſaid he! it is becauſe the Soul of Chriſt was ſo heavy at his Death. Did Chriſt bear ſuch a burden for me, with unbroken patience, and conſtancy? And ſhall I ſhrink back from momentary and light Afflictions for him?

5 Queſt. *Is not eternal Life worth the ſuffering of a moments pain?* If I ſuffer with him, I ſhall reign with him. O how will men venture Life and Limb for a fading Crown, ſwim through Seas of Blood to a Throne? And will I venture nothing? Suffer nothing for the Crown of Glory that fadeth not away? My dog will follow my horſes heels from morning to night, take many a weary ſtep through mire and dirt, rather than leave me, though at night all he gets by it is but Bones and blows. If my Soul had any true greatneſs, any ſparks of generoſity in it, how would it deſpiſe the ſufferings of the way, for the glory of the end! How would it break down all difficulties before it, whilſt by an eye of faith it ſees the forerunner who is already entered, ſtanding as it were upon the walls of Heaven, with the Crown in his hand, ſaying, *He that overcometh ſhall inherit all thins:* Come on then, my Soul, come on, there is eternal life laid up for them that by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, honour and immortality, *Rom.* 2. 7.

6 Queſt. *Can I ſo eaſily caſt off the ſociety and company of the Saints, and give the right hand of fellowſhip to the Wicked?* How can I part with ſuch lovely companions as theſe have been? How often have I been benefited by their Councels? *Ezra.* 10. 3. How often refreſhed, warmed and quickned by their Company? *Eccleſ.* 4. 10, 11. How often have I faſted and prayed with them? What ſweet counſel have I taken with them, and gone to the Houſe of God in company? And ſhall I now ſhake hands with them, and ſay, Farewel, all ye Saints, for ever; I ſhall never be among you more; come Drunkards, Swearers, Blaſphemers, Perſecutors, you ſhall be my everlaſting companions? O rather let my Body and Soul be rent aſunder, than that ever I ſhould ſay thus to the Excellent of the Earth, in whom is all my delight.

7 Queſt. *Have I ſeriouſly conſidered the terrible Scripture-Comminations againſt backſliders?* O my Heart! Dareſt thou turn thy back upon the very points of ſuch threatnings as theſe? *Jer.* 17. 5, 6. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Curſed be the Man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his Arm; And whoſe heart departeth from the Lord, for he ſhall be like the Heath in the Deſart, and ſhall not ſee when good cometh;* (i. e.) *the Curſe of God ſhall wither him Root and Branch.* And Heb. 14. 26, 27. *If we ſin wilfully after we have received the Knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery indignation which ſhall devour the adverſaries.* And again ver. 38. *If any Man draw back, my Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him:* As if he ſhould ſay, *Take him World, take him Devil, for your own, I have no delight in him.* O who dare draw back, when God hath hedged up the way with ſuch terrible threats as theſe!

Queſt. 8. *Can I look Chriſt in the Face at the Day of Judgment, if I deſert him now?*

*He that is aſhamed of me and of my Words, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him ſhall the Son of Men be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels*, Mark 8. 38. Yet a little while, and you ſhall ſee the Sign of the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory; the laſt Trump ſhall ſound, the Dead, both Small and Great, even all that ſleep in the Duſt, ſhall awake, and come before that great white Throne, on which Chriſt ſhall ſit in that Day. And now do but imagine thou ſaweſt the trembling Knees, and quivering Lips of guilty Sinners; imagine thou heardeſt the dreadful Sentence of the Judge upon them, *Go ye curſed*, &c. And then a Cry, the weeping, Wailing, and wringing of Hands, that there ſhall be: Wouldſt thou deſert Chriſt now to protract a poor, miſerable Life on Earth? If the Word of God be true, if the Sayings of Chriſt be ſealed and faithful, this ſhall be the Portion of the Apoſtate. 'Tis an eaſie Thing to ſtop the Mouth of Conſcience now, but will it be eaſie to ſtop the Mouth of the Judge then? Thus keep thy Heart, that *it depart not from the living God.*

*Seaſ.* 12. The Twelfth Seaſon of looking diligently to our Hearts, and keeping them with greateſt Care, is the Time of Sickneſs: “When a Child of God draws nigh to Eternity, when there are but a few Sands more in the Upper-part of his Glaſs to run down: Now Satan buſily beſtirs himſelf; of him it may be ſaid, as of the natural Serpent, *Nunquam niſi moriens producitur in longum*; he is never ſeen at his full Length till dying: And now his great Deſign, ſince he cannot win the Soul from God, is to diſcourage, and make it unwilling to go to God, though the gracious Soul with *Jacob*, ſhould then rouze up it ſelf upon a dying Bed, and rejoyce that the Marriage Day of the Lamb is now almoſt come; though it ſhould then ſay with dying *Auſtin*, *Vivere renuo ut Chriſto vivam*; I deſpiſe Life to be with Chriſt. Or as dying *Milius*, when one asked him, Whether he were willing to dye? *O*, ſaid he, *illius eſt nolle mori qui nolit ire ad Chriſtum*; let him be unwilling to dye, who is unwilling to go to Chriſt. But O! what ſhrinking from Death? What Lothneſs to depart, may ſometimes (indeed too frequently) be obſerved in the People of God? How loth are ſome of them to take death by the cold Hand? If ſuch a Liberty were indulged to us, not to be diſſolved, till we diſſolve our ſelves; when ſhould we ſay with St. *Paul*, *I deſire to be diſſolved?* Well then, the laſt Caſe ſhall be this.

Caſe 12. *How the People of God in Times of Sickneſs may get their Hearts looſe from all Earthly Engagements, and perſwade them into a Willingneſs to dye.*

And there are ſeven Arguments, which I ſhall urge upon the People of God at ſuch a Time as this, to make them cheerfully entertain the Meſſengers of Death, and dye, as well as live, like Saints: And the firſt is this:

1 Argu. *Firſt the Harmleſneſs of Death to the People of God.* Though it keeps its *dart*, it hath loſt its Sting: A Saint (to allude to that, *Iſa.* 11. 8.) *May play upon the hole of this Aſpe, and put his Hand into the Cockatrices den.* Death is the Cockatrice, or Aſpe; the Grave is his Hole or Den; a Saint need not fear to put his Hand boldly into it: It hath left and loſt its Sting in the Sides of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55. *O Death! Where is thy Sting?* Why art thou affraid, O Saint, that this Sickneſs may be thy Death, as long as thou knoweſt, that the Death of Chriſt is the Death of Death? Indeed, if thou didſt dye in thy Sins, as, *Job* 8. 21. if Death, as a King, did reign over thee, *Rom.* 5. 14. if it could feed upon thee, as the Lyon doth upon the Prey he hath taken, as *Pſal.* 49. 14. *If Hell followed the Pale Horſe, as it is*, Rev. 6. 8. Then thou mighteſt well ſtartle and ſhrink back from it, but when God hath put away thy Sins from thee, *as far as the Eaſt is from the Weſt*, Pſal. 103. 12. As long as there is no other Evil left in Death, for thee to encounter with, but Bodily Pain; as long as the Scriptures repreſent it to thee under ſuch Harmleſs and eaſie Notions, as the putting off thy Cloaths, 2 *Cor.* 5. 2. *And lying down to ſleep upon thy Bed*, Iſa. 57. 2. Why ſhouldeſt thou be afraid? There is as much Difference betwixt Death to the People of God, and others, as betwixt the Unicorns Horn, when it is upon the Head of that fierce Beaſt, and when it is in the Apothecaries Shops, where it is made Salubrious and Medicinal.

2 Arg. *Thy Heart may be kept from ſhrinking back at ſuch a Time as this, by Conſidering the Neceſſity of Death, in Order to the full Fruition of God.*

Whether thou art willing to dye or no, I aſſure thee there is no other Way to obtain the full Satisfaction of thy Soul, and compleat its Happineſs till the Hand of Death do thee the Kind office to draw aſide the Curtain or Fleſh, thy Soul cannot ſee God: This Animal Life ſtands betwixt him and thee, 2 *Cor.* 5. 6. *Whilſt we are at home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord.* Thy Body muſt be refined and caſt into a new Mould, elſe that new Wine of Heavenly Glory would break it. *Paul* in his higheſt Rapture, 2 *Cor.* 12. 4. when he heard Things unutterable, was then but as a Stander by, a Looker on; not admitted into the Company, as one of them; but as the Angels are in our Aſſemblies, ſo was *Paul* in that glorious Aſſembly above, and no otherwiſe; and yet even for this he muſt as it were be taken out of the Body, uncloathed for a little Time, to have a Glympſe of that Glory, and then put on his Cloaths again. O then! Who would not be willing to dye for a full Sight and Enjoyment of God? Methinks thy Soul ſhould look and ſigh, like a Priſoner, through the Grates of this Mortality; *O that I had Wings like a Dove, then would I fly away and be at reſt:* Moſt Men need Patience to dye, but a Saint that underſtands, what Death admits him to, ſhould rather need Patience to Live; methinks he ſhould often look out, and liſten on a Death-bed for his Lords Coming; and when he receives the News of his approaching Change, ſhould ſay, *The Voice of my Beloved! Behold, he cometh leaping over the Mountains, skipping over the Hills*, Cant. 2. 8.

Arg. 3. *Another Argument perſwading to this Willingneſs, is the immediate Succeſſion of a more excellent and glorious Life.*

'Tis but wink, and you ſhall ſee God: Your Happineſs ſhall not be deferred till the Reſurrection; but as ſoon as the Body is dead, the gracious Soul is ſwallowed up in Life, *Rom.* 8. 10, 11.

11. When once you have looſed from this ſhore in a few Moments, your Souls will be wafted over upon the Wings of Angels to the other ſhore of a Glorious Eternity. *Phil.* 1. 23. *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt.* Did the Soul and Body dye together, as *Berilius* taught; or did they ſleep till the Reſurrection, as others have groundleſly fancyed; it had been a Madneſs for *Paul* to deſire a Diſſolution for the injoyment of Chriſt: For if this were ſo, he enjoyed more of Chriſt whilſt his Soul dwelt in its fleſhly Tabernacle, then he ſhould out of it.

There are but two ways of the Souls living known in Scripture, *viz.* The life of *Faith*, and the Life of *Viſion*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. Thoſe two divide all Time, both preſent and future, betwixt them, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. If when Faith fails, Sight ſhould not immediately ſucceed, what ſhould become of the unbodyed Soul? But bleſſed be God this great Heart-eſtabliſhing Truth is evidently revealed in Scripture, *Luk.* 23. 43. You have Chriſt's Promiſe, *John* 14. 3. *I will come and receive you to my ſelf.* O what a Change will a few Moments make upon your condition? Rouze up, dying Saint, when thy Soul is come out a little farther; when it ſhall ſtand like *Abraham* in its Tent Door, the Angels of God ſhall ſoon be with it: The Souls of the Elect are, as it were, put out to the Anges to Nurſe, and When they Dye, theſe Angels carry them home again to their Fathers Houſe: If an Angel were cauſed to fly ſwiftly to bring a Saint the Anſwer of his Prayer, *Dan.* 9. 22. How much more will the Angels come poſt from Heaven to Receive and Transfer the Praying Soul it ſelf?

4 Argu. Farther, *It may much conduce to thy willingneſs to dye, to conſider, That by Death, God often-times hides his People out of the way of all Temptations and Troubles upon Earth,* Rev. 14. 13. *Write, From henceforth, Bleſſed are the Dead that dye in the Lord.* 'Tis God's uſual way, when ſome extraordinary Calamities are coming upon the World, to ſet his People out of harms way before hand, *Iſa.* 57. 1. *Merciful men are taken away from the evil to come.* So *Mich.* 7. 1, 2. When ſuch an evil time comes as is there deſcribed, *That they all lye in wait for Blood, and every man hunts his Brother in a Net:* Before that, God by an Act of favour houſes his People before hand; Doſt thou know what evil may be in the Earth, which thou art ſo loth to leave? Thy God removes thee for thy great advantage; thou art disbanded by death, and called off the field; other poor Saints muſt ſtand to it, and endure a great fight of afflictions.

'Tis obſerved that *Methuſala* dyed the very year before the flood; *Auguſtin*, a little before the ſacking of *Hippo*, *Parens* juſt before the taking of *Heydelburgh*: *Luther* obſerves that all the Apoſtles dyed before the deſtructien of *Jeruſalem*, and *Luther* himſelf before the Wars brake out in *Germany*: It may be the Lord ſees thy tender heart cannot endure to ſee the miſery, or bear the Temptations that are coming, and therefore will now gather thee to thy Grave in peace; and yet wilt thou cry, O ſpare me a little longer?

5 Arg. *If yet thy Heart hang Back, conſider the great advantage you will have by Death, above all that ever you enjoyed on earth*; and that (1) As to your Communion with God: (2) As to your Communion with Saints.

1. For your Communion with God: The time of perfecting that, is now come: Thy Soul ſhall ſhortly ſtand before the Face of God, and have the immediate emanations and beamings forth of his Glory upon it; here thy Soul is remote from God, the beams of his Glory ſtrike it but obliquely and feebly, but ſhortly it will be under the Line, and there the Sun ſhall ſtand ſtill, as it did in *Gibeon*; there ſhall be no cloudings, nor declinings of it: O how ſhould this wrap thy Soul with deſires of being uncloathed!

2. As for the enjoyment of Saints, here indeed we have Fellowſhip with them of the Lower Form; but that Fellowſhip is ſo diſſweetned by remaining Corruptions, that there is no ſatisfaction in it: As it is the greateſt plague that can befall an Hypocrite to live in a pure Church, ſo 'tis the greateſt vexation to the Spirit of a Saint, to live in a corrupt and diſorder'd Church; but when Death hath admitted you into that Glorious Aſſemby of the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect, you ſhall have the deſire of your hearts: Here you cannot fully cloſe on with another; yea, you cannot fully cloſe with your own Souls: O what Diſcords, Jarrings, Cenſurings are here? What perfect bleſſed harmony there? In Heaven each Saint loves another as himſelf, they are altogether lovely. O my Soul, haſte thee away from the Lyons Dens, from the Mountains of *Bether*, from divided Saints, to thoſe Mountains of Myrhe, and Hills of Franckincenſe; Thou art now going unto thine own People, as the Apoſtles Phraſe imports, 2 *Cor.* 5. 8.

6 Arg. If this will not do, *Conſider what heavy burdens Death will eaſe thy ſhoulders of.*

In this Tabernacle we groan, being burden'd, (1) With Bodily Diſtempers; how true do we find that of *Theophraſtus*, The Soul pays a dear Rent for the Tenement it now lives in? But Glorified Bodies are clogged with no indiſpoſitions; Death is the beſt Phyſitian, it will cure thee of all Diſeaſes at once. (2) With the indwelling of Sin; this makes us groan from the very Bowels, *Romans* 7. 24. *But he that is dead, is free from ſin*, *Rom.* 6. 7. Hath Juſtification deſtroyed its *Damning Power*, and Sanctification its *Reigning Power?* So Glorification deſtroys its very Being and Exiſtence. (3) We groan under Temptations here, but as ſoon as we are out of the Body, we are out of the Reach of Temptation: When once thou art [illegible] got into Heaven, thou mayſt ſay, Now Satan, I am there where thou canſt not come; for as the Damned in Hell are *malo obformati*, ſo fixed in ſin and miſery, that their condition cannot be altered; ſo Glorified Saints are *bono confirmati*; ſo fixed in Holineſs and Glory, that they cannot be ſhaken. (4) Here we groan under various Troubles and Afflictions, but then the days of our mourning are ended. God ſhall wipe away all tears from our eyes: O then let us haſte away, that we may be at reſt.

7 Arg. If ſtill thou linger like *Lot* in *Sodom*, *then laſtly, Examine all the Pleas and Pretences for a longer time on Earth.* Why art thou unwiling to Dye?

1 *Object.* Oh I have many Relations in the

World, I know not what will become of them when I am gone.

*Sol.* 1. If thou art troubled about their Bodies, and outward Condition, Why ſhould not that Word ſatisfie thee, *Jer.* 49. 11. *Leave thy Fatherleſs Children to me, I will keep them alive, and let thy Widows truſt in me.* *Luther* in his laſt Will and Teſtament hath this Expreſſion, “Lord, thou haſt given me Wife and Children, I have nothing to leave them, but I commit them unto thee. O Father of the Fatherleſs, and Judge of Widows, *Nutri, Serva, Doce*; Nouriſh, Keep, and Teach them. Or, art thou troubled for their Souls? Thou canſt not convert them, if thou ſhouldſt live, and God can make thy Prayers and Counſels to live, and take Place upon them when thou art dead.

2 *Object.* I would fain live, to do God more Service in the World.

*Sol.* Well, but if he have no more Service for thee to do here, why ſhouldſt thou not ſay with *David: If he have no delight to uſe me any farther, here am I, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* In this World thou haſt no more do, but he is calling thee to an higher Service and Imployment in Heaven; and what thou wouldſt do for him here, he can do that by other Hands.

3 *Object.* I am not yet fully ready, I am not as a Bride compleatly adorned for the Bridegroom.

*Sol.* 1. Thy Juſtification is compleat already, though thy Sanctification be not ſo; and the Way to make it ſo, is to dye; for till then, it will have its Defects and Wants.

4 *Object.* O but I want Aſſurance, if I had that, I could dye preſently!

*Sol.* 1. Yea, there it ſticks indeed; but then conſider, That an Hearty Willingneſs to leave all the World to be freed from Sin, and be with God, is the next Way to that deſired Aſſurance; no Carnal Perſon was ever willing to dye upon this Ground.

And thus I have finiſh'd thoſe Caſes which ſo nearly concern the People of God, in the ſeveral Conditions of their Life, and taught them how to keep their Hearts in all. I ſhall next apply the whole.

## I. Uſe of Information.

YOU have heared, that the Keeping of the Heart is the great Work of a Chriſtian, in which the very Soul and Life of Religion conſiſts, and without which, all other Duties are of no value with God; hence then I ſhall infer, to the Conſternation of Hypocrites, and Formal Profeſſors,

1. *That the Pains and Labours which many Perſons have taken in Religion, is but loſt Labour, and Pains to no purpoſe, ſuch as will never turn to account.*

Many great Services have been performed, many Glorious Works are wrought by Men, which yet are utterly rejected by God, and ſhall never ſtand upon Record in Order to an Eternal Acceptation, becauſe they took no heed to keep their Hearts with God in thoſe Duties: This is that Fatal Rock, upon which thouſands of vain Profeſſors ſplit themſelves eternally; they are curious about the Externals of Religion, but regardleſs of their Hearts. O how many Hours have ſome Profeſſors ſpent in Hearing, Praying, Reading, Confering? And yet, as to the main End of Religion, as good they had ſat ſtill, and done nothing: For all this ſignifies nothing, the great Work, I mean Heart-work, being all the while neglected; tell me, thou vain Profeſſor, when didſt thou ſhed a Tear for the Deadneſs, Hardneſs, Unbelief, or Earthlineſs of thy Heart? Thinkſt thou, ſuch an eaſie Religion can ſave thee? If ſo, we may invert Chriſt's Words, and ſay, *Wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way, that leadeth to Life, and many there be that go in thereat:* Hear me, thou ſelf-deluding Hypocrite, thou that haſt put off God with heartleſs Duties, thou that haſt acted in Religion as if thou hadſt been Bleſſing an Idol, that could not ſearch and diſcover thy Heart: Thou that haſt offered to God but the Skin of the Sacrifice, not the Marrow, Fat, and Inward of it; how wilt thou abide the coming of the Lord? How wilt thou hold up thy Head before him, when he ſhall ſay, O thou diſſembling falſe-hearted Man? How couldſt thou profeſs Religion? With what Face couldſt thou ſo often tell me, thou lovedſt me, when thou kneweſt all the while in thine own Conſcience, that thine Heart was not with me? O tremble to think, what a fearful Judgment it is to be given over to a heedleſs and careleſs Heart; and then to have Religious Duties, inſtead of a Rattle, to quiet and ſtill the Conſcience!

2. Hence I alſo infer for the *Humiliation* even of upright Hearts, *That unleſs the People of God ſpend more Time and Pains about their Hearts, than generally and ordinarily they do, they are never like to do God much Service, or be Owners of much Comfort in this World.*

I may ſay of that Chriſtian, that is remiſs and careleſs in keeping his Heart, as *Jacob* ſaid of *Reuben*, *Thou ſhalt not excell.* It grieves me to ſee how many Chriſtians there are, that go up and down dejected and complaining, that live at a poor low rate; both of Service and Comfort, and how can they expect it ſhould be otherwiſe as long as they live at ſuch a careleſs Rate? O how little of their Time is ſpent in the Cloſet, in ſearching, humbling, and quickning their Hearts?

You ſay, your Hearts are dead; and do you wonder they are ſo, as long as you keep them not with the Fountain of Life? If your Bodies had been dieted as your Souls have been, they would have been dead too; never expect better Hearts, till you take more Pains with them; *qui fugit molam, fugit farinam*, he that will not have the *Sweat*, muſt not expect the *Sweet* of Religion.

O Chriſtians! I fear, your Zeal and Strength hath run in the wrong Channel: I fear moſt of us may take up the Churches Complaint, *Cant.* 1. 6. *They have made me the Keeper of the Vineyards, but mine own Vineyard have I not kept.* Two Things have eaten up the Time and Strength of the Profeſſors of this Generation, and ſadly diverted them from Heart-work. (1) Fruitleſs Controverſies ſtarted by Satan, I doubt not to this very purpoſe, to take us off from practical Godlineſs, to make us puzzle our Heads, when we ſhould be ſearching our Hearts.

O how little have we minded that of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 13. 9. *'Tis a good thing, that the Heart be eſtabliſhed with Grace, and not with Meats*; (i. e.) with Diſputes and Controverſies about Meats, *which have not profited them that have been occupyed therein.*

O how much better is it to ſee Men *live exactly*, than to hear them *diſpute ſubtilly*! Theſe unfruitful Queſtions, How have they rened the Churches, Waſted Time and Spirits, and called Chriſtians off from their main Buſineſs, from looking to their own Vineyard? What think ye Sirs? Had it not been better if the Queſtions ventilated among the People of God of late Days, had been ſuch as theſe? How ſhall a Man diſcern the ſpecial, from the common Operations of the Spirit? How may a Soul diſcern its firſt Declinings from God? How may a Back-ſliding Chriſtian recover his firſt Love? How may the Heart be preſerved from unſeaſonable Thoughts in Duty? How may a boſom Sin be diſcover'd and mortify'd, *&c.* Would not this have tended more to the Credit of Religion, and Comfort of your Souls? O 'tis time to repent and be aſhamed of this Folly! When I read, what *Suarez*, a Papiſt, ſaid, who wrote many Tomes of Diſputations, that he prized the Time he ſet apart for the Searching and Examining of his Heart, in Reference to God, above all the Time, that ever he ſpent in other Studies: I am aſhamed to find the Profeſſors of this Age yet inſenſible of their Folly; Shall the Conſcience of a *Suarez* feel a relenting Pang for Strength and Time ſo ill employed? And ſhall not yours? This is it your Miniſters long ſince warned you of; your ſpiritual Nurſes were afraid of the Rickets, when they ſaw your Heads only to grow, and yonr Hearts to wither. O when will God beat our Swords into Plow-ſhares! I mean, our Diſputes and Contentions, into Practical Godlineſs. (2) Another Cauſe of neglecting our Hearts, hath been Earthly Incumbrances; the Heads and Hearts of many have been filled with ſuch a crowd and noiſe of Wordly Buſineſs, that they have ſadly and ſenſibly declined and withered in their Zeal, Love and Delight in God, in their heavenly, ſerious, and profitable Way of Converſing with Man.

O how hath this Wilderneſs intangled us! Our diſcourſes and Conferences; nay, our very Prayers and Duties have a Tang of it: We have had ſo much Work without Doors, that we have been able to do but little within. It was the ſad Complaint of an Holy One, ‘O (ſaith he) 'tis ſad to think, how many precious Opportunities I have loſt, how many ſweet Motions and Admonitions of the Spirit I have poſted over unfruitfully, and made the Lord to ſpeak in vain; in the ſecret Illapſes of his Spirit the Lord hath called upon me, but my wordly Thoughts did ſtill lodge within me, and there was no Place in my Heart for ſuch Calls of God. Surely there is a Way of enjoying God, even in our wordly Employments; God would never have put us upon them to our Loſs: *Enoch walked with God, and begat Sons and Daughters*, Gen. 5. 19. He walked with God, but did not retire and ſeparate himſelf from the Things of this Life: And the Angels, that are employed by Chriſt in the Things of this World, (for the Spirit of the living Creatures, as in the Wheels) they are finite Creatures, and cannot be in a twofold *Ubi* at one Time, yet they loſe nothing of the Beatifical Viſion, all the Time of their Adminiſtration; for *Mat.* 18. 10. *Their Angels* (even whilſt they are employed for them) *behold the Face of their Father, which is in Heaven.* We need not loſe our Viſions by our Employments, if the Fault were not our own: Alas! that ever Chriſtians, who ſtand at the Door of Eternity, and have more Work upon their Hands, than this poor Moment of interpoſing Time is ſufficient for, ſhould yet be filling both our Heads and Hearts with Trifles.

Mr. *Strong.*

3. Hence alſo I infer for the *Awakening* of all, *That if the keeping of the Heart be the great Work of a Chriſtian, then there are but few real Chriſtians in the World.*

Indeed, if every one that hath learned the Dialect of Chriſtianity, and can talk like a Saint, if every one that hath Gifts and Parts, and by the common aſſiſting Preſence of the Spirit, can preach, pray, or diſcourſe like a Chriſtian; in a Word, if ſuch as aſſociate themſelves with the People of God, and delight in Ordinances, might paſs for Chriſtians, the Number then is great.

But alas! to what a ſmall Number will they ſhrink, if you judge them by this Rule! How few are there, that make Conſcience of keeping their Hearts, watching their Thoughts, judging their Ends, *&c.* O there be but few Cloſet Men among Profeſſors! 'Tis far eaſier for Men, to be reconciled to any Duties in Religion, than to theſe: The profane Part of the World will not ſo much as touch with the out-ſide of Religious Duties, much leſs to this; and for the Hypocrite, though he be polite and curious about thoſe Externals, yet you can never perſwade him to this inward Work, this difficult Work: This Work, to which there is no Inducement by human Applauſe, this Work, that would quickly diſcover, what the Hypocrite ſeems not to know, ſo that by a general Conſent, this Heart-work is left to the Hands of a few ſecret ones, and I tremble to think in how few Hands it is.

## II. *Uſe of Exhortation.*

*IF the keeping of the Heart be ſo important a Buſineſs, if ſuch choice Advantages accrew to you thereby; if ſo many dear and precious Intereſts be wrapt up in it, then let me call upon the People of God every where to fall cloſe to this Work.*

O ſtudy your Hearts, watch your Hearts, keep your Hearts: Away with fruitleſs Controverſies and all idle Queſtions, away with empty Names and vain Shews, away with unprofitable Diſcourſe and bold Cenſures of others; turn in upon your ſelves, get into your Cloſets, and now reſolve to dwell there. You have been Stangers to this Work too long, you have kept others Vineyards too long, you have trifled about the Borders of Religion too long, this World hath detained you from your great Work too long; will you now reſolve to look better to your Hearts? Will you haſte and come out of the Crowds of Buſineſs, and Clamours of the World? And retire your ſelves more than you have done? O that this Day you would reſolve upon it!

Reader, methinks I ſhould prevail with thee; all that I beg for is but this, That thou wouldſt ſtep aſide a little oftner to talk with God, and thine own Heart; that thou wouldſt not ſuffer every Trifle to divert thee, that thou wouldeſt keep a more true and faithful Account of thy Thoughts and Affections. That thou wouldeſt but ſeriouſly demand, of thine own Heart, at leaſt every Evening, O my Heart, where haſt thou been to day? Whither haſt thou made a Road to day? If all that hath been ſaid by Way of Inducement be not enough, I have yet more Motives to offer you: And the firſt is this:

1 Motive. *The Studying, Obſerving, and diligent Keeping of your own Hearts, will marvellouſly help your Underſtanding in the deep Myſteries of Religion.*

An honeſt well-experienced Heart, is a ſingular Help to a weak Head; ſuch a Heart will ſerve you inſtead of a *Commentary* upon a great Part of the Scriptures: By this means you ſhall far better underſtand the Things of God, than the Learned *Rabbies* and Profound *Doctors*, (if graceleſs and unexperienced) ever did; you ſhall not only have a more Clear, but a more ſweet Perception and guſt of them: A Man may diſcourſe orthodoxly and profoundly of the Nature and Effects of Faith, the Troubles and Comforts of Conſcience, the Sweetneſs of Communion with God, that never felt the Efficacy and ſweet Impreſſions of theſe Things upon his own Spirit: But, O how dark and dry are theſe Notions, compared with his, upon whoſe Heart they have been acted? When ſuch a Man reads *David*'s Pſalms, or *Paul*'s Epiſtles, there he finds his own Objections made and anſwered. O, ſaith he, theſe holy Men ſpeak my very heart! Their Doubts were mine, their Troubles mine, and their Experiences mine. I remember *Chryſoſtome* Speaking to his People of *Antioch* about ſome choice Experiences, uſeth this Expreſſion: *Sciunt initiati quid dico:* Thoſe that are initiated, know what I ſay: Experience is the beſt Schoolmaſter. O then! ſtudy your Hearts, keep your Hearts.

2 Mot. *The Study and Obſervation of your own Hearts will antidote you againſt the dangerous and infecting Errors of the Times and Places you live in.*

For what think you is the Reaſon, that ſo many Profeſſors in *England* have departed from the Faith, giving heed to Fables? That ſo many thouſands have been led away by the Error of the wicked, that Jeſuits and Quakers, who have ſown corrupt Doctrine, have had ſuch plentiful Harveſts among us, but becauſe they have met with a Company of empty notional Profeſſors, that never knew what belongs to practical Godlineſs, and the Study of their own Hearts.

If Profeſſors did but give Diligence to ſtudy, ſearch, and watch their own Hearts, they would have that ἰδιον ϛήριγμον, that Steadfaſtneſs of their own, that *Peter* ſpeaks of, 1 *Pet.* 3. 17. and this would ballaſt and ſettle them, *Heb.* 13. 9. Suppoſe a ſubtil *Papiſt* would talk to ſuch of the Dignity, and Merit of good Works, could he ever work the Perſuaſion of it into that Heart, that is conſcious to it ſelf of ſo much Darkneſs, Deadneſs, Diſtraction, and Unbelief attending its beſt Duties? 'Tis a good Rule, *Non eſt diſputandum de guſtu.* There is no diſputing againſt Taſte. What a Man hath felt and taſted, one cannot beat him off from that by Argument.

3 Mot. *Your Care and Diligence in keeping your Hearts, will prove one of the beſt Evidences of your Sincerity.*

I know no external Act of Religion, that differences the Sound from the Unſound Profeſſor: 'Tis wonderful to conſider, how far Hypocrites go in all external Duties; how plauſibly they can order the outward Man, hiding all their Indecencies from the Obſervation of the World.

But then, they take no heed to their Hearts, they are not in ſecret; what they appear to be in publick: And before this Tryal, no hypocrite can ſtand; 'tis confeſt, they may in a fit, under a Pang upon a Death-bed, cry out of the Wickedneſs of their Hearts; but alas! there is no heed to be taken to theſe extorted Complaints: In our Law, no Credit is to be given to the Teſtimony of one upon the Rack, becauſe it may be ſuppoſed, that the Extremity of the Torture may make him ſay any Thing to be eaſed. But if Self-jealouſie, Care, and Watchfulneſs, be the daily Workings and Frames of thy Heart, it ſtrongly argues the Sincerity of it: For what but the Sence of a Divine Eye, what but the real hatred of Sin as Sin, could put thee upon thoſe ſecret Duties, which lie out of the Obſervation of all Creatures?

If then it be a deſirable Thing in thine Eyes, to have a fair Teſtimony of thine Integrity, and to know of a Truth, that thou feareſt God: Then ſtudy thine Heart, watch thy Heart, keep thy Heart.

4 Mot. *How fruitfull, ſweet and comfortable, would all Ordinances and Duties be to us, if our Hearts were better kept?*

O what precious Communion might you have with God, every Time you approach him, if your Hearts were but in Frame! You might then ſay with *David*, Pſal. 104. 34. *My Meditation of him ſhall be ſweet.* That which loſes all our Comforts in Ordinances and more ſecret Duties, is the Indiſpoſedneſs of the Heart: A Chriſtian whoſe Heart is in a good Frame, gets the Start of all others that come with him in that Duty. They are tugging hard to get up their Hearts to God, now trying this Argument upon them, and then that, to quicken and affect them; and ſometimes go away as bad as they came. Sometimes the Duty is almoſt ended before their Hearts begin to ſtir to feel any Warmth, Quickning, or Power from it; but all this while the prepared Heart is at its Work, this is he that ordinarily gets the firſt Sight of Chriſt in a Sermon, the firſt Seal from Chriſt in a Sacrament, the firſt Kiſs from Chriſt in ſecret Prayer. I tell you, and I tell you but what I have felt, that Prayers and Sermons would appear to you other manner of Things, than they do, did you but bring better ordered Hearts unto them; you would not go away dejected and drooping, O this hath been a loſt Day, a loſt Duty to me, if you had not loſt your Hearts, it had not been ſo: If then the Comfort of Ordinances be ſweet, look to your Hearts, keep your Hearts.

5 Mot. *Acquaintance with your own Hearts would be a Fountain of Matter to you in Prayer.*

A Man, that is diligent in Heart-work, and knows the State of his own Soul; will have a Fountain-fulneſs of Matter to ſupply him richly in all his Addreſſes to God: His Tongue ſhall not faulter, and make Pauſes for Want of Matter, *Pſal.* 45. 1. *My Heart is inditing a good Matter:* Or as *Montanus* renders the Original, My Heart is boyling up good Matter, like a living Spring, that is ſtill boyling up freſh Water; and then my Tongue is as the Pen of a ready Writer: Others muſt pump their Memories, rack their Inventions, and are often at a loſs, when they have done all; but if thou have kept, and faithfully ſtudyed thine own Heart, 'twill be with thee (as *Job* ſpeaks in another Caſe) like Bottles, full of New Wine, that want vent, which are ready to burſt: As Holy Matter flows plentifully, ſo more feelingly and ſweetly from ſuch a Heart; when a Heart-experienced Chriſtian is mourning before God over ſome ſpecial Heart Corruption, wreſtling with God for the ſupply of ſome ſpecial inward Want, he ſpeaks not as other Men do, that have learned to pray by rote, their Confeſſions and Petitions are ſqueezed out, his drop freely, like pure Honey from the Comb; 'tis a Happineſs then to be with or near ſuch a Chriſtian. I remember *Bernard*, having given Rules to prepare the Heart for Prayer, concludes them thus, *Et cum talis fueris memento mei*; and (ſaith he) when thy Heart is in this Frame, then remember me.

6 Mot. *By this the decayed Power of Religion will be recovered again among Profeſſors, which is the moſt deſirable Sight in this World.*

O that I might live to ſee that Day! When Profeſſors ſhall not walk in a vain Shew, when they ſhall pleaſe themſelves no more with a Name to live, being ſpiritually Dead: When they ſhall be no more (as many of them now are) a Company of frothy, vain, and unſerious Perſons, but the Majeſtick Beams of Holineſs ſhining from their heavenly and ſerious Converſations, ſhall awe the World, and command Reverence from all that are about them; when they ſhall warm the Hearts of thoſe, that come nigh them, ſo that men ſhall ſay, God is in theſe Men of a Truth.

Well, ſuch a Time may again be expected according to that Promiſe, *Iſa.* 60. 21. *The People ſhall be all righteous.* But till we fall cloſer to this great Work of keeping our Hearts, I am out of Hopes to ſee thoſe bleſſed Days; I cannot expect better Times, till God give better Hearts; Doth it not grieve you to ſee what a Scorn Religion is made in the World? What Objects of Contempt and Scorn the Profeſſors of it are made in the World.

Profeſſors, Would you recover your-Credit? Would you again obtain an Honourable Teſtimony in the Conſciences of your very Enemies? Then, keep your Hearts, watch your Hearts; Tis the Looſneſs, Frothineſs, and Earthlineſs of our Hearts that hath made your Lives ſo; and his hath brought you under Contempt of the World, you firſt loſt your Sights of God, and ommunion with him, then your Heavenly and erious Deportment among Men; and by that, our Intereſt in their Conſciences: O then! For e Credit of Religion, for the Honour of your rofeſſion, keep your Hearts.

7 Mot. *By Diligence in keeping our Hearts, we uld prevent, and remove the fatal Scandals and mbling-blocks out of the Way of the World.*

*Woe to the World* (ſaith Chriſt) *becauſe of Offences*, Mat. 18. 7. Doth not ſhame cover your Faces? Do not your Hearts bleed within you, to hear of the ſcandalous miſcarriages of many looſe Profeſſors? Could you not, like *Shem* and *Japhet*, go backward with a Garment to cover the Shame of many Profeſſors? How is that worthy Name blaſphemed? *Jam.* 2. 7. 2 *Sam.* 12. 13, 14. the Hearts of the Righteous ſadned, *Pſal.* 25. 3. *Ezek.* 36. 20. by this the World is fearfully prejudiced againſt Chriſt and Religion, the Bonds of Death made faſt upon their Soul; thoſe that have a general Love and liking to the Ways of God, ſtartled and quite driven back, and thus Soul-blood is ſhed: Woe to the World.

Yea, How are the Conſciences of faln Profeſſors plunged, and even overwhelmed in the Deeps of Trouble? God inwardly Excommunicating their Souls from all comfortable Fellowſhip with himſelf, and the Joys of his Salvation; infinite are the Miſchiefs that come by the ſcandalous Lives of Profeſſors.

And what is the true Cauſe and Reaſon of all this, but the neglecting of their Hearts? Were our Hears better kept, all this would be prevented: Had *David* kept his Heart, he had not broken his Bones, a neglected careleſs Heart muſt of Neceſſity produce a diſorderly ſcandalous Life. I thank God for the Freedom and Faithfulneſs of a Reverend Brother, in ſhewing Profeſſors their manifold Miſcarriages, and from my Heart do wiſh, that when their Wounds have been throughly ſearched by that Probe, God would be pleaſed to heal them by this Plaiſter. O Profeſſors! If ever you will keep Religion ſweet, if ever you hope to recover the Credit of it in the World, keep your Hearts; either keep your Hearts, or loſe your Credit; keep your Hearts, or loſe your Comforts; keep your Hearts, leſt ye ſhed Soul-blood: What Words can expreſs the deep Concernments, the wonderful Conſequences of this Work! Every Thing puts a Neceſſity, a Solemnity, a Beauty upon it.

*Goſpel-Glaſs.*

8 Mot. *An Heart well kept will fit you for any Condition God caſts you into, or any Service he hath to uſe you in.*

He that hath learnt how to keep his Heart lowly, is fit for Proſperity; and he that knows how to uſe and apply to it Scripture Promiſes, and Supports, is fit to paſs through any Adverſity; he that can deny the Pride and Selfiſhneſs of his Heart, is fit to be employ'd in any Service for God. Such a Man was *Paul*, he did not only ſpend his Time in preaching to others, in keeping others Vineyards, but he lookt to himſelf, kept his own Vineyard, 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. *Leſt when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.* And what an eminent Inſtrument was he for God? He could turn his Hand to any Work, he could dexterouſly manage both an adverſe and proſperous Condition. I know how to abound, and how to ſuffer Want: Let the People deifie him, it moves him not, unleſs to Indignation; let them Stone him, he can bear it: *If a Man purge himſelf from theſe* (ſaith he, 2 *Tim.* 2. 21.) *He ſhall be a Veſſel unto Honour, ſanctified and meet for the Maſters Uſe, and prepared unto every good Work.*

Firſt the Heart muſt be purged; and then it is prepared for any Service of God. When the Heart of *Iſaiah* was purified, which was the Thing ſignified by the touching of his Lips with a Coal from the Altar, *Iſa.* 6. 7. then he was fit for God's Work: *Here am I, ſend me*, Ver. 8. A Man that hath not learned to keep his Heart, put him upon any Service for God, and if it be attended with Honour, it ſhall ſwell up and over top his Spirit; If with ſuffering, it will exanimate and ſink him.

Jeſus Chriſt had an inſtrumental Fitneſs for his Fathers Work above all the Servants that ever God employed, he was zealous in publick Work for God, ſo zealous, that ſometimes he forgot to eat Bread, yea, that his Friends thought he had been beſides himſelf. But yet he ſo carried on his publick Work, as not to forget his own private Communion with God; and therefore you read, *Matth.* 13. 23. that when he had been labouring all Day, yet after that, he went up to a Mountain apart to pray, and was there alone. O let the Keepers of the Vineyards look to their own Vineyard! We ſhall never be ſo inſtrumental to the good of others, as when we are moſt diligent about our own Souls.

9 Mot. *If the People of God would more diligently keep their Hearts, how exceedingly would the Communion of Saints be thereby ſweetned!*

How goodly then would be thy Tents, O *Jacob*, and thy Tabernacles, O *Iſrael!* then as 'tis propheſied of the *Jews*, Zech. 8. 23. *Men would ſay, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is among you.* 'Tis the Fellowſhip your Souls have with the Father, and with the Son, that draws out the Deſires of others after Fellowſhip with you, 1 *John* 1. 3. I tell you, if Saints would be perſwaded to take more Pains, and ſpend more Time about their Hearts, there would quickly be ſuch a divine Luſtre upon the Face of their Converſations, that Men would account it no ſmall Priviledge, to be with or near them.

'Tis the Pride, Paſſion, and Earthlineſs of our Hearts, that hath ſpoiled Chriſtian Fellowſhip. Whence is it, That when Chriſtians meet, they are often jarring and contending, but only from their unmortified Paſſions? Whence are their uncharitable Cenſures of their Brethren, but only from Self-ignorance? Why are they ſo rigid, and unmerciful towards thoſe that are fallen? But becauſe they conſider not themſelves, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Gal.* 6. 1. Why is their Diſcourſe ſo frothy and unprofitable when they meet? Is not this from the Earthlineſs and Vanity of their Hearts?

My Brethren, theſe be the Things, that have ſpoiled Chriſtian Fellowſhip, and made it become a dry and ſapleſs Thing; ſo that many Chriſtians are even weary of it, and are ready to ſay with the Prophet, *Jer.* 9. 2. *O that I had a Cottage in the Wilderneſs*, &c. *That I might leave my People and go from them!* And with *David*, Pſal. 120. 6. *My Soul hath long dwelt with them that hate Peace.* This hath made them long for the Grave, that they might go from them that are not their own People, to them that are their own People, as the Original of that Text imports, 2 *Cor.* 5. 8.

But now, if Profeſſors would ſtudy their own Hearts more, watch and keep them better, all this would be prevented; and the Beauty and Glory of Communion again reſtored. They would divide no more, contend no more, cenſure raſhly no more; when their Hearts are in Tune, their Tongues will not jarr, how charitable, pitiful and tender will they be one of another, when every one is dayly humbled under the Evil of his own Heart; Lord haſten thoſe much deſired Dayes, and bleſs theſe Counſels in order to them.

10 Mot. Laſtly, *By this the Comforts of the Spirit, and precious Influences of all Ordinances would be fixed, and much longer preſerved in your Souls, than now they are.*

Ah! what would I give, that my Soul might be preſerved in that Frame I ſometimes find it after an Ordinance! *Aliquando intromittis me Domine in affectum multum inuſitatum introrſus ad neſcio quam dulcedinem*, &c. Sometimes, O Lord, (ſaith one of the Fathers ſweetly) thou admitteſt me into the moſt inward, unuſual and ſweet Delights, to I know not what Sweetneſs, which were it perfected in me, I know not, what it would be; or rather, what it would not be. But alas! the Heart grows careleſs again, and quickly returns, like Water removed from the Fire, to its native Coldneſs: Could you but keep thoſe Things for ever in your hearts, what Chriſtians would you be! what Lives would you live! and how is it, that theſe Things remain no longer with us? Doubtleſs it is, becauſe we ſuffer our Hearts to take cold again: We ſhould be as careful after an Ordinance or Duty to prevent this, as one that comes out of an hot Bath, or great Sweat is, of going out into the chill Air. We have our hot and cold Fits by Turns, and what is the Reaſon but our Unskilfulneſs and Careleſneſs in keeping the Heart?

'Tis a thouſand Pities, that the Ordinances of God, as to their quickning and comforting Effects, ſhould be like thoſe humane Ordinances the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, that periſh in the uſing. O then, let me ſay to you, as *Job* 15. 11. *Do the Conſolations of God ſeem ſmall to you?* Look over theſe ten ſpecial Benefits, weigh them in a juſt Ballance; are they ſmall Matters? Is it a ſmall Matter to have thy weak Underſtanding aſſiſted? Thy endangered Soul antidoted, thy Sincerity cleared, thy Communion with God ſweetned, thy Sails filled in Prayer? Is it a ſmall Thing to have the decayed Power of Godlineſs again recovered, all fatal Scandals removed, an inſtrumental Fitneſs to ſerve Chriſt obtained, the Communion of Saints reſtored to its Primitive Glory, and the Influences of Ordinances abiding in the Souls of Saints? If theſe be no common Bleſſings, no ſmall Benefits, then ſurely 'tis a great Duty to keep the Heart with all Diligence.

## *The III. Uſe for Direction.*

THE next Uſe ſhall be for Direction to ſome ſpecial Means for the keeping of the Heart; and here, beſides what hath been hinted in the Explication of the Duty *at the beginning of this Diſcourſe*, to which I refer the Reader, and all thoſe Directions throughout the whole, appropriated to particular Caſes and Seaſons: I ſhall farther add ſeveral other General Means of excellent Uſe to this End: And the firſt is this.

1 Means. *Would you thus keep your Hearts as hath been perſwaded, then furniſh your Hearts richly with the word of God; which is their beſt Preſervative againſt Sin.*

Keep the Word, and the Word will keep you: As the firſt receiving of the Word regenerated your Hearts, ſo the keeping of the Word within you, will preſerve your Hearts. *Col.* 3. 16. *Let the Word of Chriſt dwell richly in you*; let it dwell, not tarry with you for a night, and let it dwell richly, or plentifully; in all that is of it, in its Commands, Promiſes, Threats; in all that is in you, in your Underſtandings, Memories, Conſciences, Affections, and then 'twill preſerve your Hearts, *Pſal.* 119. 11. *Thy Word have I hid in mine Heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee*: 'Tis the Slipperineſs of our Hearts in Reference to the Word, that cauſes ſo many Slips in our Lives. Conſcience cannot be urged, or awed with forgotten Truths; but keep it in the Heart, and it will keep both Heart and Life upright, *Pſal.* 37. 31. *The Law of his God is in his Heart, none of his Steps ſhall ſlide*, or if he do, the Word will recover the ſtraying Heart again. *Mat.* 26. 57. *Then* Peter *remembred (the Words of* Jeſus *) and wept bitterly*: We never loſe our Hearts, till they have firſt loſt the efficacious and powerfull Impreſſions of the Word.

2 Mea. *Call your Hearts frequently to an Account, if ever you mean to keep them with God.*

Thoſe that put a Stock into the Hands of unfaithful or ſuſpicious Servants, will be ſure to make ſhort Reckonings with them; *the Heart is deceitful above all Things, and deſperately wicked*, Jer. 17. 9. O 'tis as neceſſary, as ſweet, that we and our Reins; that is, we and our ſecret Thoughts, ſhould confer together every Night, *Pſal.* 16. 7. We ſhould call our Hearts to Account every Evening, and ſay, O my Heart! where haſt thou been to Day? Where have thy Thoughts wandred to Day? what Account canſt thou give of them? O naughty Heart, vain Heart, couldſt thou not abide by the Fountain of Delights? Is there better Entertainment with the Creature than with God? The oftner the Heart meets with Rebukes and Checks for wandring, the leſs 'twill wander; if every vain Thought were retracted with a Sigh, every excurſion, of the Heart from God, with a ſevere Check, it would not dare ſo boldly and frequently to digreſs and ſtep aſide; thoſe Actions which are committed with reluctancy, are not committed with frequency.

3 Mea. *He that will keep his Heart, muſt take heed of plunging himſelf into ſuch a Multiplicity of earthly Buſineſs, as he cannot manage without neglecting his main Buſineſs.*

It cannot be imagined, he ſhould keep his Heart with God, that hath loſt himſelf in a Wood of Earthly Buſineſs; take heed you do not pinch your Souls, by gratifying the immoderate Deſires of your Fleſh. I wiſh many Chriſtians could truly ſay, what an Heathen once did, *I do not give, but only lend my ſelf to my Buſineſs.* 'Tis ſaid *Germanicus* reigned in the *Romans* Hearts; *Tyberius* only in their Provinces: Though the World be in your Hands, let it not juſtle Chriſt out of your Hearts.

*Seneca.*

Take heed, Chriſtian, leſt thy Shop ſteal away thy Heart from thy Cloſet: God never intended Earthly Employments for a Stop, but rather for a Step to Heavenly Ones. O let not *Ariſtippus* the Heathen ariſe in Judgment againſt thee, who ſaid, *He would rather neglect his Means than his Mind, his Farm than his Soul.* If thy Ship be overladen, thou muſt caſt ſome over-board; more Buſineſs than thou canſt well manage, is like more Meat than thou canſt well digeſt, which will quickly make a ſickly Soul.

4 Mea. *He that means to keep his Heart, muſt carefully obſerve its firſt Declinings from God, and ſtop it there.*

He that will find his Houſe in good Repair, muſt ſtop every Chink as ſoon as diſcovered, and he that will keep his Heart, muſt not let a vain Thought be long neglected: The Serpent of Heart Apoſtaſie is beſt killed in the Egg of a ſmall Remiſſion. O if many poor decayed Chriſtians had lookt to their Hearts in Time, they had never come to that ſad paſs they now are: We may ſay of Heart Neglects, as the Apoſtle doth of vain Bablings, that they increaſe to more and more Ungodlineſs. *Nemo repente fit turpiſſimus*; little Sins neglected will quickly become great and maſterleſs: The greateſt *Crocodile* once lay in an Egg, the greateſt Oak was once but an Acorn. The firing of a ſmall Train of Powder may blow up all by leading to a greater Quantity. Men little think what a proud, vain, wanton or worldly Thought may grow to: Behold how great a Matter a little Fire Kindles!

5 Mea. *Take heed of loſing the Livelineſs and Sweetneſs of your Communion with God, leſt thereby your Hearts be looſed off from God.*

The Heart is an hungry and reſtleſs Thing, it will have ſomething to feed upon; if it enjoy nothing from God, it will hunt for ſomething among the Creatures, and there it often loſes it ſelf, as well as its End. There is nothing more engages the Heart to a Conſtancy and Evenneſs in walking with God, than the Sweetneſs, which it taſtes therein: As the *Gauls*, when once they taſted the ſweet Wine of *Italy*, could never be ſatisfied till they conquered that Country, where it grew.

'Tis true, Conſcience of Duty may keep the Heart from neglecting it, but when there is no higher Motive, it drives on deadly, and is filled with Diſtractions; that which we delight in, we are never weary of, as is evident in the Motions of the Heart to earthly Things, where the Wheels being oyled with delight, run nimbly, and have often need of trigging; the Motions of the Heart upward would be as free, if its Delight in heavenly Things were as great.

6 Mea. *Habituate thy Heart to ſpiritual Meditations, if thou wouldſt have it freed from thoſe burdenſome Diverſions.*

By this Means you will get a Facility, and Dexterity in Heart Work: 'Tis pity thoſe ſmaller Portions of our Time betwixt ſolemn Duties ſhould lie upon our Hands, and be rendered uſeleſs to us. O learn to ſave, and be good Husbands upon your Thoughts; to this purpoſe, a *neat Author* ſpeaks, ‘ Theſe Parentheſes,
‘ which happen to come between
‘ the more ſolemn Paſſages (whe-
‘ ther Buſineſs or Recreations)
‘ of human Life, are wont to be
‘ loſt by moſt Men, for Want of a due value for
‘ them, and even by good men, for want of Skill to
‘ preſerve them: for though they do not properly
‘ deſpiſe them, yet they neglect, or loſe them,
‘ for Want of knowing how to reſcue them, or

*Boyles occaſional reflect. pag.* 9, 10.

“ what to do with them; but although grains “ of ſand and aſhes be apart but of a deſpicable “ ſmallneſs, and lyable to be ſcattered and blown “ away, yet the ſkilful artificer by a vehement “ fire brings numbers of theſe to afford him that “ noble ſubſtance Glaſs, by whoſe help we may “ both ſee our ſelves, and our blemiſhes live“ly repreſented, (as in looking Glaſſes) and diſ“cern cœleſtial objects (as with Teleſcopes) and “ with the Sun-beams kindle diſpoſed materials “ (as with burning glaſſes;) ſo when theſe lit“tle fragments, or parcels of time, which if not “ carefully lookt to, would be diſſipated and loſt, “ come to be managed by a ſkilful Contemplator, “ and to be improved by the cœleſtial fire of De“votion, they may be ſo ordered as to afford us “ both looking-glaſſes to dreſs our Souls by, and “ proſpectives to diſcover Heavenly wonders, and “ incentives to inflame our hearts with zeal: Thus “ far he.

Something of that nature I have under hand, for a publick benefit, if God give life to finiſh, and opportunity to produce it: certainly this is a great advantage for the keeping of the heart with God.

## IV. Uſe of Conſolation.

I Shall now cloſe the whole with a word or two of conſolation to all diligent and ſerious Chriſtians, that faithfully and cloſely ply heart-work; that are groaning and weeping in ſecret over the hardneſs, pride, earthlineſs and vanity of their hearts, that are fearing and trembling over the experienced deceitfulneſs, and falſeneſs of them, whilſt other vain profeſſors eyes are abroad, their time and ſtrength eaten up by fruitleſs diſputes, and earthly imployments; or at beſt by a cold and formal performance of ſome heartleſs and empty Duties: Poor Chriſtian, I have three Things to offer thee in order to thy ſupport and comfort, and Doubtleſs either of them alone mixed with Faith is Sufficient to comfort thee over all the trouble thou haſt with thine own heart.

1 Comfort. *This argues thy heart to be upright and honeſt, whatever thy other gifts and abilities are.*

'Tis uprightneſs of heart will comfort thee upon a death-bed. *2 Kings 20. 2, 3. Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, ſaying, Remember now O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect Heart, &c.*

I am really of his mind, who ſaid, *Si mibi daretur optio, eligerim Chriſtiani ruſtici ſordidiſſimum & maxime agreſte opus præ omnibus victoriis & triumphis Alexandri aut Cæſaris.* Might I have my wiſh, I would prefer the moſt deſpicable and ſordid work of a ruſtick Chriſtian, before all the victories and triumphs of *Alexander* or *Cæſar*; Yea, let me add, before all the elaborated duties and excellent gifts of vain profeſſors; before the tongues of men and Angels: It will ſignifie more to my comfort to ſpead one ſolitary hour in mourning before the Lord over heart corruption, than many hours in a ſeeming zealous, but really dead performance of common duties with the greateſt enlargements and richeſt embelliſhments of parts and gifts.

By this very thing Chriſt diſtinguiſhes the formal and ſerious Chriſtian, *Mat. 6. 5.* The one is for the Street and Synagogue, for the obſervation and applauſe of men, but the other is a Cloſet-man; he drives on a home-trade, a heart-trade. Never be troubled then for the want of thoſe things that a man may have and be eternally Damned, but rather bleſs God for that which none but the Favourites, and darlings of heaven have; Many an one is now in Hell that had a better head than thine, and many a one now in Heaven that complained of as bad an heart as thine.

2 Comf. *Know further for thy comfort, that God would never leave thee under ſo many heart troubles and burdens, if he intend not thy real benefit thereby.*

Thou art often crying out, Lord why is it thus, why go I mourning all the day, having ſorrow in my heart, thus long have I been exerciſed with hardneſs of heart, and to this day have not obtained a broken heart, many years have I been praying and ſtriving againſt vain thoughts, yet am ſtill infeſted and perplexed with them. O when ſhall I get a better heart! I have been in travel, and brought forth but wind, I have obtained no deliverance, neither have the corruptions of my heart fallen! I have brought this heart many times to Prayers, Sermons, Sacraments, expecting and hoping for a cure from them, and ſtill my ſore runneth and ceaſeth not.

Penſive Soul, let this comfort thee, thy God deſigns thy benefit, even by theſe occaſions of thy ſad complaints. For (1) Hereby he would let thee ſee what thy heart by Nature is and was, and therein take notice how much thou art beholding to Free-Grace. He leaves thee under theſe exerciſes of Spirit, that thou mayeſt lye as with thy face upon the ground, admiring that ever the Lord of Glory ſhould take ſuch a Toad, ſo vile a Creature into his boſome. Thy baſe heart, if it be good for nothing elſe, yet ſerves to commend and ſet off, the unſearchable riches of Free Grace. (2) This ſerves to beat thee off continually from reſting, yea, or but glancing upon thine own righteouſneſs, or excellency: the corruption of thy heart, working in all thy duties, makes thee ſenſible to feel that the Bed is too ſhort, and the Covering too narrow: Were it not for thoſe reflections thou haſt after duties, upon the dulneſs and diſtractions of thine heart in them; how apt wouldſt thou be to fall in love with, and admire thine own Performances, and Enlargements? For if notwithſtanding theſe, thou haſt much to do with the pride of thy heart; how much more, if ſuch humbling and ſelf-abaſing conſiderations were wanting. And laſtly, this tends to make thee the more compaſſionate and tender towards others; Perhaps thou wouldſt have little pity for the diſtreſſes, and ſoul troubles of others, if thou hadſt leſs experience of thine own.

3 Comf. *To conclude, God will ſhortly put a bleſſed end to all theſe Troubles, cares and watchings.*

Th

The time is coming when thy heart ſhall be as thou wouldſt have it, when thou ſhalt be diſcharged of theſe cares, fears and ſorrows, and never cry out, Oh my hard, my proud, my vain, my earthly heart any more. When all darkneſs ſhall be baniſhed from thine underſtanding; and thou ſhalt clearly diſcover all truths in God, that Chryſtal Ocean of truth: When all vanity ſhall be purged perfectly out of thy thoughts, and they be everlaſtingly, raviſhingly, and delightfully entertained and exerciſed upon that ſupream Goodneſs, and infinite excellency of God, from whom they ſhall never ſtart any more like a broken Bow. And as for thy pride, paſſion, earthlineſs, and all other the matters of thy complaint and trouble, it ſhall be ſaid of them; as of the *Egyptians to Iſrael, Stand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of God.* Theſe corruptions thou ſeeſt to day, henceforth thou ſhalt ſee them no more for ever: When thou ſhalt lay down thy Weapons, of prayers, tears, and groans, and put on the Armour of light, not to fight, but Triumph in.

Lord, when ſhall this bleſſed day come? How long, How long, Holy and True? My ſoul waiteth for thee; Come my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe, Or a young Hart upon the Mountains of *Bether.* Amen.

# The Touchſtone of Sincerity:

## OR

## The Signs of Grace, and *Symptoms of Hypocriſie*; Opened in a Practical Treatiſe upon *Revelations* III. 17, 18.

### The Epiſtle to the Reader.

READER,

AMONG the Difficulties and ſeverities of true Religion, the faithful ſearching, and diligent keeping of our hearts, are found in the firſt and higheſt rank of difficulties; theſe two take up the main work of a Christian betwixt them, *Hic labor, hoc opus eſt*: I had hopes that theſe *Eſſaies* for the *ſearching of the Heart*, might much ſooner have followed my former * for *keeping the heart*: but Providence hath reſerved it for the fitteſt ſeaſon.

* *A Saint indeed.*

It comes to thy hand, *Reader*, in a day of ſtraits and fears, a dark and gloomy ſeaſon; when the Nations about us are made drunk with their own blood, and filled with the wine of aſtoniſhment; In a day when the Cup is ready to paſs unto us, and a ſtorm ſeems to be riſing in the fears of many, and threatning the *P*roteſtant intereſt in theſe reformed Nations. Some men, very conſiderable for Piety and Learning, from that Scripture, Rev. 13. 3. *The deadly Wound,* (Viz. That given the Beaſt by the Reformation) *was healed*, have concluded that *Popery* will once more over-run the reformed Nations; and one of great renown in all the Churches of Chriſt, foretelling this furious (but ſhort) ſtorm, comforts the People of God with this, that it is like to fall heavieſt upon the Worſhippers in the *outward Court*, namely, the formal Profeſſors of the times.

Oh! How much is every Man now concerned to have his eſtate and condition well cleared, and to give all diligence to make his calling and election ſure!

It ſhould both amaze and grieve a pious mind, to ſee how ſome ingenious Perſon can ſit with unwearied patience and pleaſure racking their Brains upon ſome dry *School Problem*, or ſome nice *Mathematical Point*; Whil'ſt no Reaſons or Perſwaſions can prevail with them to ſpend one ſerious hour in the ſearch and ſtudy of their own hearts.

It was the ſaying of the great *Cicero*, *Libenter omnibus omnes opes conceſſerim, ut mihi liceat, vi nullâ interpellante, iſto modo literis vivere.* I would give all the Wealth in the World that I might wholly live in my Studies, and have nothing to hinder me. What a brave offer had that been, if Heaven and the clearing of a title to it had been the ſubject-matter of thoſe ſtudies! *Crede mihi, extingui dulce eſſet, Mathematicarum artium ſtudio*, ſaith another, (*i. e.*) Believe me, it were a ſweet death to dye in the ſtudy of the *Mathematical Arts*: And I ſhould be apt to believe it too, did I not know that eternal Judgment immediately follows death; and that they who ſtand at the door of Eternity have higher matters to mind than *Mathematical Niceties.* To diſcern the harmonies and proportion of the *Signs* of Grace wrought in our *Souls*, is a far more pleaſant and neceſſary imployment; and to be extinguiſhed in ſuch a work as this, were a lovely death indeed; *Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing.*

My Friends, a day of trouble is near, a dying hour approacheth us, and when our Eye-ſtrings, and Heart-ſtrings are breaking, when we are taking the laſt graſp of Chriſt and the Promiſes, you will then know to what purpoſe thoſe hours ſpent in ſuch Work as this were. *Search your ſelves, yea ſearch your ſelves before the decree bring forth*, as that Text may be read, *Zeph.* 2. 1, 2. Enter into thy Chamber, Chriſtian, and ſhut thy Door; ſit cloſe to this Imployment thou art here directed to; and however Times ſhall govern, whether it be fair or foul Weather abroad, thou ſhalt never repent ſuch an Expence of thy Time; *Nuſquam requiem inveni, niſi in libro & clauſtro*; ſaid a devout Soul once. I am never better, than when I am at my Book, or on my Knees.

This may ſeem but a dull Melancholy Life to the briſk and aiery Spirits of theſe times; but let us be content with it as it is, and leave them (if we cannot have their Company) to their Sportiveneſs and Frolicks, never once grudging them their ſhort and dear bought Pleaſures. Aſſurance that Sin is pardoned, and Chrſt is ours; with the unſpeakable joys that are inſeparably connected therewith, is that *White Stone, and New Name, which none knows but he that receives it*; for no Words can poſſibly ſignifie to another what that Soul taſts and feels in ſuch an Hour as that is.

And be not diſcouraged at the Difficulty of obtaining it, this *White Stone* is no *Philoſophers* Stone, which no Man could ever ſay he had in his own Hand, for many a Chriſtian hath really found it in waiting upon the Lord by Prayer and diligently ſearching the Scriptures and his own Heart.

Reader, The Time will come when they that ſcoff at the ſerious Diligence of the Saints, and break many a pleaſant Jeſt upon the moſt ſolemn and awfull things in Religion, will tremble when they ſhall hear the Midnight-Cry, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh*; and ſee the Lamps of all Vain and Formal Profeſſors expire, and none admitted into the Marriage, but ſuch whoſe Lamps are furniſhed with Oyl (*i. e.*) ſuch whoſe Profeſſions and Duties are enlivened and maintained by vital Springs and Principles of real Grace within them.

It is a very remarkable Story that *Melchior Adams* records in the Life of *Gobelinus*, That a little before his Time there was a Play ſet forth at *Iſenach* in *Germany*, of the *Wiſe* and *Fooliſh Virgins*: wherein the *Virgin Mary*, who was one of the Five Saints that repreſented the Wiſe Virgins, was brought in with the reſt, telling the *Fooliſh Virgins* that cryed to her for Oyl, that it was too late: And then others repreſenting the *Fooliſh Virgins*, fell a weeping and making moſt bitter Lamentations.

*Melch. Adams in vita Gobelni perſonæ vixit* Anno 1420.

Hereat *Prince Frederick* (who was one of the Spectators) greatly amazed, cryed out, *Quid eſt fides noſtra Chriſtiana, ſi neque* Maria, *neque alia* Sancta *exorari poteſt*, &c. What is our Faith worth, and to what purpoſe are all our good Works, if neither *Mary*, nor any other *Saint* can help us! And ſuch was his Conſternation, that it threw him into a ſore and violent diſeaſe, which ended in an *Apoplex*, whereof he died about four Days after.

If the Repreſentation of theſe Things in a Play ended the Life of ſo great a Man, ſo tragically; Oh think with thy ſelf, *Reader*, what will the Effects of the Lords real Appearance in the Clouds of Heaven, and the Mourning and Wailing of the Tribes of the Earth in that Day be? Think I ſay and think again, and again, what the diſmal Effects of ſuch a Sight and Sound will be upon all that neglect ſerious Preparation themſelves, and ſcoff at them that do prepare to meet the Lord.

The Deſign of this *Manual* is to bring every Mans Gold to the Touchſtone and Fire, I mean every Mans Grace to the Tryal of the Word, that thereby we may know what we are, what we have, and what we muſt expect and truſt to at the Lords coming. I pretend not to any Gift of *diſcerning Spirits*. Such an extraordinary Gift there once was in the Church, and very neceſſary for thoſe times (wherein *Satan* was ſo buſie, and the *Canon* of *Scripture* not compleated) which the *Apoſtle* calls the Gift of *diſcerning Spirits*, 1 Cor. 12. 10. And ſome are of Opinion that by Vertue of this Gift, *Peter* diſcerned the Hypocriſie of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, but whatever that Gift was, it is utterly ceaſed now; no Man can pretend to it, but the Ordinary Aids and Aſſiſtances of the Spirit are with us ſtill, and the lively *Oracles* are among us ſtill, to them we may freely go for Reſolution of all Doubts, and Deciſion of perplexed Caſes: And thus we may diſcern our own Spirits, though we want the extraordinary Gift of diſcerning other Mens Spirits.

I have little to ſay of this *Treatiſe* in thy Hands, more than that it is well aimed, and deſigned, how ever it be managed: The Ear tries Words, as the Mouth taſteth Meat; theſe Things will reliſh according to the Palates it meets with.

It is not the pleaſing, but profiting of Men that I have herein laboured for. I know of nothing in it that is like to wound the upright, or ſlightly heal the Hypocryte, by crying Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace. Scripture light hath been my *Cynoſura*, and with that Thread in my Hand, I have followed the Search of Hypocriſie through the Labyrinths of the Heart. Some Aſſiſtance I hope I have had alſo from Experience; for Scripture and Experience are ſuch Relatives, and the Tye betwixt them ſo diſcernable, as nothing in Nature can be more ſo. What we feel in our Hearts, we might have read in the Scriptures before ever we felt it.

That the Bleſſing of God may go forth with it, and accompany it to thy Soul, Reader, is the Hearts deſire and prayer of

*Thine and the Churches*

*Servant in Chriſt*,

JOHN FLAVELL.

# The Touchſtone of Sincerity:

## OR

## The Signs of Grace, and *Symptoms of Hypocriſie*; Opened in a Treatiſe upon *Revelations* III. 17, 18.

*Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and increaſed with Goods, and have need of nothing: And knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counſel thee to buy of me GOLD TRYED in the FIRE, that thou mayeſt be rich,* &c.

## CHAP. I.

*Wherein the Text is opened, and the Doctrines propounded.*

ALthough the *Revelation* be a *Compendium* of intricate Viſions and obſcure Prophecies, containing almoſt as many Myſteries as Words: Yet that Cloud overſhadows the Prophetical Part only; which begins where this Chapter (with the doctrinal Part) ends: Here the Waters are found no deeper than in other Places of Scripture; but if we go a little farther they become an overflowing Flood: Hitherto we touch Ground, but a ſtep further delivers us into the Deeps, which are above the Heads of the talleſt Chriſtians: Here the Spirit ſpeaks *doctrinally*, and perſpicuouſly; but in the following Chapters *myſtically*, and in great Obſcurity.

*Tot myſteria quot verba.* Hieron.

Seven *Epiſtles* are found in this Doctrinal Part, immediately dictated from Heaven, and ſent by *John* to the *Seven Churches of Aſia*, to inſtruct, correct, encourage, and confirm them, as their ſeveral Caſes required.

My Text falls in the laſt *Epiſtle*, ſent to the Church of *Laodicea*; the worſt, and moſt degenerate of all the reſt. The beſt had their Defects, and infirmities; but this laboured under the moſt dangerous Diſeaſe of all. The faireſt Face of the ſeven had ſome *Spots*, but a dangerous Diſeaſe ſeems to have invaded the very Heart of this.

Not that all were equally guilty, but the greateſt Part (from which the whole is denominated) were *lukewarm* Profeſſors; who had a Name to live, but were dead, who being never throughly engaged in Religion, eaſily embraced that Principle of the *Gnoſticks*, which made it ἀδιάφορον, a matter of Indifferency to own or deny Chriſt in time of Perſecution. The moſt ſaving Doctrine that ſome Profeſſors are acquainted with. This lukewarm temper Chriſt hated, he was ſick of them, and loathed their Indifferency: *I wiſh* (ſaith he) *v.* 16. *thou wert either cold or hot*; an Expreſſion of the ſame amount with that in 1 *King*. 18. 21. *How long halt you between two Opinions?* And is manifeſtly tranſlated from the Qualities of *Water*, which is either *cold*, or *hot*; or *lukewarm*, a middle Temper betwixt both, and more nauſeous to the Stomach than either of the former. *Cold* is the Complexion and natural temper of thoſe that are wholly alienated and eſtranged from Chriſt and Religion. *Hot*, is the gracious Temper of thoſe that know and love Jeſus Chriſt in an excelling degree. *Lukewarm*, or *tepid*, is the Temper of thoſe who have too much Religion to be eſteemed Carnal, and too little to be truly Spiritual; a Generation that is too *politick* to venture much, and yet ſo *fooliſh* as to loſe all: They are loth to forſake Truth *wholly*, and more loth to follow it too *cloſely*: The *Form* of Religion they affect as an *honour*, the *Power* of it they judge a *Burden*.

*Frigidos vocat plane a Chriſto alienos. Fervidos, vera Chriſti cognitione in excellenti gradu præditos. Tepidos, qui cum Chriſtiani dici velint, nec cauſam religionis ſerio agunt, nec vitam confeſſioni conformem dignamque ducunt.* Sol. Glaſſ. Rhet. Sacra. par. 3. p. 165.

This is that Temper which the Lord hates, and this was the Diſeaſe of *Laodicea*, which Chriſt the great and only Heart-*Anatomiſt* and Soul-*Phyſican* diſcovers in *v.* 17. and preſcribes a Cure for it in *v.* 18. So that the Words reſolve themſelves into two Parts: *viz*,

{*Firſt*, A faithful Diſcovery, } the Diſeaſe
{*Secondly*, A proper Remedy, of } of *Laodicea*.

1. *Firſt*, Their Diſeaſe is faithfully diſcovered to them, both in its Symptoms, Cauſe, and Aggravation.

Firſt, Its *Symptome*, an unconcerned, indifferent regardleſs Spirit in matters of Religion; nor hot, nor cold; the true Temper of *Formal-Profeſſors*, who never engaged themſelves throughly and heartily in the Ways of God, but can take, or leave as times govern, and wordly Intereſt come to be concerned.

*Secondly*, Its Cauſe and Root, which is the Defect and Want of the Truth, and Power of inward Grace; noted in theſe Expreſſions, *Thou art wretched, and miſerable, poor, blind, and naked*; (i. e.) thou art deſtitute of a real Principle, a ſolid Work of Grace; theſe five *Epithets* do all Point at one and the ſame thing; namely, the Defectiveneſs and Rottenneſs of their Foundation. The two firſt, ὁ ταλαιπωρὸς ϗ ὁ ἐλεεινὸς, *wretched* and *miſerable*; are more general, concluding them in a ſad Condition, a very ſinful and lamentable Eſtate: The three laſt, πτωχὸς, τυφλὸς, ϗ γυμνὸς, viz. *poor*, *blind* and *naked*, are more particular, pointing at thoſe grand Defects, and Flaws in the Foundation, which made their Condition ſo wretched and miſerable.

Firſt, *Poor*, that is, void of Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs before God; theſe are the true riches of Chriſtians, and whoſo wants them, is poor, and miſerable; how rich ſoever he be in Gifts of the Mind, or Treaſures of the Earth.

πτωχὸς *deſtitutus Juſtitia, & Sanctitate vera, coram Deo.* Grotius.

Secondly,

τυφλὸς *Nec morbum ſciens, nec remedium.*

Secondly, *Blind*, (i. e.) without ſpiritual Illumination, and ſo neither knowing their Diſeaſe, nor their Remedy; the Evil of Sin, or Neceſſity of Chriſt. *Durham in Loc.*

γυμνὸς *Carens juſtitia qua veſtitus eſt Chriſtianorum.* Pareus.

Thirdly, *Naked*, without *Chriſt*, and his Righteouſneſs. Sin is the Souls Shame and Nakedneſs. Chriſts pure and perfect Righteouſneſs is its covering, or *Garment*: This they wanted, how richly ſoever their Bodies were adorned. Theſe were *Laodiceans*, (i. e.) a juſt or righteous People; (according to the Notation of that Word) whoſe Garments with which they covered themſelves, were made of the home-ſpun Thread of their own Righteouſneſs.

Thirdly, The Diſeaſe of *Laodicea* is here opened to them in its *Aggravations*. *Thou ſaidſt I am rich, and increaſed with Goods, and have need of nothing; but knoweſt not*, &c.

*Nil miſerius miſero non miſerante ſeipſum.*

To be really graceleſs, and Chriſtleſs, is a miſerable Condition; but to be ſo, and yet confidently perſwaded of the contrary, is moſt miſerable: To have the very Symptoms of Death upon us, and yet tell thoſe that pity us, we are as well as they, is lamentable indeed.

O the Efficacy of a Spiritual Deluſion! This was their *Diſeaſe*, *Graceleſneſs*, and the *Aggravation of it*, was their *Senſleſneſs*.

2. *Secondly*, We have a proper Remedy preſcribed, *v.* 18. *I counſel thee to buy of me Gold tried in the Fire, that thou mayeſt be rich*, &c. In which we have to conſider, Firſt, what is preſcribed for the Cure. Secondly, where it is to be had. Thirdly, how to be obtained.

Firſt, What are the Remedies preſcribed, and they are three; *Gold*, *White-rayment*, and *Eye-ſalve*. Firſt, *Gold* the Cure of Poverty; yea, *Gold tried in the Fire*, (i. e.) Grace that hath been variouſly proved already, and the more it is proved, the more its Truth will be conſpicuous. The next is *White-rayment*, the Remedy againſt Nakedneſs. And laſtly *Eye-ſalve*, the effectual Cure of Blindneſs. Under all theſe choice *Metaphors*, more choice and excellent Things are ſhadowed, even ſpiritual Graces, real Holineſs, more precious than Gold. Chriſt's imputed Righteouſneſs, the richeſt Garment in all the Wardrobe of Heaven; and ſpiritual Illumination, the moſt excellent *Collyrium* or *Eye-ſalve* that ever was or can be applyed to the mental Eye or Underſtanding of Man in this World.

*Hoc μονοπώλιον eſt Chriſti, extra quod nulla eſt ſalus.*

Secondly, Where theſe precious Remedies may be had, and you find Chriſt hath the *Monopoly* of them all; *buy of me*, ſaid Chriſt in the Text; he is the *Repoſitory* of all Graces. Angels, Miniſters, Ordinances, cannot furniſh you with them, without Chriſt.

Thirdly, How they may be obtained from him; *buy of me*; on this Place *Eſtius*, and others build their Doctrine of Merit; which is to build a Superſtructure of Hay and ſtubble upon a Foundation of God. The Exigence of the very Text it ſelf deſtroys ſuch Conceits: For what have they that are poor, wretched, miſerable, and want all things, to give as a Price, or by Way of Merit for thoſe ineſtimable Treaſures of Grace? *Buying* therefore in this Place, can ſignifie or intend no more than the Acquiſition, compaſſing, or obtaining theſe Things from *Jeſus Chriſt* in the Uſe of ſuch Means and Methods as he hath appointed, and in the Uſe of them we merit Grace no more, than the *Patient* merits of his *Phyſician* by coming to him, and carefully following his Preſcriptions in the Uſe of ſuch Medicaments as he freely gives him: and that Place, *Iſa.* 55. 1. (from which this Phraſe ſeems to be borrowed) fully clears it: *He that hath no Money, let him come and buy Wine, and Milk, without Money, and without Price.*

From all which, theſe three Obſervations fairly offer themſelves to us.

Doct. 1. *That many Profeſſours of Religion are under very great and dangerous Miſtakes in their Profeſſion.*

Doct. 2. *That true Grace is exceeding precious, and greatly enriches the Soul that poſſeſſeth it.*

Doct. 3. *That only is to be accounted true Grace, which is able to endure all thoſe Trials appointed, or permitted for the Diſcovery of it.*

The firſt Doctrine naturally riſes out of the Scope of the Text, which is to awaken and convince unſound Profeſſors.

The ſecond from the Uſe the Holy Ghoſt makes of the beſt and choiceſt Things in Nature, to Shadow forth the ineſtimable Worth and Preciouſneſs of Grace,

And the Third, from that particular, and moſt ſignificant *Metaphor* of *Gold tried in the Fire*; by which I here underſtand, a real and ſolid Work of Grace, evidencing it ſelf to be ſo, in all the Proofs and Tryals that are made of it; for whatſoever is probational of Grace, and puts its Soundneſs and Sincerity to the Teſt, is that to it which Fire is to Gold: In this Senſe it is uſed in Scripture, *Pſal.* 66. 10. *Thou haſt tried us as Silver is tried:* And *Zach.* 13. 9. *I will bring the third part through the Fire, and will refine them as Silver is refined, and try them as Gold is tried.* So that whatſoever it is which examines and tries Grace, whether it be ſound, and ſincere, that is the *Fire Chriſt* here ſpeaks of; and ſuch Grace as abides theſe Trials, is the Gold here intended.

## CHAP. II.

*Wherein the firſt Doctrine is opened and improved briefly as a preliminary Diſcourſe to the principal Subject herein deſigned.*

Doct. 1. *That many Profeſſors of Religion are under very great and dangerous Miſtakes in their Profeſſion.*

SECT. I. ALL Flattery is dangerous, Self-flattery is more dangerous, but Self-flattery in the Buſineſs of Salvation, is the moſt dangerous of all.

To pretend to the good we know we have not, is *Groſs Hypocriſie*; to opine and perſwade our ſelves of the good we have not, though we think we have it, is *formal Hypocriſie*; and this was the Caſe of thoſe Self-deceivers in the Text.

My Deſign in this Diſcourſe is not to ſhake the well-built Hopes of any Man, or beget groundleſs Jealouſies; but to diſcover the real dangerous Flaws in the Foundation of many Mens Hopes for Heaven: Every thing is as its Foundation is, and *debile fundamentum fallit opus*; that failing all fails.

There is a twofold Self-ſuſpicion or Fear in God's own People. The one is a Fear of *Caution*, awaking the Soul to the uſe of all preventive Means for avoiding Danger; this is *Laudable*. The other a groundleſs Suſpicion of reigning Hypocriſie, tending only to Deſpondency; this is *Culpable*: By the former the Soul is guarded againſt *Danger*, by the later it is betrayed into needleſs Trouble; and debarred frm *Peace*.

Good Men have ſometimes more Fear than they ought, and wicked Men have leſs than they ought: The former do ſometimes ſhut their Eyes againſt the *fair Evidences* of their own *Graces*, the latter ſhut their Eyes againſt the *ſad Evidences* of their *Sin* and *Miſery*. This is an Evil in both, but not equally dangerous; for he that ſhuts his Eyes againſt his own Graces and Privileges, loſeth but his Peace and Comfort for a time; but he that ſhuts his Eyes againſt the Evidences of his Sin and Miſery loſeth his precious Soul to all Eternity! Of this latter Sort of *Self-deceivers* the World is full, and theſe are the Men I am concerned with in this Point.

O that ſome Men had leſs Trouble! And Oh that ſome had more! If the *fooliſh Virgins* had been leſs *confident*, they had certainly been more *ſafe*, Matth. 25. If thoſe glorious Profeſſors in *Matth.* 7. 22. had not ſhut their Eyes againſt their own *Hypocriſie*, Chriſt had not ſhut againſt them the Door of Salvation and Glory. *Ananias* and *Saphira*; *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*; *Alexander* and *Demas*: With multitudes more of that Sort, are the ſad Inſtances and Proofs of this Point. It is ſaid, *Prov.* 30. 12. *There is a Generation that is pure in their own Eyes, and yet is not waſhed from their Filthineſs*. Through what falſe Spectacles do the Men of that Geneaation look upon their own Souls; The Men of that Generation are multiplied in this Generation: Never was any Age over-run with a Generation of vain, Self-couzening, formal Profeſſors, as this Generation is.

Three Things I ſhall here endeavour to do.

(1.) To give Evidence beyond Contradiction to this ſad truth; That among Profeſſors are found many Self-deceivers.

(2.) To aſſign the true Cauſes and Reaſons why it is ſo. And,

(3.) Improve it in thoſe practical Inferences the Point affords.

## SECT. II.

THAT there are multitudes of ſuch ſelf-deceivers among Profeſſors, will appear;

1. Firſt, by this, that there are every where to be found many more *Profeſſors*, than *Converts*. Unregenerate Profeſſors, whoſe Religion is but the Effect of Education. Chriſtianity by the favour of an early Providence was the firſt Comer, it firſt beſpake them for it ſelf; theſe are Chriſtians of an humane Creation, rather born, than new-born Believers. Now, all *theſe* are ſelf-deceived, and haſting to Damnation, under the Efficacy of a ſtrong Deluſion; *for if a man think himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, Gal. 6. 3. Surely our Birth-priviledge, without the new Birth, is *nothing*; *yea*, worſe than *nothing*, as to our laſt, and great Account; that which Stands for *a great Summ* in our *Arithmetick*, it's nothing, it is but a *Cypher* you ſee, in God's, *Except a man be born again*, (ſays the Lips of Truth) *he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God*, Joh. 3. 3.

Poor Self-deceivers, ponder thoſe Words of *Chriſt*; you have hitherto thought your civil *Education*, your dead and *heartleſs* Duties enough to denominate you Chriſtians before God; but go now, and learn what that Scripture meaneth; and be aſſured, you muſt experience another manner of *Converſion*, or elſe it is impoſſible for you to eſcape eternal *Damnation*.

2. Secondly, It is too manifeſt by this, that many Profeſſors are only acquainted with the *Externals* of Religion; and all their Duties are no more but a Complyance of the outward man with the Commands of God: This is the ſuperficial Religion which deceives and betrays multitudes into eternal Miſery. True Religion ſeats it ſelf in the inward man, and acts effectually upon the vital Powers: Killing Sin in the Heart, and purging its Deſigns and Delights from Carnality and Selfiſhneſs; engaging the Heart for God, and ſetting it as a Bow in its full Bent for him, in the Approaches we make to him: But how little are many Profeſſors acquainted with theſe things!

Alas! If this be all we have to ſtand upon, how dangerous a Station is it! What is external Conformity, but an artificial Imitation of that which only lives in the Souls of good Men? Thus was *Jehu* deceived; he did many Acts of external Obedience to God's Command, *but Jehu took no heed to walk in the Way of the Lord God of Iſrael with his Heart*, 2 Kings 10. 31. and this was his Overthrow.

This alſo was the Ruine of thoſe Formaliſts, *Ezech.* 33. 31. they came and ſate before the Lord as his People; The Word was to them as a lovely Song; mightily charmed with the Modulation of the *Prophets* Voice, and his lively Geſtures; but all the while their Hearts went after their Covetouſneſs: And what Abundance of ſuch Phariſaical, Superficial Religion is every where to be found?

3. Thirdly, It appears by this, that every Tryal made by Sufferings upon Profeſſors, blows away multitudes like dry leaves in *Autumn*, by a ſtormy Wind; many fall from their *own Stedfaſtneſs* in ſhaking Times: Proſperity multiplies vain Profeſſors, and Adverſity purges the *Church* of them. *Then ſhall many be offended*, Matth. 24. 10.

This the Scripture every where *marks* as a *Symptome* of Hypocriſie, *Pſal.* 78. 8. *A Generation that ſet not their Heart aright: And whoſe Spirit was not ſtedfaſt with God.* 1 Joh. 2. 19. *But they went out, that they might be made manifeſt, that they were not of us*, Matth. 13. 21. *For when* Tribulation *or Perſecution*

*ſecution ariſeth becauſe of the Word*; *by and by he is offended.* But ſhould one have told them in the Days of their firſt Profeſſion, that all their Zeal and Labour in Religion would have ended in this; it is like they would have replyed as *Hazael* to the Man of God, 2 *King.* 8. 13. *But what is thy Servant a Dog, that he ſhould do this great Thing!* Quantum mutatus ab illo?

Oh how unlike is their dark and dirty Evening, to their glorious and hopefull Morning! Theſe Profeſſors have more of the *Moon* than of the *Sun*; little Light, leſs heat; but many changes: They deceive many, yea, they deceive themſelves, but cannot deceive God. During the Calm, what a Flouriſh do they make! And with what Gallantry do they ſail! By and by you may hear *horrendas tempeſtates*, and ſoon after you may ſee, *fienda naufragia*, a dreadful Shipwrack, after a furious Storm; and no Wonder, for they wanted that ἴδιον στηριγμὸν, that Ballaſt and Eſtabliſhment in themſelves that would have kept them tite and ſtable.

1 *Pet.* 3. 17.

4. Fourthly, It is too apparent by this, that many Profeſſors ſecretly indulge and ſhelter beloved Luſts under the Wings of their Profeſſion. This like a Worm at the Root will wither and kill them at laſt, how fragrant ſoever they may ſeem to be for a Seaſon. *Gideon* had ſeventy *Sons*, and one *Baſtard*; but that one *Baſtard* was the Death of all his ſeventy *Sons*.

Some Men have many excellent Gifts, and perform Multitudes of Duties, but one ſecret Sin indulged and allowed, will deſtroy them all at laſt. He that is partial as to the Mortification of his Sins, is undoubtedly *hypocritical* in his Profeſſion. If *Davids* Evidence was good for his Integrity, ſurely ſuch Profeſſors will never clear themſelves of Hypocriſie. *I was alſo upright before him, and kept my ſelf from mine Iniquity*, ſaith he, *Pſal.* 18. 23. This is the right Eye, and right Hand which every ſincere Chriſtian muſt pluck out, and cut off, *Matth.* 5. 29, 30.

Which is a *Metaphor* from *Chirurgeons*, whoſe Manner it is when the whole is in Danger by any Part, to cut it off, *ne pars ſincera trahatur*; leſt all Periſh.

Their ſuppreſſing ſome Luſts raiſeth their Confidence, the Indulging of one razeth the Foundation of their Hopes, and thus they deceive themſelves.

5. Fifthly, This alſo manifeſts the ſelf-deceits of many *Profeſſors*, That the ſecret Duties of Religion, or at leaſt the ſecret Intercourſe of the Soul with God in them, is a ſecret hid from the Knowledge and Experience of many *Profeſſors*.

To attend the Ordinances of God in the Seaſons of them they know, to pray in their Families at the ſtated Hours thereof they know; but to retire from all the World into their *Cloſets*, and there to pour out their Hearts before the Lord, they know not.

To feel ſomewhat within, paining them like an empty hungry Stomach, until they have eaten that hidden Manna, that Bread in ſecret; I mean refreſhed their Souls with real Communion with the Lord there; this is a Myſtery locked up from the Acquaintance of many that call themſelves *Chriſtians*; and yet this is made a *Characteriſtical Note* of a ſincere Chriſtian by *Chriſt* himſelf, in *Matth.* 6. 6.

O Reader, If thy Heart were right with God, and thou didſt not cheat thy ſelf with a vain Profeſſion, thou wouldſt have frequent Buſineſs with God, which thou wouldſt be loth thy deareſt Friend, or the Wife of thy Boſome ſhould be privy to: *Non eſt religio ubi omnia patent.* Religion doth not lay all open to the Eyes of Men. Obſerved Duties maintain our *Credit*, but ſecret Duties maintain our *Life*. It was the ſaying of of an Heathen about his ſecret Correſpondency with his Friend, What need the World be acquainted with it? *Thou and I are Theatre enough to each other:* There are encloſed Pleaſures in Religion, which none but renewed ſpiritual Souls do feelingly underſtand.

6. Laſtly, How many more profeſs Religion in theſe Days, than ever made Religion their Buſineſs! *Philoſophy* tells us, there is a τὸ ἔργὸν, and a παρεργὸν, a *Main-buſineſs*, and a *By-buſineſs*, the ſame is found in Religion alſo.

There are *that give themſelves to the Lord*, 2 Cor. 8. 5. whoſe Converſation or Trade is in Heaven; *Phil.* 3. 18. the End or Scope of whoſe Life is Chriſt, *Heb.* 13. 7, 8. who give Religion the Precedency both in Time and Affection, *Pſal.* 5. 3. *Rom.* 12. 11. who are conſtant and indefatigable in the Work of the Lord, 1 *Cor.* 15. 58.

And there are alſo that take up Religion rather for *Oſtentation*, than for an *Occupation*, who never mind the Duties of Religion, but when they have nothing elſe to do; and when their outward Man is engaged in the Duties of it, yet their Heart is not in it; they hear, they pray, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἔξω, as *Chryſoſtome* ſpeaks, but their Souls, their Thoughts and Minds are abroad. It is not their Buſineſs to have Fellowſhip with God in Duties, to get their Luſts mortified, their Hearts tryed, their Souls conformed to the Image of God in Holineſs.

They pray as if they prayed not; and hear as if they heard not, and if they feel no Power in Ordinances, no Quickening in Duties, it is no Diſappointment at all to them; for theſe were not their Deſigns in drawing nigh to God in theſe Appointments.

And thus you ſee what Numbers of Profeſſors deceive themſelves.

## SECT. III.

AND if we ſeriouſly enquire into the Grounds and Cauſes of this Self-deceit among Profeſſors, we ſhall find theſe *four* Things conſpiring to delude and cheat them, in the great Concern of their Salvation.

1. Firſt, The natural Deceitfulneſs of the Heart, than which nothing is more treacherous, and falſe, *Jer.* 17. 9. *The Heart is deceitful above all Things, and deſperately wicked*; עקב דרב מכל *Supplantativum cor præ omnibus*, the Heart is the greateſt *Supplanter*, the moſt crafty and ſubtil Cheat of all, it deceives us as *Jacob* did his Brother, (to whoſe Name this Text alludes.) It defeats us of our heavenly Heritage, as *Jacob* ſupplanted him in his earthly one; while we are gone a hunting after earthly Trifles. And wherein its Deceitfulneſs principally appears, you may ſee by the ſolemn *Caveat* of the *Apoſtle James*, 1. 22. wherein he warns us to beware, that in hearing the Word we deceive not our ſelves by falſe Reaſonings; for

*Ar. Mont.*

for ſo παραλογιζόμενοι ἑαυτοὺς imports, and may be ſtrictly rendred, *falſe reaſoning themſelves*, namely, by making falſe *ſyllogiſms*; whereby they miſconclude about their ſpiritual and eternal eſtate and condition, and befool themſelves.

The time will come when a mans own heart will be found to have the chief hand in his ruine; and what *Apollodorus* did but fancy his heart ſaid to him, ſome mens hearts will tell them in earneſt when they come to the place of miſery and torment; ἐγὼ σοὶ τέτων αἰτία. I have been the cauſe of all this. I have betrayed thee into all theſe torments. It was my *lazineſs*, my *credulity*, my averſneſs to the ways of ſtrict godlineſs, mortification, and ſelf denyal have for ever undone thee. When thou ſateſt under the convincing truths of the Goſpel; It was I that whiſpered thoſe Atheiſtical ſurmiſes into thine ear, perſwading thee all thou heardſt was but the intemperate heat of an hot brained zealot; when the Judgements of God were denounced, and the miſery thou now feeleſt forewarned and threatned, it was I that whiſpered what the tongue of another once ſpake out, *Tunc credam, cùm illuc venero.* I will believe it when I come thither.

Surely this is a great truth which was obſerved by the wiſeſt of men, *He that truſteth in his own heart is a fool*, Proverbs 28. 26. And thouſands of ſuch fools are to be found among Profeſſours.

2. Secondly, *Satan* is a chief conſpirator in this treacherous deſign; *we are not Ignorant* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *of his devices*; νοήματα his Sophiſtry and ſleights, 2 *Cor.* 2. 21. his μεθοδείας, trains and methods of Temptation, which are throughly ſtudied, artificially moulded and ordered; even ſuch *Syſtemes* as *Tutors* and *Profeſſours* of *Arts* and *Sciences* have, and read over to their *Auditors*; as one judiciouſly obſerves, to be the import of that Text, *Eph.* 6. 11. Nor it is to be wondred at, conſidering his vaſt knowledge, deep Malice, and long experience in this Art of cheating; together with the great corruption and pronity of the Hearts of Men to cloſe with his devices, and believe his impoſtures; that ſo vaſt a Number of ſouls are taken *captive by him at his will*, 2 Tim: 2. 26.

Dr. *Goodwin* Child of Light.

'Tis the God of this World that blinds the minds of them that believe not, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. *The God of this World*, (ſo call'd by a *Mimeſis*) who leads a *World* of poor deluded wretches to deſtruction, having firſt *blinded their minds*, that is deluded, and with his helliſh art practiſed upon their underſtanding, that τὸ ἡγεμόνικον, leading and directive faculty, which is to the ſoul what eyes are to the body.

I remember *Baſil* brings in *Satan* thus inſulting *Chriſt*, I have them, I have them: For all thy blood and Miracles, thy Wooings and beſeechings, thy knockings and ſtrivings, I have couzened thee of them at the very gates of Heaven: For all their illuminations, and taſting of the Powers of the World to come; I have ſhipwrackt them in the very mouth of the Haven.

3. Thirdly, The *common* works found in *unregenerate* ſouls, deceive many, who cannot diſtinguiſh them from the *ſpecial* works of the *Spirit* in Gods *Elect*: See that ſtartling Scripture, *Heb.* 6. 4. Where you find among the common operations of the Spirit upon *Apoſtates*, *Illumination*, which gives perſpicuity to their minds in diſcerning ſpiritual truths, and that frequently with more diſtinctneſs and depth of Judgment, than ſome gracious ſouls attain unto; beſides, it is the matter out of which many rare and excellent gifts are formed in admirable variety; which are ſingularly uſeful to others as they are exerciſed in expounding the Scriptures, defending the truths of Chriſt by ſolid arguments, preaching, praying, *&c.* And make the ſubject of them renowned and honoured in the Church of God; whilſt mean time, they are dazled with their own ſplendour, and fatally ruined by them.

There you find alſo *Taſting* as well as enlightening. So that they ſeem to abound not only in *knowledge*, but in *ſenſe* alſo, (*i. e.*) in ſome kind of *experience* of what they know; for Experience is the bringing of things to the Teſt of ſpiritual ſenſe. They do *taſte* or experience the good that comes by the promiſes of the word, and diſcoveries of Heaven and glory; though they feel not experimentally the transforming efficacy of theſe things upon their own ſouls.

Now that *illumination* furniſhing them with excellent gifts (as before was noted) enabling them to *Aſſent* to Goſpel truths, which the Scripture calls Faith, *Acts.* 8. 12. and working in them *conviction* of ſin, 1 *Sam.* 15. 24. Reformation of life, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. and touching their affections alſo with tranſient joy in the diſcovery of thoſe truths.

And this *Taſte* which comes ſo near to the *experience* which the ſanctified ſoul enjoys: theſe things ſeem to put their condition beyond all controverſie, and lay a foundation for their ill built confidence; nothing is more apt to beget and nouriſh ſuch a Confidence than the meltings and workings of our affections about ſpiritual things; for as a *grave Divine* hath well obſerved, ſuch a man ſeems to have all that is required of a Chriſtian, and to have attained the very end of all knowledg, which is operation and influence upon the affections. When they ſhall find *heat* in their *affections*, as well as *light* in their *minds*; how apt are they to ſay (as theſe ſelf-deceivers in the *Text* did) they *are rich, and have need of nothing!* Now of all the falſe ſigns of grace, by which men couzen themſelves, none are ſo dangerous and deſtructive to ſouls, as thoſe that come neareſt true ones: never doth *Satan* more effectually and ſecurely mannage his cheats, than when he is transformed into an *Angel of light*.

Mr. *A. Burges.*

Among this ſort of ſelf-deceivers, how many gifted men, and among that ſort ſome imployed in the office of the Miniſtry, will be found! whoſe daily imployment being about ſpiritual things, ſtudying, preaching, praying, *&c.* conclude themſelves ſanctified perſons, becauſe they are converſant about ſacred imployments, as if the *Subject* muſt be, becauſe the *object* is ſacred. Oh that ſuch would ſeriouſly ponder thoſe two Scriptures, Mat. 7. 22. *Many will ſay unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? and in thy name have caſt out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful things?* and 1 Cor. 9. 27.——*leaſt that by any means, when I have preached unto others, I my ſelf ſhould be caſt away.*

4. Laſtly, To add here no more, this ſtrengthens ſelf-deceit exceedingly in many, *viz.* Their obſervations of and comparing themſelves with others. Thus the *Phariſees*, (thoſe groſs ſelf-deceivers)

ceivers ) *truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others*, Luke 18. 9. their Low rating of others, gave them that high rate and value of themſelves: And thus the Proverb is made good, *Regnat luſcus inter cæcos*, he that hath but one Eye, is a King among the Blind.

Thus the falſe *Apoſtles* cheated and befool'd themſelves, 2 *Cor.* 10. 12. *But they meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, and comparing themſelves among themſelves, are not wiſe.* God hath not made one Man a Meaſure or Standard to another Man, but his Word is the common Beam or Scale to try all Men.

Theſe Men are as ſharp ſighted to note other Mens Evils, as their own Excellencies, to eye the Miſcarriages of others with *Deriſion*, and their own Performances with *Admiration*.

They bleſs themſelves when they behold the profane in their Impieties, *Luke* 18. 11. *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, Extortioners, Unjuſt, Adulterers, or even as this Publican, q. d.* O what a Saint am I in compariſon of theſe *Miſcreants!* The Phariſees Religion you ſee runs all upon *Nots*; a *negative Holineſs* is enough to him; and the Meaſure he takes of it is by compariſon of himſelf, with others more externally vile than himſelf. A Chriſtian may ſay with Praiſe and Humility, *I am not as ſome men are*, but though *he know nothing by himſelf, yet is he not thereby juſtified*, 1 Cor. 4. 4. he neither rakes together the Enormities of the vileſt, or the Infirmities of the holieſt, to juſtifie and applaud himſelf as theſe Self-deceivers do. And theſe are the Cauſes and Occaſions of that general Deception, under which ſo great a Part of the profeſſing World bow down, and periſh.

## SECT. IV.

3. IN the laſt Place I ſhall prove this Point variouſly according to the Importance and uſefulneſs of it, with as much Brevity and Cloſeneſs of Application as I can: And

*Uſe* 1. Shall be for *Caution* to Profeſſors; before I tell you what Uſe you ſhould make of it, I muſt tell you what Uſe you may not make of it.

Firſt, Don't make this Uſe of it, to conclude from what hath been ſaid, that all *Profeſſors* are but a Pack of *Hypocrites*, and that there is no Truth nor Integrity in any Man: This is both intolerable *Arrogance* to aſcend the Throne of God, and unparallel'd *Uncharitableneſs* to judge the *Hearts* of all Men.

Some Men are as apt to conclude others to be Hypocrites, by meaſuring their Hearts by their own, as others are to conclude themſelves *Saints*, by comparing their own *Excellencies* with other Mens *Corruptions*: but bleſſed be God there is ſome Grain among the Heap of Chaff, ſome true *Diamonds* among the counterfeit Stones. The *Devil* hath not the whole Piece; a remnant according to Election belongs really to the Lord.

2. *Secondly*, Don't make this Uſe of it, that Aſſurance muſt needs be impoſſible, becauſe ſo many Profeſſors are found to be Self-deceivers.

That Aſſurance is one of the great Difficulties in Religion, is a great Truth; but that it is therefore unattainable in this World, is very falſe. *Popiſh Doctrine* indeed makes it impoſſible, but that Doctrine is practically confuted in the comfortable Experience of many Souls: All are commanded to ſtrive for it: 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Give Diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*: And ſome have the Happineſs to obtain it: 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. *For I know whom I have believed, and I am perſwaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that Day.*

Let the *Similar* Works upon *Hypocrites* reſemble as much as they will the *ſaving* Works of the Spirit upon Believers; yet God doth always, and the Saints do *ſometimes* plainly diſcern the Difference.

3. *Thirdly*, Don't make this Uſe of it, to conceal and hide the Truths or Graces of God, or refuſe to *profeſs*, and *confeſs* them before Men, becauſe many Profeſſors deceive them ſelves and others alſo by a vain Profeſſion; becauſe another profeſſeth what he hath not, muſt you therefore hide or deny what you have? 'Tis true, the *Poſſeſſion* of Grace and Truth in your own Souls is that which ſaves you; but the *Profeſſion* and *Confeſſion* of it, is that which honours God, and edifies; yea, ſometimes is the Inſtrument to ſave others: It's your Comfort that you feel it, it's others Comfort to know that you do ſo. *Oſtentation* is your Sin, but a ſerious and humble *Profeſſion* is your Duty, *Rom.* 10. 9.

## SECT. V.

*Uſe* 2. HAving ſhewed you in the former *Section* what *Uſe* you ought *not* to make of this Doctrine, I will next ſhew you what *Uſe* you *ought* to make of it; and ſurely you cannot improve this Point to a better purpoſe than from it to take Warning, and look to your ſelves, that you be not of that Number who deceive themſelves in their *Profeſſion*. If this be ſo, ſuffer me cloſely to preſs that great *Apoſtolical Caution*, 1 Cor. 10. 12. *Let him that thinks he ſtands, take heed leſt he fall.* O Profeſſors, look carefully to your Foundation; be not high minded, but fear: You have it may be done and ſuffered many things in and for Religion; you have excellent Gifts, and ſweet Comforts, a warm Zeal for God, and high Confidence of your Integrity; all this may be *right* ( for ought I or ( it may be ) you know ) but yet 'tis poſſible it may be *falſe* alſo; you have ſometimes judged your ſelves, and pronounced your ſelves upright; but remember your *final Sentence* is not yet pronounced by your Judge. And what if God weigh you over again in his more equal Ballance, and ſhould ſay *Mene tekel*, thou art weighed in the Ballance, and art found wanting; What a confounded Man wilt thou be under ſuch a Sentence! *Quæ ſplendent in conſpectu hominis, ſordent in conſpectu Judicis*; Things that are highly eſteemed of Men, are an Abomination in the Sight of God; he ſeeth not as Man ſeeth.

Thy Heart may be falſe, and thou not know it; yea, it may be falſe, and thou ſtrongly confident of its Integrity.

The Saints may approve thee, and God condemn thee, *Rev.* 3. 1. *Thou haſt a Name that thou liveſt, but thou art dead*: Men may ſay, There's a true *Nathanael*, and God may ſay, There's a ſelf-couzening *Phariſee*.

Reader, thou haſt heard of *Judas* and *Demas*; of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, of *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*; once renowned and famous Profeſſors, and thou haſt heard what they proved at laſt.

Take heed their Caſe be not thine own; do they not all as it were with one Mouth cry to thee, O Profeſſor! If thou wilt not come where we are, don't couzen thy ſelf as we did: If thou expecteſt a better Place and *Lot*, be ſure thou get a ſincerer *Heart*: Had we been more *ſelf-ſuſpicious*, we had been more *ſafe*.

I would not ſcare you with *needleſs Jealouſies*, but I would fain prevent *fatal Miſtakes*. Don't you find your Hearts deceitful in many things? Don't they ſhuffle over ſecret Duties? Don't they *cenſure* the ſame Evils in others, which they ſcarce *reprove* in your ſelves? Are there not many by-ends in Duties? Don't you find they are far leſs affected with a great deal of Service and Honour done to God by others, than with a little by your ſelves?

Is it not hard to look upon other Mens Excellencies without *Envy*, or upon your own without *Pride*?

And are you not troubled with a *buſie Devil*, as well as with a bad Heart? Hath not he that circuits the whole World, obſerved you? Hath he not ſtudied your Conſtitution Sins, and found out that Sin which moſt eaſily beſets you? Hath he leſs Malice againſt your Souls than others? Surely you are in the very Thick of Temptations; thouſands of Snares are round about you. Oh how difficultly are the Righteous ſaved! How hard to be upright! How few even of the profeſſing World win Heaven at laſt!

O therefore ſearch your Hearts, Profeſſors, and let this Caution go down to your very Reins; *let him that thinks he ſtands, take heed leſt he fall.*

Away with raſh uncharitable Cenſures of others, and be more juſt and ſevere in cenſuring your ſelves. Away with dry and unprofitable Controverſies, and ſpend your Thoughts upon this great Queſtion, Am I ſound, or am I rotten at Heart? Am I a new Creature, or an old Creature ſtill, in a new Creatures Dreſs and Habit? Beg the Lord that you be not deceived in that great Point (your Integrity) whatever you may be miſtaken in. Pray that you be not given up to an heedleſs, careleſs, and vain Spirit, and then have Religious Duties for a *Rattle* to ſtill and quiet your Conſciences.

Surely that Ground-work can never be laid too ſure, upon which ſo great a ſtreſs as thy Soul and Eternity muſt depend. It will not repent thee (I dare promiſe) when thou comeſt to die, that thou haſt employed thy Time and Strength to this End: Whileſt others are panting after the Duſt of the Earth, and ſaying, Who will ſhew us any Good? be thou panting after the Aſſurance of the Love of God, and crying, Who will ſhew me how to make my Calling and Election ſure?

O deceive not your ſelves with Names and Notions! Think not, becauſe you are for a ſtricter Way of Worſhip, or becauſe you aſſociate with (and are accordingly denominated) one of the more reformed Profeſſors; that therefore you are ſafe enough: Alas! How ſmall an intereſt have Titles, Modes, and Denominations in Religion? Suppoſe a curious *Artiſt* take a Lump of Lead and refine it, and caſt it into the Mould; whence it comes forth ſhining, and bearing ſome noble Figure, ſuppoſe of an *Eagle*, yet it is but a leaden *Eagle*. Suppoſe the Figure of a *Man*, and that in the moſt exact Lineaments and Proportions, yet ſtill is it but a *leaden Man*. Nay, let it bear the Figure of an *Angel*, it is but a *leaden Angel*: For the baſe and ignoble Matter is the ſame it was, though the Figure be not. Even ſo, Take an unregenerate carnal Man, let his Life be reformed, and his Tongue refined; and call him a zealous *Conformiſt*, or a ſtrict *Non-conformiſt*; call him a *Presbyterian*, an *Independant*, or what you will; he is all the while but a carnal Conformiſt, or Non-conformiſt; an unregenerate Presbyterian, a carnal Independant; for the *Nature* is ſtill the ſame, though the ſtamp and Figure his Profeſſion gives him, be not the ſame.

O my Friends, believe it, fine Names, and brave Words, are of little value with God. God will no more ſpare you for theſe, than *Samuel* did *Agag* for his delicate Ornaments, and ſpruce Appearance: Either make ſure the Root of the Matter, or the *leaves* of a vain Profeſſion will not long cover you.

To be deceived by another is bad enough, but to deceive our ſelves is a thouſand Times worſe.

To deceive our ſelves in Truths of the *Superſtructure* is bad, and they that do ſo ſhall ſuffer loſs; 1 *Cor.* 3. 12. But to deceive our ſelves in the *Foundation* is a deſperate Deceit, and ſhipwracks all our Hope and Happineſs at once.

If any Man loſe his *Money* by a *cheat* it troubles him, but to loſe his *Soul* by a *cheat* will *confound him*: If a Man loſe an Eye, an Ear, a Hand, a Foot; yet *omnia Deus dedit duplicia*, as *Chryſoſtome* ſpeaks; God hath given theſe Members double; ſo that there's another left; *animam vero unam*; but the Soul is one, and only one, and if that be damned, you have not another to be ſaved.

O therefore be reſtleſs till it be, and till you know it be out of eternal Danger.

## SECT. VI.

*Uſe* 3. IN Concluſion, If ſo many Profeſſors of Religion be cheated in their Profeſſion, let all that are well ſatisfied and aſſured of their Integrity bleſs the Lord whil'ſt they live, for that Mercy. O 'tis a Mercy that no unſanctified Soul can have; yea, and it's a Mercy that many gracious Souls cannot obtain, though they ſeek it with Tears; and would part with all the pleaſant Things they have in the World to enjoy it.

This is that Mercy that gives Souls the higheſt Pleaſures this World is acquainted with, or the State of this Mortality can bear: For let the well aſſured Soul but conſider what it is aſſured of: *Chriſt* with the Purchaſes of his Blood. O what is this! *I am my beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, Cant. 2. 16. what a vital raviſhing overpowering Efficacy is in that Voice of Faith! Let it but look back a few Years, and compare what it was with what it is: It was afar off, it's now made nigh, *Epheſ.* 2. 12, 13. It was not beloved, but is now beloved, *Rom.* 25. 26. it had not obtained Mercy, but now hath obtained Mercy, 1 *Pet.* 2. 10. or let the aſſured Soul look forward and compare what it now is, and hath, with what it ſhortly ſhall be made, and put in Poſſeſſion of: *Beloved* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *now are we the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: But we know that when he ſhall appear, we* *ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is,* 1 John 3. 2.

I ſay let the aſſured Soul but ſteep its thoughts by meditation in theſe ſubjects, and it as impoſſible to keep him from his tranſports of Joy, as it is for a Man to forbear laughing when he is tickled.

O what a life have you in compariſon of other Men? Some have two Hells, one preſent, another coming; you have two Heavens; one in hand, the other in hope. Some of your own Brethren in Chriſt, that have been it may be many years panting after aſſurance, are ſtill denyed it; but God hath indulged ſo peculiar a favour to you. Bleſs ye the Lord, and make his praiſe glorious.

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# CHAP. III.

*Containing the Proof and Improvement of*

Doct. 2. *That true Grace is exceeding precious, and greatly enricheth the Soul that hath it: It's Chriſts Gold.*

SECT. I. THE *Lord Jeſus* here chooſeth the moſt pure, precious, reſplendent, durable, and valuable thing, in all the Treaſuries and magazines of Nature, to ſhadow forth ſaving Grace, which is infinitely more excellent: certainly that muſt be the beſt thing, which the beſt things in Nature can but imperfectly ſhadow forth. What was the golden Oyl emptied through the two Golden pipes, *Zech.* 4. 12. but the precious Graces of God, flowing through Chriſt, into all his Members! Gold is precious, but one *drachm* of ſaving grace is more precious than all the Gold of *Ophir*. *It cannot be gotten for gold, neither ſhall ſilver be weighed for the price thereof,* Job 28. 15. Surely *Gold* and *Silver*, *Saphires*, *Diamonds* and *Rubies* are not worth the mentioning, when ſaving Grace is once mentioned. For Conſider it,

1. Firſt, In its *cauſe*, and *fountain* from whence it flows; and you ſhall find it to be the fruit of the Spirit, *Gal.* 5. 22. Who upon that accompt is called *the Spirit of Grace*, *Heb.* 10. 29. It derives its original from the moſt high; it is Spirit born of Spirit, *John* 3. 6. All the *rules of Morality*, all humane diligence and induſtry can never Produce one gracious habit or act alone, 2 Cor. 3. 5. *Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves,* &c.

Nay, we ſpeak not becoming the incomparable Worth of Grace, when we ſay, it is the Fruit and Birth of the Spirit; for ſo are common Gifts alſo. There are ſeveral Emanations from this Sun, divers ſtreams from this Fountain; but of all his operations and productions, this of ſaving grace is the moſt noble and excellent. *Gifts* are from the Spirit as well as *Grace*, but grace is more excellent than the beſt gifts, 1 *Cor.* 12. 31. *Covet earneſtly the beſt gifts, and yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent way.* Hence you read in *Phil.* 1. 10. *Of things that are excellent,* or as the original, τὰ διαφέροντα might be rendred, *things that differ.* Namely, in reſpect of excellency; not as good and evil, but as leſs good, and more good differ. Gifts have their value and preciouſneſs, but the beſt gifts differ as much from grace, as *Braſs* from *Gold*; though both be generated by the influence of the ſame Sun. Gifts (as one ſaith) are dead *Graces*, but Graces are *living Gifts*: It is the moſt excellent production of the higheſt and moſt excellent cauſe.

2. *Secondly*, Conſider it in its *Nature*, and you will find it *Divine*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, viz. in our *Sanctification*: not that it gives us the *Properties* of the Divine Nature, they are incommunicable; but the ſimilitude, and reſemblance of it is ſtamped upon our Souls, in the Work of Grace.

*The new man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him,* Col. 3. 10. The *Schoolmen* and ſome of the *Fathers* place this image or reſemblance of God, in the natural faculties of the ſoul, *viz.* the underſtanding, memory and will; which is an *umbrage* of a *Trinity in Unity*: but it rather conſiſts in the *renovation of the Faculties* by grace; for in this we bear the Divine Image upon our Souls, and that Image or Reſemblance of God in holineſs, is the *beauty* and *honour* of our Souls.

It is their beauty, *How fair, and how pleaſant art thou, O love, for delights!* ſaith *Chriſt* of his People, *Cant.* 7. 6. Natural Beauty conſiſts in the *Symmetry*, and comely proportion of parts each with other; Spiritual beauty in the harmony or agreeableneſs of our ſouls to *God*: And as it is our chiefeſt beauty, ſo certainly it is our higheſt *honour*; for it gives us acceſs unto *God*, who is the Fountain of *Honour* and *Glory*; and this makes the righteous *more excellent than his Neighbour*; let his Neighbour be what he will, tho' the blood of *Nobles* run in his Veins, the righteous is more excellent than he; except ſaving grace be alſo diffuſed into his Soul.

3. *Thirdly*, Conſider it in its *recipient ſubject*, and you will find its value ſtill to increaſe: For the *precious* oyl of Saving Grace is never poured into any other than an *elect veſſel*.

Hence Faith, one branch of ſanctification, is with reſpect to its *ſubject*, ſtiled *the Faith of Gods Elect*, Tit. 1. 1. Whoſoever finds true grace in his Soul, may (during the evidence thereof) from it ſtrongly conclude his *Election*, looking backward, and his *Salvation* looking forward, *Rom.* 8. 30. It *marks* and *ſeals* the Perſon in whom it is for Glory. *God hath ſet apart him that is godly for himſelf*, Pſal. 4. 3.

4. *Fourthly*, View the precious worth of grace in its *excellent effects* and influences upon the Soul, in which it inheres.

(1.) It *adorns* it with incomparable Ornaments, which are of great price in the ſight of God, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. yea it reflects ſuch beams of Glory in the ſoul where its ſeat is, that Chriſt himſelf the *Author*, is alſo the *Admirer* of it, *Cant.* 4. 9. *Thou haſt raviſhed my heart, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe; thou haſt raviſhed my heart, with one of thine eyes, with one of the chains of thy neck.* And as one overcome with its excelling beauty, he ſaith, *Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me,* Cant. 6. 5.

(2.) It *Elevates* and *ennobles* a Mans Spirit beyond all other principles in Man. It ſets the heart and affections upon Heaven, and takes them up with the glory of the inviſible World, *Phil.* 3. 20. *But our Converſation is in Heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour.* Whilſt others are trading for Corn, and Wine; for Sheep and Oxen; for Feathers and Trifles; the gracious Soul is trading with God for pardon and peace; for Righteouſneſs and Life; for Glory and Immortality.

lity. *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Chriſt Jeſus*, 1 John 1. 3.

(3.) It doth not only raiſe the Spirit by Converſing with God, and Things above; but transforms the Soul, by that Converſe, into the Likeneſs of thoſe heavenly Objects it converſeth with. *It changeth them into the ſame Image*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. ſo that though the ſanctified Man ſtill remains the *who he was*, yet not the *what he was* before, the very temper of his Spirit is altered.

(4.) It doth not only *transform* the Soul in which it is, but *preſerves* the *Subject* in which it is: It is a ſingular *Preſervative* from Sin; ſo that though Sin *be* in them ſtill, and *works* in them ſtill; yet it cannot prevail in them ſtill to fulfill the Luſts of it, as it was want to do, *Gal.* 5. 17. Sin conceives, but cannot bring forth Fruit unto Death; this gives it a miſcarrying Womb.

(5.) It doth not only preſerve it from *Sin*, but *Grace eſtabliſheth* the Soul in whom it is, far beyond any other *Arguments* without, or any other *Principles* within a Man. *It is a good thing that the Heart be eſtabliſhed with Grace*, Heb. 13. 9. This is that which the Apoſtle calls our own *Stedfaſtneſs*; or that Ballaſt we have within our ſelves; which keeps us tite and ſtable. O the Excellencies of Grace!

(6.) To conclude, it is the Root of all that precious Fruit which we bring forth to God in this World. It is the Root of every gracious *Word* in our *Lips*, and of every gracious *Work* in our *Hands*: Be the Matter of our gracious Thoughts never ſo excellent, the Matter of our heavenly Diſcourſes and Prayers never ſo ſweet; ſtill Grace is the *Root of the Matter*; *Job* 19. 28. O then what a precious thing is Grace!

5. *Fifthly*, View it in its *Properties*, and you will ſoon diſcover its tranſcendent Excellencies: The richeſt *Epithets* are no *Hyperboles* here, we ſpeak not byond the Value of it, when we call it *Supernatural Grace*, for ſo it is. It comes down from above, from the *Father of Lights*, *Jam.* 1. 17. Nature can never be improved to that Height, how much ſoever its Admirers boaſt of it: Nor do we ſtrain too high, when we call it *Immortal Grace*; for ſo hath God made it: This is that Water which ſprings up in the ſanctified Soul into eternal Life, *John* 4. 14. It will not dye when thou dieſt, but aſcend with the Soul from which it is inſeparable; and be ſwallowed up with it into Glory, *Rom.* 8. 10. you may out-live your *Friends*, you may out-live your *Eſtates*, you may out-live your *Gifts*; but you can't out-live your *Graces*.

Shall I ſay, it is the moſt *ſweet and comfortable Thing* that ever the Soul was acquainted with in this World, next *Jeſus Chriſt*, the *Author* and Fountain of it? Sure if I ſo ſpeak, I have as many Witneſſes to atteſt it, as there be gracious Souls in the World: Nothing is more comfortable than Grace, except *Chriſt*, and yet without Grace no Soul can feel the Comforts of Chriſt, in the *Troubles of Life*, or in the *Straits* of Death: This is a Spring of Comfort.

6. *Sixthly*, Conſider it in its *Deſign* and *Scope*; and you will ſtill diſcern more and more of its precious Excellency: For what is the Aim and End of God in the Infuſions and Improvements of Grace, but to attemper and mould our Spirits by it, into a Meetneſs and Fitneſs for the Enjoyment of himſelf in the World to come? *Col.* 1. 12. *Giving Thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*: Compare this with 2 *Cor.* 5. 5. *Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame Thing is God.*

O bleſſed Deſign! How precious muſt that Work be, which is wrought for ſo high and glorious a purpoſe as this is! No Work more excellent, no End more noble.

7. *Seventhly*, Conſider the *Means* and *Inſtruments*, both *principal*, and *ſubordinate*, imployed in this Work: Many bleſſed Inſtruments are ſet on Work to beget, conſerve, and improve it in our Souls: And theſe all ſpeak the precious Worth of it: No wiſe Man will dig for a baſe and worthleſs Metal with golden Mattocks. The *Blood* of Chriſt was ſhed to procure it, *Heb.* 13. 12.

The Spirit of God is ſent forth to form and create it; for it is his own Workmanſhip, *Epheſ.* 2. 10. his Fruit, *Gal.* 5. 22.

The *Ordinances* and *Officers* of the Goſpel were at firſt inſtituted, and ever ſince continued in the Church, for this works ſake, *John* 17. 17. and *Eph.* 4. 12. it's the Fruit of Chriſt's Blood; yea, and it hath coſt the Sweat and Blood of the Diſpenſers of the Goſpel too.

Nay, all the *Works of Providence* look this Way, and aim at this thing, *Rom.* 8. 28. What is the errand of all God's Rods, but to make us Partakers of his Holineſs? *Heb.* 12. 10.

8. *Eighthly*, The high value that the moſt high God ſets upon Grace, ſhews it to be an excellent Thing indeed: *It is of great Price in his ſight*, 1 Pet. 3. 4. no Service finds Acceptation with God, but what is performed by Grace: None but ſanctified Veſſels, are meet for the Maſters Uſe. *The End of the Commandment is Charity, out of a pure Heart*, 1 Tim. 1. 5.

The weakeſt Performances of Grace find Acceptance with him, though clog'd with many ſinfull Weakneſſes and Infirmities, *Heb.* 11. 31, 32. If God ſo prize it, well may we: He that made the *Jewel*, beſt underſtands the value of it.

9. *Ninthly*, *The Hypocritical Pretences* made to it all over the Profeſſing World, ſhew what a moſt precious and deſirable Thing it is: If there were not ſome ſingular Glory in it, why doth every one covet to be reputed gracious? Nay, the *Devil* himſelf baits many of his Hooks of Temptation with a ſhew of Grace; For he knows Sin hath no native Beauty of its own to entice; and therefore he borrows the Paint and Pretence of Holineſs, to cover it: But O what a *Dilemma* will the *Hypocrite* be poſed with at laſt? And how can he anſwer it when God ſhall demand,

If Grace were evil, why didſt thou ſo affect the Name and Reputation of it? And if it were good, why didſt thou ſatisfie thy ſelf with the empty Name and Shadow of it only?

10. *Tenthly*, To conclude; The *incomparable Eſteem* that all good men have for it, ſhews it to be a Thing of ineſtimable Price.

Grace is the *Sum* of all their *Prayers*, the *Scope* of all their *Endeavours*, the *Matter* of their chief *Joy*, the Reward of their Afflictions and Sufferings. Their chief *Joys* and Sorrows, Hopes and Fears in this World, are taken up about it: By all which it appears that its Price is above *Rubies*; and all the Gold and Silver in the World are but dung and droſs in Compariſon with it.

SECT.

## SECT. II.

*Containing ſix practical Inferences from this precious Truth.*

*Infer.* 1. Is ſaving Grace more precious than Gold? *Let them that have it bleſs God for it, and not boaſt:* Mens Hearts are as apt to puff up and ſwell with *ſpiritual*, as with *material* Gold: It's hard to be an Owner of much of this *Gold*, and not be lifted up with it. To keep down thy Heart, and preſerve thine Eyes from being dazled with theſe their gracious Excellencies; it will be needful for thee Chriſtian ſometime to conſider,

That altho' Grace be one of the moſt excellent Things that ever God created, yet it is *but a Creature*, a dependent Thing, 1 *Cor.* 5. 17.

Yea it is not only a Creature, but a very imperfect Creature yet in thy Soul; labouring under many Weakneſſes, *Phil.* 3. 12. and ſometimes ready to die, *Rev.* 3. 2.

Though it can do many things for you, yet it cannot juſtifie you before God: You cannot make a Garment of it to cover your Guilt, nor plead the Dignity of it at God's Bar for your Diſcharge; 'tis not your *inherent*, but Chriſt's *imputed Righteouſneſs* muſt do that for you; though in other Reſpects it be very neceſſary.

Nay, remember; how excellent ſoever it be, it's not the native Growth and Product of your Hearts; all the Grace you have is foraign to your Natures, and what you have, is received, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7.

And Laſtly, Remember he that is moſt proud and conceited of his own Graces, will be found to be the Owner of leaſt Grace, and hath moſt Cauſe to Queſtion, whether he have any or no. It's the Nature of Grace to humble, abaſe and empty the Soul; and it's the Strength of our Corruptions which thus puffs us up with vain Conceits.

*Infer.* 2. Is ſaving Grace more excellent than Gold? *What Cauſe then have the poorest Chriſtians to be well ſatisfied with their Lot?* To others God hath given *Iſhmael*'s Portion, the Fatneſs of the *Earth*; to you *Iſaac*'s, the Graces of the *Covenant*: Their Portion is paid in *Braſs*, yours in *Gold*: Many of you are *poor in the World*, but *rich in Faith*; *and Heirs of the Kingdom which God hath promiſed*, Jam. 2. 5. what is the *Duſt* of the Earth, to the *Fruits* of the *Spirit*? You are troubled that you have no more of the World; it may be if you had more *Gold*, you would have leſs *Grace*: You conſider not how many are poor and wretched in both Worlds; *Monyleſs*, and *Chriſtleſs* too: You don't conſider you are near come to that State, in which all your Wants will be fully ſupply'd; where you ſhall not need the Treaſures of the Earth, and have your Deſires ſatisfied out of the Treaſures of Grace and Glory.

*Infer.* 3. Is ſaving Grace *Gold*, yea, infinitely more precious than *Gold*? *Then ſurely declining Chriſtians are great Loſers, and have Cauſe to be great Mourners.* The Remiſſion of the leaſt Degree of *Grace*, is more to be lamented than the loſs of the greateſt Sum of *Gold*.

Though the Habits of Grace be not loſt; yet the *Acts* of Grace may be ſuſpended, 2 *Sam.* 12. 31. The *Degrees* of Grace may be *remitted*, Rev. 3. 3. The *Evidences* of Grace may be clouded, and *conſequently* the *Comforts* of Grace may *be ſuſpended*, Iſa. 50. 10. and the leaſt of theſe is ſuch a Loſs, as all the Treaſures of the Earth cannot repair: Well therefore may declined Chriſtians challenge the firſt Place among all the Mourners in the World.

*Infer.* 4. Is Grace ſo invaluably precious? *How precious then ought the Ordinances of God to be to our Souls, by which Grace is firſt communicated, and afterwards improved in our Souls! The Law of thy Mouth is better unto me than thouſands of Gold and Silver*, Pſal. 119. 72. and good Reaſon, whilſt it *imparts* and *improves* that to which Gold and Silver is but droſs and dung.

None but thoſe that value not Grace, will ever ſlight the *Means*, or deſpiſe and injure the *Inſtruments* thereof. It's a ſad Sign of a graceleſs World, when theſe precious Things fall under Contempts and Slights.

*Infer.* 5. If Grace be ſo precious, *how watchful ſhould all gracious Perſons be in the Daies of Temptation!* The Deſign of Temptation is to rob you of your Treaſure: When *Cut-purſes* get into the Croud, we uſe to ſay; Friends, look to your Purſes. How many brave Criſtians have we read and heard of, that have rather choſen to part with their *Lives*, than with their *Graces*, who have *reſiſted unto Blood, ſtriving againſt Sin?* Heb. 12. 4.

O Chriſtians, you live in a cheating Age, many *ſeeming* Chriſtians have loſt all, and many *real* Chriſtians have loſt *much*, ſo much, that they are like to ſee but little Comfort in this World: Who are like to go Mourning to the Grave with that Lamentation, *Job* 29. 2, 3. *O that it were with me as in times paſt!*

*Inf.* 6. To conclude. Is there ſuch precious worth in ſaving Grace? *Then bleſs God for, and diligently uſe all Means to increaſe and improve it in your Souls.* It's Gold for Preciouſneſs, and for Uſefulneſs; and muſt not be laid up in a Napkin: That's a Sin condemned by the very Scope of that *Parable*, Mat. 25. 14, 15, &c.

All Chriſtians indeed have not the ſame Advantages of Improvement, but all muſt improve it according to the Advantages they have in Order to an Account. *Reſerved Chriſtians* who live too abſtracted from the Society and Communion of others, and diſperſe not their Streams abroad to the Benefit of others; nor improve the Graces of others for their own Benefit, are wanting both to their own Duty and Comfort. See you a Man rich in *Grace*; O trade with him if you can, to improve your ſelves by him; and the rather, becauſe you know not how ſoon Death may ſnatch him from you, and with him all his Stock of Grace is gone from you too, except what you made your own whilſt you converſed with him: But alas, alas! inſtead of *holy* profitable Soul-improving Communion, ſome are ſullenly reſerved; ſome are negligent and lazy; ſome are litigious and wrangling; more apt to draw forth the Droſs, than the Gold; I mean the Corruptions, than Graces of others. And how few there be that drive a profitable Trade for increaſe of Grace, is ſad to conſider.

And as Grace is not improved by Communion with *Men*, ſo I doubt moſt Chriſtians thrive but little in their Communion with *God*: We are too ſeldom in our *Cloſets*, too little upon our *Knees*, and when we are there, we gain but little, we come not off ſuch Gainers by Duty as we might.

O

O Chriſtians, think when you are hearing and praying, I am now trading with Heaven for that which is infinitely better than Gold. God is rich to all that call upon him, what a treaſure may I get this hour, if the fault be not in mine own heart? And thus of the ſecond Obſervation.

# CHAP. IV.

*Wherein the Third Doctrine, being the main ſubject of this Treatiſe is opened, and the method of the whole diſcourſe ſtated.*

Doct. 3. *That only is to be accounted true Grace which is able to endure all thoſe tryals appointed or permitted for the diſcovery of it.*

SECT. I. THE moſt wiſe God hath ſeen it fit to ſet all his people in a ſtate of tryal in this world. Firſt, He tryes, and then he Crowns them, James 1. 12. *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation* πειρασμὸν, (i. e.) *probation* or tryal ] *for when he is tryed, he ſhall receive the crown of life*: &c.

No man can ſay what he is, whether his graces be true or falſe, till they be tryed and examined by thoſe things which are to them as fire is to gold. Theſe ſelf-deceivers in the *Text*, thought they had grace; yea they thought they had been rich in grace; but it proved no better than *droſs*: And therefore *Chriſt* here counſels them to *buy of him gold tryed in the fire*, (i. e.) true grace indeed, which appears to be ſo upon the various proofs and examinations of its ſincerity, which are to be made in this world, as well as in the great ſolemn tryal it muſt come to in the world to come.

The Scriptures ſpeak of a twofold tryal, *viz.*

A tryal of Mens { Opinions and Graces.

1. *Firſt*, The *Opinions* and Judgments of men are tryed as by fire, in which ſenſe we are to underſtand that place, 1 *Cor.* 3. 12, 13. *Now if any man build upon this foundation, Gold, Silver, precious ſtones; wood, hay, ſtubble! every mans work ſhall be made manifeſt for the day ſhall declare it, becauſe it ſhall be revealed by fire, and the fire ſhall try every mans work of what ſort it is.*

This *text* ſpeaks of ſuch perſons as hold the foundation of Chriſtianity, but yet ſuperſtructed ſuch Doctrines and practices, as were no more able to endure the Tryal, than *Hay, Wood*, or *ſtubble* can endure the fire. Such a perſon hereby brings himſelf into danger, nd though the *Apoſtle* will not deny the *poſſibility*, yet he aſſerts the *difficulty* of his ſalvation: *he ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire*, (*i. e.*) as a man is ſaved by leaping out of his houſe at midnight, when it is all on fire about his ears: r ſo that phraſe imports *Amos* 4. 11. and *Jude* 3. Glad to eſcape naked, and with the loſs of s goods, bleſſing God, he hath his life for a ey: as little regard ſhall ſuch have to their er- neous notions, and unſcriptural opinions at t.

*Dum probantur toti n fumum abeunt.*

*Quo ex judicio ve- t ex incendio nu- lus effugit.* Chry- ſt.

2. *Secondly*, The *graces* of men are brought to e teſt as well as their Opinions. Tryal will be made of their *hearts*, as well as of their *heads*; and upon this tryal the everlaſting ſafety and happineſs of the Perſon depends: If a mans opinions be ſome of them found hay or ſtubble, yet ſo long as he holds the head, and is right in the foundation, he may be ſaved; but if a mans ſuppoſed graces be found ſo, all the world cannot ſave him: there is no way of eſcape if he finally deceive himſelf herein: and of this tryal of *Graces* my text ſpeaks: Sincere Grace is Gold tryed by fire.

There is a twofold tryal of grace, Active, and Paſſive.

Firſt, An *Active* tryal of it, in which we try it our ſelves, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves, prove your ſelves*: (i. e.) meaſure your *hearts, duties* and *graces* by the rule of the word; ſee how they anſwer to that rule, bring your Hearts and the Word together by ſolemn ſelf-examination: confer with your reins, and commune with your own hearts.

Secondly, A *Paſſive* tryal of it: whether we try it or no, God will try it, he will bring our gold to the touchſtone, and to the fire. *Thou O Lord knoweſt me, thou haſt ſeen me and tryed mine heart towards thee*, ſaith the Prophet, *Jer.* 12. 3.

Sometimes he tryes the *ſtrength* and *ability* of his ſervants graces, and thus he tryed *Abraham*, *Heb.* 11: 17. and ſometimes he trys the *ſoundneſs* and *ſincerity* of our graces, ſo the *Epheſian Angel* was tryed and found droſs, *Rev.* 2. 2. And ſo *Job* was tryed and found true gold, *Job* 23. 10. Theſe tryals are not made by God for his own information, for he knows what is in man, his eyes pierce his Heart and Reins; but for our information, which is the true ſence of Deut. 8. 2. *Thou ſhalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee theſe fourty years in the Wilderneſs, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart*, (i.e.) to make thee know it, by giving thee ſuch experiments and tryals of it in thoſe wilderneſs ſtraits and difficulties.

And theſe are the tryals of grace I am here to ſpeak of, not excluding the *Active tryals* made by our ſelves; no, no, all theſe tryals made by God upon us, are deſigned to put us upon the tryal of our ſelves: When God trys, we ſhould try too.

Now the method into which I ſhall caſt this diſcourſe ſhall be to ſhew you,

1. *Firſt*, What thoſe things are which try the ſincerity of our Graces, as fire tryes Gold.
2. *Secondly*, For what ends doth God put the graces of his people upon ſuch tryals in this world.
3. *Thirdly*, That ſuch grace only is ſincere as can endure theſe tryals.
4. *Fourthly* and *Laſtly*, To apply the whole, in the main uſes of it.

## SECT. II.

1. Firſt, W*HAT thoſe things are which try the ſincerity of grace, as fire tryes gold.*

Before I enter into Particulars, it will be needful to acquaint you, that the ſubject before me is full of difficulties. There is need (as one ſpeaks) of much cautious reſpect to the various ſizes and degrees of growth among Chriſtians, and the viciſſitudes of their inward caſe: elſe we may darken and perplex the way inſtead of clearing it.

The *pourtraicture* of a Chriſtian is ſuch as none can draw to one *Model*, but with reſpect to the *infan-*

*cy* of ſome, as well as the Age and *Strength* of others.

Great heed alſo ought to be had in the Application of *Marks* and *Signs*, we ſhould firſt try them, before we try *our ſelves*, or *others* by them. *Marks* and *Signs* are by ſome diſtinguiſhed into *excluſive*, *incluſive*, and *poſitive* : *Excluſive Marks* ſerve to ſhut out bold Pretenders, by ſhewing them how far they come ſhort of a ſaving Work of Grace, and they are commonly taken from ſome neceſſary common Duty, as hearing, praying, *&c.* he that doth not theſe Things, cannot have any Work of Grace in him ; and yet if he do them, he cannot from thence conclude his eſtate to be gracious : He that ſo concludes deceives himſelf.

*Incluſive Marks* rather diſcover the *Degrees*, than the Truth of Grace, and are rather intended for *Comfort* than for *Conviction* : If we find them in our ſelves, we do not only find *Sincerity*, but *Eminency* of Grace : They being taken from ſome raiſed degree and eminent Acts of Grace in confirmed and grown Chriſtians.

Betwixt the two former there is a middle Sort of *Marks*, which are called *poſitive Marks*, and they are ſuch as are always and only found in regenerate Souls. The *Hypocrite* hath them not, *the grown Chriſtian* hath them, and that in an eminent Degree, the *pooreſt Chriſtian* hath them in a lower but ſaving Degree : Great Care muſt be taken in the Application of them. And it's paſt doubt that many Weak and injudicious Chriſtians have been greatly prejudiced by finding the Experiences of eminent Chriſtians propoſed as Rules to meaſure their Sincerity by. Alas! theſe no more fit their *Souls*, than *Sauls* Armour did *Davids Body*.

Theſe Things being premiſed, and a due care carried along with us through this Diſcourſe ; I ſhall next come to the Particulars, and ſhew you what thoſe Things are which diſcover the State and Tempers of our Souls. And though it be true, that there is no Condition we are in, no Providence that befals us, but it takes ſome Proof, and makes ſome Diſcovery of our Hearts: Yet to limit this Diſcourſe, and fall into Particulars as ſoon as we can, I ſhall ſhew what *Tryals* are made of our Graces in this World, by our *Proſperity*, and our *Adverſity*, by our *Corruptions*, and our *Duties* : And laſtly by our *Sufferings* upon the Score and Account of Religion.

## SECT. III.

Firſt, *Proſperity*, Succeſs, and the Increaſe of outward Enjoyments, are to Grace what Fire is to Gold. Riches and Honours make Tryal what we are, and by theſe things many a falſe Heart hath been detected, as well as the Sincerity and Eminency of others Graces diſcovered. We may fancy the Fire of Proſperity to be rather for *Comfort* than *Tryal* ; to *refreſh* us rather than to prove us ; but you will find Proſperity to be a great *Diſcovery*; and that ſcarce any thing proves the Truth and Strength of Mens Graces and Corruptions more than it doth : *Rara virtus eſt humilitas honorata*, ſaid *Bernard*, to find Humility with Honour is to find a *Phœnix* ; let an obſcure perſon be lifted up to Honour, and how ſteady and well-compoſed ſoever he was before, it's a thouſand to one but this Eyes will dazle, and his Head run round when he is upon the lofty Pinacle of Praiſe and Honour : *Prov.* 27. 21. *As the fining Pot for Silver, and the Furnace for Gold* ; *ſo is a Man to his Praiſe* : Put the beſt Gold into the *fining Pot* of Praiſe, and it's a great Wonder if a great Deal of Droſs do not appear, *Iſa.* 39. 2. the vain Glory of good *Hezekiah* roſe like a *Froth* or Scum upon the Pot, when heated by Proſperity. It was ſuch a fining Pot to *Herod* as diſcovered him to be droſs it ſelf, *Acts* 12. 23. How did that poor Worm ſwell under that Tryal into the Conceit of a God ? And was juſtly deſtroyed by Worms, becauſe he forgat himſelf to be one: We little think what a ſtrange Alteration an exalted Eſtate will make upon our Spirits. When the *Prophet* would abate the vain Confidence of *Hazael*, who could not believe that ever he ſhould be turned into ſuch a ſalvage Beaſt as the *Prophet* had foretold : He only tells him, *The Lord hath ſhewed me that thou ſhalt be King over* Syria, 2 *King*. 8. 13. The Meaning is, don't be too confident, *Hazael*, that thy Temper and Diſpoſition can never alter to that Degree, Thou never yet ſateſt in a *Throne*; when men ſee the *Crown* upon thy *Head*, then they will better ſee the true Temper of thy *Heart*.

*Magiſtratus indicat virum.*

How humble was *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, tame and tractable in a lean Paſture ; but bring them once into *Canaan*, and the World is ſtrangely altered ; then, *we are Lords*, ſay they, *we will come no more unto thee*, Jer. 2. 2, 7, 31. Proſperity is a *Criſis* both to Grace and Corruption. Thence is that Caution to *Iſrael*, Deut. 10. 11, 12. *When thou haſt eaten, and art full, Then beware leſt thou forget the Lord thy God.* Then beware, that's the Critical Time ; ſurely that man muſt be acknowledged rich, very rich in Grace, whoſe Grace ſuffers no Diminution or Eclipſe by his Riches ; and that Man deſerves double Honour, whoſe Pride the Honours of this World cannot provoke and inflame.

It was a ſad Truth from the Lips of a pious divine in *Germany* upon his Death-bed ; being ſomewhat diſconſolate by reflecting upou the Barrenneſs of his Life : Some Friends took thence an Occaſion to commend him; and mind him of his painful Miniſtry, and fruitful Life among them ; but he cryed out, *Auferte ignem, adhuc enim paleas habeo* ; Withdraw the Fire, for I have Chaff in me ; meaning that he felt his Ambition like Chaff catching Fire from the Sparkles of their Praiſes : like unto which was the ſaying of another, *He that praiſeth me, wounds me.*

But to deſcend into the particular Diſcoveries that Proſperity and Honour make of the *Want* of Grace in ſome, and of the *Weakneſs* of Grace in others : I will ſhew you what *Symptomes* of Hypocriſie appear upon ſome Men under the Tryals of Proſperity, and what Signs of Grace appear in others under the ſame Tryal.

## SFCT. IV.

Proſperity diſcovers many ſad Symptoms o a naughty Heart, and among others theſe ar ordinarily moſt conſpicuous.

1. *Firſt*, It caſts the Hearts of ſome Men int a *deep Oblivion of God*, and makes them lay aſid all Care of Duty : *Rare fumant fælicibus Ar* The Altars of rich Men ſeldom ſmoke, *Deut.* 3 13, 14, 15. *Jeſurun* ſucked Honey out of th Rock, eat the fat of Lambs, and Kidneys o

Wheat ; but what was the effect of this ? he kicked, and forſook God which made him, and lightly eſteemed the rock of his ſalvation ; inſtead of lifting up their *hearts* in an humble thankful acknowledgment of Gods bounty, they lifted up the *heel* in a wanton abuſe of his mercy : in the fatteſt earth we find the moſt ſlippery footing.

He that is truely gracious may in proſperity remit ſome degrees, but a Carnal heart there loſeth all that which in a low condition he ſeemed to have. *Agurs deprecation* as to himſelf, no doubt was built upon his frequent obſervation how it was with others, *Prov.* 30. 8, 9. *Leſt I be full, and deny God.* It's ſaid in Eccleſ. 5. 12. *That the abundance of the rich will not ſuffer him to ſleep*, and I wiſh that were the worſt injury it did him ; but alas, it will not ſuffer him to *pray*, to *meditate*, to allow time and thoughts about his eternal concernments ; he falls aſleep in the lap of proſperity, and forgets that there is a *God* to be ſerved, or a ſoul to be ſaved. O this is a dangerous ſymptom of a very graceleſs heart.

2. *Secondly*, *Proſperity* meeting with a graceleſs heart, makes it wholly *ſenſual*, and entirely ſwallows up its thoughts and affections : Earthly things transform and mold their hearts into their own ſimilitude and nature : The whole ſtrength of their ſouls goes out to thoſe injoyments. So thoſe graceleſs, yet proſperous perſons are deſcribed, Job 21. 11, 12, 13. *They take the Timbred and Harp, and rejoyce at the ſound of the Organ, they ſpend their days in wealth* ; They take the *Timbrel*, not the *Bible*. *They rejoyce at the ſound of the Organ*, not a word of their rejoycing in God. *They ſend forth their little ones in the dance.* That is all the *Catechiſm* they are taught. *They ſpend their days in wealth.* Their whole time, that precious ſtock and Talent is wholly laid out upon theſe ſenſitive things : Either the pleaſure of it powerfully charms them, or the cares of it wholly engroſs their minds ; that there is no time to ſpare for God : *They live in pleaſure upon earth*, as it is, *Jam.* 5. 5. Juſt as the fiſh lives in the water its proper element, take him off from theſe things, and put him upon ſpiritual ſerious heavenly imployments, and he is *Piſcis in arido* : Like a fiſh upon the dry Land.

Now though Proſperity may too much influence, and enſnare the minds of good men, and eſtrange them too much from Heavenly things ; yet thus to engroſs their hearts, and convert them into their own ſimilitude and nature, ſo that theſe things ſhould be the Center of their hearts, the very proper element in which they live, is utter impoſſible.

An Hypocrite indeed may be brought to this, becauſe though *Janus* like, he have two faces, yet he really hath but one principle ; and that is wholly carnal and earthly : So that it's eaſie to make all the water to run in one channel, to gather all into one entire ſtream, in which his heart ſhall pour out all its ſtrength to the Creature.

But a Chriſtian indeed hath a double principle that acts him : though we have a law of ſin that moves him one way, yet there is in him alſo the Law of grace, which thwarts and croſſes that principle of corruption ; ſo that as grace cannot do what it would, becauſe of ſin ; ſo neither can ſin do what it would, becauſe of grace, *Gal.* 5. 17.

The heart of a Chriſtian in the midſt of enſnaring ſenſitive enjoyments finds indeed a corrupt principle in it, which would incline him to fall aſleep upon ſuch a ſoft pillow ; and forget God and duty : but it cannot, Oh no, it cannot do ſo, there's a principle of grace within him that never leaves jogging, diſturbing, and calling upon him, till he riſe and return to his God the true reſt of his ſoul.

3. *Thirdly*, A falſe pretender to Religion, an *Hypocritical Profeſſour* meeting with proſperity and ſucceſs, grows altogether unconcerned about the intereſt of Religion, and ſenſeleſs of the calamities of Gods people. Thus the Prophet convinces the Jews of their *hypocriſie*, Amos 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. *They were at eaſe in Zion, and truſted in the Mountain of Samaria* : And ſo having a ſhadow of Religion, and a fulneſs of all earthly things, they fell to feaſting and ſporting : *They drank wine in bowls, and anointed themſelves with the chief oyntments, but were not grieved for the affliction of Joſeph.* They condolled not, *Gnalſheber*, over the breakings or tearing to pieces of *Joſeph* ; if they are out of danger once, let the Church ſhift for it ſelf ; they are ſecure in a warm neſt, let the birds of prey catch and devour that flock with which they ſometimes aſſociated, they are not toucht with it. *Moſes* could not do ſo, though in the greateſt ſecurity, and confluence of the honours and pleaſures of *Egypt*, Acts 7. 23. *Nehemiah* could not do ſo, though the ſervant and *favorite* of a mighty *Monarch*, and wanted nothing to make him outwardly happy : Yet the pleaſures of a *Kings Court* could not chear his heart, or ſcatter the clouds of ſorrow from his Countenance, whileſt his brethren were in affliction, and the City of his God lay waſte, *Nehemiah* 2. 1, 2, 3. Nor indeed can any Gracious heart be unconcerned and ſenſeleſs ; for that Union that all the *Saints* have with *Chriſt* their head, and with one another as fellow members in Chriſt, will *beget ſympathy* among them in their ſufferings. 1 *Cor.* 12. 26.

## SECT. V.

BUT as the fire of proſperity diſcovers this, and much more droſs in a graceleſs heart ; ſo it diſcovers the ſincerity and grace of Gods people. I ſay not that it diſcovers nothing but grace in them. O that it did not ! alas ! many of them have had a great deal of droſs and corruption diſcovered by it, as was noted before : but yet in this Tryal, the graciouſneſs and uprightneſs of their hearts will appear in theſe and ſuch like workings of it.

1. *Firſt*, Under proſperity, ſucceſs and honour, the upright heart will labour to ſuppreſs pride, and keep it ſelf lowly and humble, and ſtill the more grace there is, the more humility there will be. If God lift him up, he will lay himſelf low, and exalt his God high. So did *Jacob* when God had raiſed and enlarged him, Gen. 32. 10. I *am not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant, for with my ſtaff* I *paſſed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.*

Great was the difference in *Jacobs* outward condition at his return, from what it was at firſt paſſage over *Jordan* : then poor, now rich ; then ſingle and comfortleſs, now the head of a great family. Yea, but though his outward eſtate was altered, the frame of his heart was not altered. *Jacob* was an holy and humble man when he went out, and ſo he was when he returned: He ſaw a multitude of Mercies about him, and among them all, not one but was greater than himſelf.

I dare not ſay every Chriſtian under Proſperity can at all times manifeſt like humility; but I am ſure what Pride and Vanity ſoever may riſe in a gracious Heart tryed by Proſperity, there's that within him will give check to it: He dare not ſuffer ſuch proud Thoughts to lodge quietly in his Heart: For alas he ſees that in himſelf, and that in his God that will abaſe him; Grace will make him *look back* to his original Condition, and ſay with *David*, *What am I O Lord God, and what is my Fathers Houſe; that thou haſt brought me hitherto?* 2 Sam. 7. 18.

It will make him look in, and ſee the Baſeneſs of his own Heart, and the Corruptions that are there, and admire at the Dealings of God with ſo vile a Creature. O thinks he, if others did but know what I know of my ſelf, they would abhor me more than now they eſteem and value me.

2. *Secondly*, *Proſperity* uſually draws forth the Saints Love to the God of their Mercies: That which heats a wicked Mans *Luſts*, warms a gracious Mans Heart with Love and Delight in God.

Theſe were the Words of that lovely Song which *David* ſang in the Day that the Lord delivered him out of the Hands of all his Enemies, and from the Hand of *Saul*, and he ſaid, *I will love thee O Lord my Strength*; Pſal. 18. *Title* & *v.* 1. *compared:* Theſe outward things are not the main Grounds and Motives of their Love to God; no, no, they love him when he takes away, as well, as when he gives: But they are ſanctified Inſtruments to inflame their Love to God: They *boyle* up a wicked Mans *Luſts*, but they *melt* a gracious Mans Soul. O in what a Pang of Love did *David* go into the Preſence of God under the Senſe of his Mercies! *his melting Mercies*; when he thus poured out his whole Soul in a Stream of Love to his God, 2 *Sam.* 7. 19, 20. *Is this the manner of men, O Lord God! and what can David ſay more unto thee!* An Expreſſion that turns up the very Bottom of his Heart.

3. *Thirdly*, *Proſperity* and comfortable Providences do uſually become Cautions againſt Sin when they meet with a ſanctified Soul. This is the natural Inference of a gracious Soul from them, Hath God pleaſed me, then hath he obliged me to take more care to pleaſe him. O let me not grieve him, that hath comforted me. So *Ezra* 9. 13. *After ſuch a Deliverance, as this, ſhould we again break thy Commandments!* What! break his Commandments who hath broken our Bonds! God forbid.

It was an excellent Reſolution of a *Chriſtian* once, who Receiving an eminent Mercy, at the ſame time he felt himſelf under the Power of a ſpecial Corruption; Well, (ſaith he) now will I go forth in the Strength of this Mercy to mortifie and ſubdue that Corruption. I will not meaſure every Chriſtian by the eminent Workings of Grace in ſome one; but ſurely ſo far I may ſafely go, That Sincerity knows not how to ſin becauſe Grace hath abounded, any more than it dare Sin that Grace may abound.

4. *Fourthly*, A truly gracious Soul will not be ſatisfied with all the Proſperity and Comforts in the World for his Portion. *Not thine Lord, but Thee* is the Voice of Grace: When Providence had been more than ordinarily bountiful in outward things to *Luther*, he began to be afraid of its Meaning, and earneſtly proteſted, God ſhould not put him off ſo. *The Lord is my Portion ſaith my Soul*, Lam. 3. 24. and the Soul can beſt tell what it hath made its choice, and wherein it hath beſtowed its chief Delights and Expectations.

An unſound Heart will accept theſe for its Portion: If the World be ſure to him, and his Deſigns fail not there; he can be content to leave God, and Soul, and Heaven, and Hell at Hazard: But ſo cannot the upright. Theſe things in *Subordination*; but neither theſe, nor any thing under the Sun in *Compariſon* with, or *Oppoſition* to God.

## CHAP. V.

*Shewing what Probation Adverſity makes of the Sincerity or Unſoundneſs of our Hearts.*

SECT. I. THat *Adverſity* is a *Furnace* to try of what Metal our Hearts are, none can doubt, that hath either ſtudied the Scriptures, or obſerved his own Heart under Afflictions.

When the Droſs and Ruſt of Hypocriſie and Corruption had almoſt eaten out the Heart of Religion among the *Jews*; then ſaith God, *I will melt them, and try them; for what ſhall I do for the Daughter of my People?* Jer. 9. 7. Here Affliction is the Furnace, and the People are the Metal caſt into it; and the End of it is Tryal. *I will melt them and try them*; what other Courſe ſhall I take with them? If I let them alone, their Luſts like the Ruſt and Canker in Metals will eat them out. Proſperity multiplies Profeſſors, and Adverſity brings them to the Teſt: Then *Hirelings* quickly become *Changlings:* The gilded *Potſherd* gliſters till it come to ſcouring. The Devil thought *Job* had been ſuch a one, and moves that he may be tried this way; being confident he would be found but droſs in the Tryal, *Job* 1. 11. But tho' the Furnace of Affliction diſcovered ſome Droſs in him, (as it will in the beſt of Men) yet he came forth as Gold.

In this Furnace alſo Grace is manifeſted: 'Tis ſaid, *Rev.* 13. 10. *Here is the Patience and Faith of the Saints:* (i. e.) here is the Trial and Diſcovery of it in theſe Days of Adverſity. It was a weighty ſaying of *Tertullian* to the Perſecutors of the Church in his Days, *Probatio innocentiæ noſtra, eſt iniquitas veſtra.* Your Wickedneſs is the Trial of our Innocency. *Conſtantius* the Father of *Conſtantine* made an exploratory Decree, That all who would not renounce the Chriſtian Faith, ſhould loſe their Places of Honour and Profit; This preſently ſeparated the *Droſs* from the *Gold*; which was his Deſign: For many renounced Chriſtianity, and thereupon were renounced by him; and thoſe that held their Integrity, were received into Favour.

*Tertul. in Apol.*

In time of Proſperity, Hypocriſie lies covered in the Heart like *Neſts* in the green *Buſhes*; but when the *Winter* of Adverſity hath made them bare, every Body may ſee them without ſearching.

But to fall into cloſer Particulars, it will be neceſſary to enquire what Effects of Adverſity are common to both the Sound and the Unſound; and then what are proper to either in this cloſe Trial by Adverſity.

SECT

## SECT. II.

IT will be expedient to the Deſign I manage in this Diſcourſe, to ſhew in the firſt Place what are common Effects of Adverſity to both the godly and ungodly, for in ſome things they differ not, but as it is with the one, ſo alſo with the other: As,

1. *Firſt*, Both the godly and ungodly may fear Adverſity before it comes. To be ſure a wicked Man cannot, and it's evident many godly Men do not come up to the Height of that Rule, *Jam.* 1.2. *To account it all Joy when they fall into divers Temptations*, or Trials by Adverſity.

'Tis ſaid, *Iſa.* 33. 14. *The Sinners in Sion are afraid, trembling ſurprizeth the Hypocrite.* Namely, under the Apprehenſion of approaching calamities: And it's true alſo, the *Saints in Sion* may be afraid: *My Fleſh trembleth for Fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments*; ſaid holy *David*, Pſ. 119. 120. and Job 3. 23. *The thing which I greatly feared* (ſaith that upright Soul) *is come upon me*: There is a vaſt Difference betwixt a Saints firſt meeting with Afflictions, and his parting with them: he entertains them ſometimes with trembling, he parts with them rejoycing, ſmiling on them, and bleſſing them in the Name of the Lord. So that by this the upright, and the falſe Heart, are not diſcriminated: Even ſanctified Nature declines Sufferings and Troubles.

2. *Secondly*, Both the godly and ungodly may entertain Afflictions with Regret and Unwillingneſs when they come. Afflictions and Troubles are Wormwood and Gall, *Lam.* 3. 19. and that goes not down pleaſantly with Fleſh and Blood, *Heb.* 12. 11. *No Affliction for the preſent ſeemeth joyous, but grievous*; he means to God's own People. They are *in heavineſs* through manifold Temptations or Trials by the Rod: 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. When God gives the Cup of Affliction into the Hands of the wicked, how do they reluctate and loath it? How do their Stomacks riſe at it? And though the Portion of the Saints Cup be much ſweeter than theirs, (for that bitter Ingredient of God's vindictive Wrath is not in it) yet even they ſhrink from it, and loth they are to taſte it.

3. *Thirdly*, Both the one and other may be impatient and fretful in Adverſity: it's the very Nature of Fleſh and Blood to be ſo. *The wicked are like the troubled Sea which cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt forth Mire and Dirt*, Iſa. 57. 20. It's an Alluſion to the unſtable and ſtormy *Ocean*: You know there is naturally an Eſtuation, and working in the Sea, whether it be incenſed by the Wind or no; but if a violent Wind blow upon the unquiet *Ocean*, Oh what raging and foaming is there! What Abundance of traſh and filth doth it at ſuch times caſt out!

Now, though Grace make a great Difference betwixt one and another, yet I dare not ſay, but even a gracious Heart may be very unquiet and tumultuous in the Day of Affliction. Sanctified Souls have their Paſſions and Luſts which are too little mortified, even as *ſweet Bryar*, and *Holythiſtles* have their Prickles, as well as the worthleſs Bramble. *Jonah* was a good Man, yet his Soul was ſadly diſtempered by adverſe Providences! *Jonah* 4. 9. *Yea* (ſaith he, and that to his God) *I do well to be angry, even unto Death.*

4. *Fourthly*, Both the one and the other may be weary of the Rod, and think the Day of Adverſity a tedious Day, wiſhing it were once at an End. *Babylon* ſhall be weary of the Evil that God will bring upon it, *Jer.* 51. *ult.* and Oh that none of *Sions Children* were weary of Adverſity too! How ſad a Moan doth *Job* make of his long continued Affliction, *Job* 16. 6, 7. *Though I ſpeak, my Grief is not aſſwaged, and though I forbear, what am I eaſed? But now he hath made me weary.*

And if you look into Pſal. 6. 3. 6. you may ſee another ſtrong Chriſtian even tyred in the Way of Affliction: *My Soul* (ſaith *David* in that Place) *is ſore vexed, but thou O Lord how long! I am weary with my groaning.*

5. *Fifthly*, Both the one and other may be driven to their Knees by Adverſity. *Lord in Trouble have they viſited thee, they have poured out a Prayer when thy chaſtening was upon them*, Iſa. 26. 16. Not that a godly Perſon will pray no longer than the Rod is at his Back; O no, he cannot live without Prayer long, how few calls ſoever he hath to that Duty by the Rod: but when the Rod is on his *Back*, he will be more frequently, and more fervently upon his *Knees*: Indeed many graceleſs Hearts are like *Childrens Tops* which will go no longer than they are whipt; they cannot find their Knees and their Tongues, till God find a Rod to excite them. A dangerous Symptom. The ſame Affliction may put a gracious, and a graceleſs Soul to their Knees; but tho' in the external matter of Duty, and in the external Call or Occaſion of Duty they ſeem to agree; yet is there a vaſt Difference in the Principles, Manner, and Ends of theſe their Duties; as will evidently appear in its proper Place in our following Diſcourſe.

But by what hath been ſaid in this *Section*, you may ſee how in ſome things the holy upright Soul acts too like the unſanctified, and in other Things how much the *Hypocrite* may act like a Saint: He may be externally humbled, ſo was *Ahab*: He may pray under the Rod, *Mal.* 2. 13. yea, and requeſt others to pray for him, ſo did *Simon*, Acts 8. 24.

## SECT. III.

BUT though the ſound and unſound Heart differ not in ſome external Carriages under the Rod; yet there are Effects of Adverſity which are proper to either, and will diſcriminate them. To which End let us firſt ſee what effects Adverſity is uſually followed withal in unſound and carnal Hearts: And we ſhall find among other, theſe *five Symptoms* of a naughty Heart appearing under Croſſes and Afflictions.

1. *Firſt*, A graceleſs Heart is not quickly and eaſily brought to ſee the Hand of God in thoſe Troubles that befall it, and be duly affected with it, *Iſa.* 26. 11. *Lord when thy Hand is lifted up they will not ſee*: when it hath ſmitten, or is lifted up to ſmite, they ſhut their Eyes: 'Tis the Malice of this Man, or the Negligence of that, or the Unfaithfulneſs of another that hath brought all this Trouble upon me: Thus the Creature is the *Horizon* that terminates their Sight, and beyond that they uſually ſee nothing: Sometimes indeed the Hand of God is ſo immediately manifeſted, and convincingly diſcovered in Afflictions, that they cannot avoid the Sight of it, and then they may (in their Way) pour out a Prayer before him, but ordinarily they impute all to ſe-

cond cauſes, and overlook the firſt Cauſe of their troubles.

2. *Secondly*, Nor is it uſual with theſe Men under the Rod to retire into their Cloſets, and ſearch their hearts there; to find out the particular cauſe and provocation of their affliction: *No man repented him of his wickedneſs, ſaying what have I done?* Jer. 8. 6. What curſed thing is there with me, that hath thus incenſed the anger of God againſt me? God viſits their iniquities with *afflictions*, but they viſit not their own hearts by *ſelf-examinations*. God judges them, but they judge not themſelves; he ſhews their iniquities in a clear glaſs, but none ſaith, *What have I done?* This phraſe, *What have I done?* Is the voice of one that recollects himſelf after a raſh action; or the voice of a Man aſtoniſhed at the diſcovery afflictions make of his ſins, but no ſuch voice as this is ordinarily heard among carnal Men.

3. *Thirdly*, An unſound Profeſſor if left to his choice, would rather chuſe *Sin* than *Affliction*; and ſees more evil in that, than in this.

And it cannot be doubted, if we conſider the principle by which all unregenerate Men are acted, is *ſenſe* not *faith*: hence *Jobs* friends would have argued his Hypocriſie, *Job* 36. 21. And had their *application* been as their *rule*, it would have concluded it. *This* ( *viz.* Sin ) *haſt thou choſen, rather then affliction.*

I do not ſay that an upright man cannot commit a *moral* evil, to eſcape a *pœnal* evil. O that daily obſervation did not too plentifully furniſh us with ſad inſtances of that kind! but upright ones do not, dare not upon a ſerious deliberate diſcuſſion and debate chuſe ſin rather than affliction; what they may do upon ſurpriſals, and in the violence of temptation is of another nature.

But a falſe and unſound heart diſcovers it ſelf in the choice it makes upon deliberation, and that frequently, when ſin and trouble come in competition: put caſe, ſaith *Auguſtine*, a *Ruffian* ſhould with one hand ſet the cup of drunkenneſs to thy mouth, and with the other a dagger to thy breaſt; and ſay, *Drink or die*: thou ſhouldeſt rather chuſe to die ſober, than to live a *drunkard*: and many Chriſtians have reſiſted unto blood ſtriving againſt ſin, and with renowned *Moſes* choſen affliction, the worſt of afflictions; yea death it ſelf in the moſt formidable appearance, rather than ſin: And it is the habitual temper and reſolution of every gracious heart ſo to do, tho' thoſe holy reſolutions are ſometimes overborn by violence of temptation.

But the *Hypocrite* dreads leſs the defilement of his ſoul, than the loſs of his eſtate, liberty or life. If you ask upon what ground then doth the Apoſtle ſuppoſe, 1 *Cor*. 13. 3. a man may give his body to be burnt, and not have charity? that the *Salamander* of Hypocriſie may live in the flame of *Martyrdom*? The anſwer is at hand, they that chooſe death in the ſenſe of this Text, do not chooſe it to eſcape ſin, but to feed and indulge it. Thoſe ſtrange adventures ( if any ſuch be ) are rather to maintain their own honour, and enroll their names among worthy and famous Perſons to Poſterity; or out of a blind zeal to their eſpouſed errors and miſtakes; than in a due regard to the glory of God, and the preſervation of integrity. I fear to ſpeak it, but it muſt be ſpoken, (ſaith *Hierom*) That even Martyrdom it ſelf, when ſuffered for Admiration and Applauſe, profits nothing; but that blood is ſhed in vain.

*Timeo dicere, ſed dicendum eſt; martyrium ipſum ſi ideo fiat ut admirationi & laudi habeatur a fratribus; fruſtrà ſanguis effuſus eſt.* Hier.

4. *Fourthly*, It is the property of an unregenerate ſoul under adverſity to turn from creature to creature for ſupport and comfort, and not from every creature to God alone. So long as their feet can touch ground, I mean feel any creature relief or comfort under them, they can ſubſiſt and live in afflictions; but when they loſe ground then all creature-refuge fails, then their Hearts fail too.

Thus *Zedekiah* and the ſelf-deceiving *Jews*, when they ſaw their own ſtrength failed them, and there was little hope left that they ſhould deliver themſelves from the *Chaldeans*, what do they in that ſtrait? Do they with upright *Jehoſophat* ſay, *Our eyes are unto thee?* No, no, their eyes were upon *Egypt* for ſuccour, not upon Heaven: Well, *Pharaoh* and his aids are left ſtill, all hope is not gone: *Jer*. 37. 9. See the like in *Ahaz*, in a ſore plunge and diſtreſs he Courts the King of *Aſſyria* for help, 2 *Chron*. 28. 22, 23. That project failing, why then he will try what the gods of *Damaſcus* can do for him: any way rather than the right way, *Flectere ſi nequeam ſuperos, Acheronta movebo.*

So it is with many others. If one child die, what do they do, run to God and comfort themſelves in this, *The Lord liveth* tho' my Child die? If an Eſtate be loſt and a Family ſinking, do they with *David* comfort themſelves in the *everlaſting Covenant*, ordered and ſure? No, no; but if one Relation die, there's another alive; if an Eſtate be gone, yet not all: ſomething is left ſtill, and the caſe will mend.

As long as ever ſuch Men have any viſible encouragement, they will hang upon it; and not make up all in Chriſt, and encourage themſelves in the Lord. To tell them of rejoycing in the Lord, when the Fig-tree bloſſoms not, is what they cannot underſtand.

5. *Fifthly*, To conclude, An unſound heart never comes out of the Furnace of affliction purged, mortified, and more ſpiritual and holy than when he was caſt into it: his ſcum and droſs is not there ſeparated from him: nay, the more they are afflicted, the worſe they are. *Why ſhould ye be ſmitten any more? ye will revolt more and more*, Iſa. 1. 5. And to keep to our Metaphor, conſult *Jer*. 6. 29. God had put that incorrigible people into the Furnace of affliction, and kept them long in that fire; and what was the Iſſue? Why, ſaith the Prophet, *The bellows are burnt, the lead is conſumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain*, &c. *reprobate ſilver ſhall men call them, becauſe the Lord hath rejected them.*

If the fire of affliction be continually blown till the very bellows be burnt, that is, the *tongue*, or rather the *Lungs* of the *Prophet*, which have ſome reſemblance to bellows; though theſe be even ſpent in reproving, and threatning, and denouncing woe upon woe, and Judgment upon Judgment; and God fulfils his word upon them; yet ſtill they are as before; the droſs remains: though *Jeruſalem* be made a *Furnace*, and the inhabitants, the fleſh boyling in it is noted ( pertinently to my Diſcourſe ) in *Ezek*. 24. 6. 13. *the ſcum remains with them*, and cannot be ſeparated by the fire; and the reaſon is plain, becauſe no affliction in its ſelf purges ſin, but as it is ſanctified, and works in the vertue of Gods bleſſing, and in purſuance of the promiſes.

O think on this you that have had thouſands of afflictions in in one kind and another, and none of them all have done you good: they have not mortified, humbled, or benefited you at all. And thus you ſee what the effects of adverſity are when it meets a graceleſs heart.

## SECT. IV.

BY this time, *Reader*, I ſuppoſe thou art deſirous to know what effects adverſity and afflictions uſe to have when they meet with an honeſt and ſincere heart; only before I come to particulars, I think it needful to acquaint thee, That the fruits of afflictonsare moſtly *after-fruits*, and not ſo diſcernable by the Chriſtian himſelf under the *Rod*, as after he hath been exerciſed by it, *Heb.* 12. 11. and calmly reflects upon what is paſt; nor doth every Chriſtian attain the ſame meaſure and degree: ſome *rejoyce*, others commonly *ſubmit*: but I think theſe ſeven effects are ordinarily found in all upright hearts that paſs under the rod.

1. Firſt, The ſincere and upright ſoul betakes its ſelf to God in affliction, *Job* 1. 20. When God was *ſmiting*, *Job* was *praying*: when God *afflicted*, *Job worſhipped*: *So David*, Pſal. 116. 3,4. *I found ſorrow and trouble, then called I upon the name of the Lord*; And when the meſſenger of *Satan* buffeted *Paul*, *For this cauſe* (ſaith he) *I beſought the Lord thrice*, 2 Cor. 12. 8. Alas, whither ſhould a Child go in diſtreſs but to its Father?

2. *Secondly*, He ſees and owns the hand of God in his afflictions: how much or little ſoever of the inſtruments of trouble appear. *The Lord hath taken away*, ſaith *Job*, *Job* 1. 21. God hath bidden him, ſaith *David*, 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. If the blow come from the hand of a wicked man, yet he ſees that wicked hand in Gods righteous hand, *Pſal.* 17. 14. And this apprehenſion is fundamental to all that Communion men have with God in their afflictions, and to all that peaceableneſs, and gracious ſubmiſſion of their ſpirits under the rod: he that *ſees* nothing of God in his *troubles*, hath nothing of God in his ſoul.

3. *Thirdly*, He can juſtifie God in all the afflictions and troubles that come upon him, be they never ſo ſevere. *Thou art juſt in all that is brought upon us*, ſaith *Nehemiah*, *Nehem.* 9. 33. *Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve*, ſaith Ezra, Ezra 9. 13. *It is of the Lords mercy we are not conſumed*, ſaith the *Church*, *Lam.* 3. 22. Are we in *Babylon?* It's a Mercy we are not in *Hell*. If God *condemn* him, yet he will *juſtifie* God; if God caſt him into a *ſea of Trouble*, yet he will acknowledge in all that *ſea of trouble*, there is not one *drop of injuſtice*. If I have not deſerved ſuch uſage from the hands of *men*, yet I have deſerved worſe than this at the hands of *God*.

4. *Fourthly*, Afflictions uſe to melt and humble gracious hearts: there is an habitual tenderneſs planted in their ſpirits, and a juſt occaſion quickly draws it forth: And ſo uſual a thing it is for gracious Hearts to be humbled under the Afflictings of God, that Affliction is upon that Score called *Humiliation:* The *Effect* put for the *Cauſe*; to ſhew where one is, the other will be: 2 *Cor.* 12. 21. *My God will humble me*, (i. e.) he will afflict me with the Sight of your Sins, and diſorders: And if a gracious Soul be ſo apt to be humbled for other Mens Sins, much more for his own.

5. *Fifthly*, The upright Soul is inquiſitive under the Rod to find out that Evil for which the Lord contends with him by Affliction, *Job* 10. 2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me:* And *Job* 34. 31. *That which I ſee not, teach thou me: If I have done Iniquity, I will do no more.* So *Lam.* 3. 39, 40. *Let us ſearch and try our Ways, and turn again to the Lord*: In Afflicting God ſearches *them*, and under Affliction they ſearch *themſelves:* Willing they are to hear the Voice of the Rod, and glad of any Diſcovery it makes of their Hearts.

6. *Sixthly*, The upright Heart chuſeth to lye under Affliction, rather than to be delivered from it by Sin. I ſay this is the choice and Reſolution of every upright Heart, however it may be ſometimes over-born by the Violence of Temptation, *Heb.* 11. 35. *Not accepting deliverance*, viz. upon ſinfull Terms, and Conditions.

They are ſenſible how the Fleſh ſmarts under the Rod, but had rather it ſhould ſmart, than Conſcience ſhould ſmart under Guilt. Affliction, ſaith an upright Soul, grieves me, but Sin will grieve God; Affliction wounds my Fleſh, but Sin will wound my Soul. Deliverance I long for, but I will not pay ſo dear for it, how much ſoever I deſire it. *Nolo tanti emere pœnitentiam:* Outward Eaſe is ſweet, but inward Peace is ſweeter.

7. *Seventhly*, He prizeth the ſpiritual Good gotten by Affliction, above Deliverance from it; and can bleſs God from his heart for thoſe Mercies how dear ſoever his Fleſh hath paid for them. *Pſal.* 119. 67. and 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* Such is the Value the People of God have for ſpiritual Graces, that they cannot think them a dear penyworth, whatever their Fleſh hath paid for them. The Mortification of one Luſt, one Diſcovery of Sincerity, one Manifeſtation of God to their Souls, doth much more than make amends for all that they have endured under the Rod.

Is Patience improved, Self-acquaintance increaſed, the Vanity of the Creature more effectually taught, longings after Heaven inflamed? O bleſſed Afflictions that are attended with ſuch bleſſed Fruits! It was the ſaying of a holy Man under a ſore Trouble for the Death of an only Son; when in that dark Day God had graciouſly manifeſted himſelf to his Soul; *O*, ſaid he, *I would be contented* (*if it were poſſible*) *to lay an only Son in the Grave every Day I have to live in the World, for one ſuch Diſcovery of the Love of God as I now enjoy.*

# CHAP. VI.

*Shewing Indwelling ſin to be to grace, what fire is to gold, and how the ſoundneſs and unſoundneſs of our hearts are diſcovered by our Carriage toward it.*

SECT. I. PRoſperity and Adverſity put Sincerity to the Tryal, but nothing makes a deeper Search into our Boſoms, nothing ſifts our Spirits more narrowly, or tells us what our State is more plainly, than our Behaviour towards that Corruption that dwells in us; the Thorn is next Neighbour to the Roſe: Sin and

Grace dwell not only in the ſame Soul, but in the ſame Faculties. The *Collier* and *Fuller* dwell in one Room, what one cleanſeth the other Blacks: Of all the Evils God permits in this World, none is more grievous to his People than this: They ſometimes wonder why the Lord will ſuffer it to be ſo; why, ſurely among other wiſe and holy ends of this Permiſſion, theſe are ſome.

They are left to try you, and to humble you; there is no intrinſecal Goodneſs in Sin, but however in this it occaſions good to us, that by our Carriage towards it we diſcern our Sincerity. The *Touch-ſtone* is a worthleſs Stone in it ſelf, but it ſerves to trye the Gold: 1 *Joh.* 3. 9, 10. *Whoſoever is born of God; doth not commit Sin, for his ſeed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God; in this the Children of God are manifeſt, and the Children of the Devil*; *q. d.* In reſpect of their Carriage towards Sin, the one and other is plainly manifeſted: This is that which ſeparates the *Droſs* from the *Gold*, and ſhews you what the true State of Mens Perſons, and temper of their Hearts is. By not *ſinning* we are not to underſtand a total Freedom from it in this World, as if it implied any ſuch Perfection of the People of God in this World, that's the *Popiſh* and *Pelagian* Sence: Nor yet muſt we take it in the *Arminian* Sence, who to avoid the Argument of the *Orthodox*, will underſtand it of the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt: What a ſtrange Thing would it be to make that a Characteriſtical Note of Diſtinction betwixt the godly and ungodly, which ſo very few even of the moſt ungodly are ever guilty of?

But the manner of our Behaviour towards Sin, and our Carriage towards it before, or under, or after the Commiſſion of it; in that the Children of God are manifeſt, and the Children of the Devil.

Now there are five Things relating to ſin that diſcriminate and mark the ſtate of the Perſons: The Difference is diſcernable,

In our
1. Abſtinence from Sin.
2. Hatred of Sin.
3. Troubles about Sin.
4. Subjection to Sin.
5. Oppoſition of Sin.

## SECT. II.

(1.) THe Grounds and Motives of our Abſtinence do very clearly manifeſt the ſtate of our Souls; what they are in the Regenerate, and Unregenerate, is our next Work. And let it be conſidered,

*Firſt*, That an unſound and unrenewed Heart may abſtain from one Sin, becauſe it is contrary to, and inconſiſtent with another Sin: For it is with the Sins of our Natures, as it is with the Diſeaſes of our Bodies: Though all Diſeaſes be contrary to health, yet ſome Diſeaſes (as the *Feaver* and *Palſie*) are contrary to each other. So are Prodigality and Covetouſneſs, Hypocriſie and Profaneneſs: Theſe oppoſe each other, not for mutual Deſtruction as Sin and Grace do, but for Superiority, each contending for the Throne, and ſometimes taking it by Turns: It is with ſuch Perſons as with that poſſeſſed Man, *Matth.* 17. 15. whom the Spirit caſt ſometimes into the Fire, ſometimes into the Water: Or if one ſubdue the other, yet the Heart is alſo ſubdued to the Vaſſalage of that Luſt that is uppermoſt in the Soul.

2. *Secondly*, An unrenewed Soul may be kept from the Commiſſion of ſome Sin; not becauſe there is a Principle of Grace within him, but becauſe of ſome providential Reſtraint without him, or upon him: For it often falls out, that when Men have conceived Sin, and are ready to execute it, Providence claps on the Fetters of Reſtraint, and hinders them from executing it.

This was the Caſe of *Abimeleck*, *Gen.* 20. 6. and 17. compared, *I withheld thee:* And though Perſons ſo reſtrained, have not the Good of ſuch Providences, yet others have; for by it a World of Miſchief is prevented in the World, which otherwiſe would break out; and to this Act of Providence we owe our Lives, Liberties, Eſtates and Comforts in this World.

3. *Thirdly*, An unſound Heart may not commit ſome Sins; not becauſe he truly hates them, but becauſe his Conſtitution inclines him not to them: Theſe Men are rather beholding to a good Temper of Body, than to a gracious Temper of Soul. Some Men cannot be Drunkards if they would; others cannot be covetous and baſe, they are made *è meliori luto*, of a more refined Metal than others; but chaſt and liberal, juſt and ſober Nature, is but Nature ſtill: The beſt Nature in all its Endowments, is but Nature at the beſt.

4. *Fourthly*, A graceleſs Heart may be reſtrained from Sin by the Force of Education and Principles of Morality that Way inſtilled into it. Thus *Jehoaſh* was reſtrained from Sin, 2 *Kings* 12. 2. *And Jehoaſh did that which was right in the Sight of the Lord all the Days wherein Jehojadah the Prieſt inſtructed him.* The Fear of a Parent or Maſter, will do a great deal more with ſome in this Caſe, than the Fear of God. The Influence of a ſtrict Education nips off the Excreſcencies of budding Vice. The Way we are taught when *young*, we keep when *old*: This is the Influence of Man upon Man; not the Influence of the regenerating Spirit upon Men.

5. *Fifthly*, A graceleſs Heart may be kept from ſome Sins by the Fear of the *Events*, both in this World, and that to come. Sin that is followed with Infamy and reproach among Men, may on this Ground be forborn; not becauſe God hath *forbidden it*, but becauſe humane Laws will *puniſh it*, and the ſober World will brand us for it: And ſome look farther, to the Puniſhment of Sin in *Hell:* They are not afraid to *Sin*, but they are afraid to *burn*.

Here Sin is like a ſweet *Roſe* in a brake o *Thorns:* Fain we would have it, but are loth t tear our Fleſh to come by it. It's good that Si is prevented any way; but to be kept on thi Ground from Sin, doth not argue the Eſtate o the Perſon to be good: And thus you ſee ſom of the Grounds on which carnal Men are reſtrained: And in this *the Children of the Devil are manifeſt*.

## SECT. III.

BUt there are Grounds of Abſtinence from Si by which the *Children of God are alſo man feſted*, and ſuch are theſe that follow.

1. *Firſt*, A ſincere Heart dares not ſin becau of the *Eye and Fear of God* which is upon hi So you find it in *Job* 31. 1: and 4. he durſt n

allo

allow his Thoughts to ſin, becauſe he lived under the Awe of Gods Eye. *Nehemiah* durſt not do as former Governours had done; though an Opportunity preſented to enrich himſelf; *becauſe of the fear of his God*, Nehem. 5. 15. The Soul that lives under the awe of this eye will be as conſcientious where no Diſcovery can be made by Creatures, as if all the World looked on, *Levit.* 19. 14. *Thou ſhalt not curſe the Deaf, nor put a ſtumbling Block before the Blind; but ſhalt fear thy God, I am the Lord.*

What if a Man do curſe the *Deaf*, the Deaf cannot hear him; and what if he do put a ſtumbling Block before the *Blind*, the Blind cannot ſee him: True, but God ſees him, God hears him, that's enough to a Man that hath the Fear of the Lord upon his Heart.

2. *Secondly*, As the Fear of God, ſo the *Love of God*, is a principle of reſtraint from ſin to the Soul that is upright. This kept back *Joſeph* from Sin, *Gen.* 39. 9. *How can I do this great Wickedneſs, and Sin againſt God! How can I?* He ſpeaks as a Man that feels himſelf bound up from Sin by the Goodneſs and Love of God that had been manifeſted to him, *q. d.* Hath he delivered me from the pit into which my envious Brethren caſt me? Hath he in ſo miraculous a Way advanced me to all this Honour and Power in *Egypt*? and now, after all his Kindneſs and Love to me, ſhall I ſin againſt him? O how can I do this againſt ſo good, ſo gracious a God? So *Pſal.* 97. 10. *Ye that Love the Lord hate evil.* Love will cry out in the Hour of Temptation, is this thy kindneſs to thy Friend? Doſt thou thus requite the Lord for all his Kindneſſes?

3. *Thirdly*, As the Love of God, ſo the *intrinſecal Evil and Filthineſs that is in Sin* keeps back the gracious Soul from it, *Rom.* 12. 9. *abhor that which is evil*, ἀποςογȣ̃ντες τὸ πόνερον, hate it as Hell it ſelf: Or as the *French Tranſlation* hath it, *be in horrour:* As the Apprehenſions of *Hell*, ſo the Apprehenſions of *Sin* impreſs horrour upon the Mind that's ſanctified: Nothing more loathſome to an holy Soul. Its Averſations from it are with the higheſt Indignation and loathing.

4. *Fourthly*, The renewed Nature of a Saint reſtrains him from Sin, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The Spirit luſteth againſt the Fleſh, ſo that ye cannot do the thing that ye would:* Ye cannot, why cannot ye? becauſe it is againſt your new Nature.

Beloved, This is a very remarkable thing in the Experience of all renewed Men, That upon the Renovation of Mens *Principles*, their *Delights*, and their *Averſations* and Loathings are laid quite croſs and oppoſite to what they were before. In their carnal ſtate, vain company, and ſinful exerciſes were their Delight. To be ſeparated from theſe, and tyed to Prayer, Meditation, heavenly diſcourſe, and Company; O what a Bondage would that have been! Now to be tyed to ſuch carnal ſociety, and reſtrained from duties of godlineſs, and the ſociety of the godly, becomes a much ſorer Bondage to the Soul.

5. *Fifthly*, *Experience of the Bitterneſs of ſin*, is a reſtraint to a gracious Heart. They that have had ſo many ſick Days, and ſorrowful Nights for Sin as they have had, are loth to taſte that wormwood and Gall again, which their Soul hath ſtill in remembrance, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. *In that ye ſorrowed after a godly Sort, what Carefulneſs it wrought!* He would not grapple with thoſe inward Troubles again, he would not have the chearful Light of Gods's Countenance eclipſed again for all, and much more than all the Pleaſures that are in ſin.

6. *Sixthly*, The Conſideration of the *Sufferings of Chriſt* for Sin, powerfully withholds a gracious Soul from the Commiſſion of it: *Rom.* 6. 6. *Our old man is Crucified with him, that the Body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.* Were there a *Knife* or *Sword* in the Houſe that had been thruſt through the Heart of your Father, would you ever endure the ſight of it? Sin was the Sword that pierced Chriſt, and ſo the death of Chriſt becomes the Death of Sin in his People. Thus the Ghildren of God, and the Children of the Devil are manifeſt, in the Principles and Reaſons of their *abſtinence* from ſin.

## SECT. IV.

(2.) SEcondly, They are alſo manifeſted by their *hatred of ſin:* This puts a clear diſtinction betwixt them: For no falſe or unregenerate Heart, can hate Sin as Sin; he may indeed,

1. *Firſt*, Hate ſin in another, but not in himſelf: Thus one proud man hates another; *Calco ſuperbiam Platonis*, ſaid *Diogenes*, when he trampled *Plato's* fine Cloaths under foot; I ſpurn the pride of *Plato: Sed majori ſuperbiâ*, as *Plato* ſmartly replyed, Thou trampleſt upon my pride, but it is with greater pride. *Why* (ſaith *Chriſt* to the *Hypocrite*) *beholdeſt thou the mote in thy Brothers Eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own Eye?* Matt. 7. 3. How quick in eſpying, and raſh in cenſuring the ſmalleſt fault in another, is the Hypocrite! it was but one fault, and that but a ſmall one, but a *mote* that he could find in another; yet this he quickly diſcerns: It may be there were many excellent graces in him, theſe he overlooks, but the *mote* he plainly diſcerns.

It may be that Mote in his brothers eye had drawn many Tears from it; but theſe he takes no notice of; and mean while there is a *beam (i.e.)* a great horrid flagitious evil in himſelf; but it is too near him to be diſcerned, or bewailed: This is a ſad *Symptom* of a naughty Heart.

2. *Secondly*, He may hate it in its *Effects*, and *Conſequents*; not in its own *Nature:* As the *Thief* hates the *Gallows*, not the wickedneſs that he hath done. It is not ſin in it ſelf, but ſin in its Connexion with *Hell*, that is frightful to him.

The unſound Profeſſor could wiſh that there were no ſuch threatning in the *Bible* againſt Sin: When Sin tempts him, I would, ſaith he, but I fear the Conſequence. O Sin, could I ſeparate thee from *Hell*, nothing ſhould ſeparate thee and me.

3. *Thirdly*, He may hate it in a *mood* or *pang*, but not with a *rooted Habitual* hatred. It's plain from 2 *Pet.* 2. 22. that ſin may ſometimes lye upon the Conſcience of an unregenerate man, as a load lyes upon a ſick *ſtomach*; and ſo he may diſcharge himſelf of it, by reformation, reſtitution, *&c.* but a little time reconciles the quarrel betwixt him and his Luſt again: If they fall out they will fall in again; *the dog is returned to his vomit, and the ſow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in in the mire.*

But an upright Soul hates ſin in another manner, and in this hatred of ſin *the Children of God are manifeſt.*

1. *Firſt*, The Oppoſition of ſin to God, is the very ground and formal reaſon upon which a gracious ſoul oppoſes and hates it: if it be oppoſite to the holy *Nature* and *Law* of *God*, it cannot but be odious in his eyes: This cut *Davids* Heart, *Pſal.* 51. 4. *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned* *q. d.* I have wronged *Uriah* greatly, I have

wronged my ſelf and family greatly; but the wrong I have done to others is not worth naming, in compariſon of the wrong I have done to thee.

2. *Secondly*, The upright ſoul hates ſin *in himſelf*, more than he hates it *in any other?* as a man hates a *Serpent* in the *hedge*, but much more in his own *boſome:* Rom. 7. 23. *But I ſee another Law in my members:* and ver. 21. *I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me: q. d.* I don't know how others find it, but I am ſure I find ſin in my very *boſome*, in my very *bowels*, it is *preſent with me. O wretched man that I am!* A gracious ſoul can mourn to ſee it in others; but to find it in himſelf, pierceth him to the very heart.

3. *Thirdly*, The gracious ſoul hates not only this or that *particular ſin*, but the *whole kind*, every thing that is ſinful. True hatred is ϖρὸς τὰ γένη, of the whole nature or kind, *Pſal.* 119. 104. *I hate every falſe way*; his reaſonings proceed *a quatenus ad omne*, from ſin, as ſin; concluding againſt every ſin. Sins that are profitable, and pleaſant, as well as ſins that have neither profit nor pleaſure: ſins that are *ſecret* as well as ſins that are *open*, and will defame him.

*Ariſt.* Rhet. lib. 2. cap. 4.

And before this tryal a falſe heart cannot ſtand; for he always indulges to ſome Luſt: there is an Iniquity which he cannot be ſeparated from.

4. *Fourthly*, The ſincere ſoul *Hates* ſin with an *irreconcileable hatred:* There was a time when ſin and his ſoul fell out, but there never will be a time of reconciliation betwixt them again.

That breach which effectual conviction once made, can never be made up any more: *they will return no more to folly*, Pſal. 85. 8. And indeed it ſeems to them that have ſuffered ſo much for ſin, that have endured ſo many fears and ſorrows for it, the *greateſt folly* in the world to return to ſin again: No, no, they admire the mercy of their eſcape from ſin, to their dying day; and never look back upon their former ſtate but with ſhame and grief.

Ask a *Convert*, would you be back again where once you were? Would you be among your old Companions again? Would you be fulfilling the luſts of the fleſh again? And he will tell you he would not run the hazard to abide one day or one night in that condition again, to gain all the Kingdoms of the World the next morning.

5. *Fifthly*, The ſincere ſoul hates ſin with a *ſuperlative hatred:* He hates it more than any other evil in the world beſides it. *Penal* evils are not pleaſant themſelves, but yet if he muſt endure them, or ſin; then ſufferings to chuſe: *Heb.* 11. 25. *Chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction than enjoy the pleaſures of ſin*; the worſt of ſufferings, rather than the beſt of ſin.

6. *Sixthly*, To conclude, ſo deep is the hatred that upright ones bear to ſin, that nothing pleaſes them more than the thoughts of a full deliverance from it doth: *Romans* 7. 34. *I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* What doth he ſo heartily thank God for? O for a proſpect of his final deliverance from ſin, never to be intangled, defiled, or troubled with it any more: And this is one thing that ſweetens death to the Saints, as much as any thing in the world can do, except Chriſts victory over it, and lying in the grave for us. To think of a *grave* is not pleaſant in it ſelf, but to think of a parting time with ſin, that's ſweet and pleaſant indeed.

## SECT. V.

(3.) THIRDLY, The Children of God and the Children of the Devil, pure Gold, and vile Droſs, are Manifeſt as in Hatred of ſin, ſo in their *Troubles, and Sorrow about ſin.*

All trouble for ſin argues not ſincerity, ſome have reaſon to be troubled even for their troubles for ſin. So have they,

1. *Firſt*, That are only troubled for the commiſſion of ſome more groſs ſins that ſtartle the natural *Conſcience*, but not for inward ſins that defile the *ſoul. Judas* was troubled for betraying innocent Blood, but not for that baſe Luſt of Covetouſneſs that was the root of it, or the want of ſincere love to *Jeſus Chriſt*: *Matth.* 27. 4, 5. Outward ſins are ſins *majoris infamiæ*, of greater *ſcandal*; but Heart-ſins are oftentimes *majoris reatus*, ſins of greater *guilt*: To be troubled for groſſer ſins, and have no trouble for ordinary ſins daily incurred, is an ill ſign of a bad heart.

2. *Secondly*, A graceleſs heart may be much troubled at the *diſcovery* of ſin, when it is not troubled for the *guilt* of ſin, Jer. 2. 26. *As the Thief is aſhamed when he is found, ſo is the houſe of Iſrael aſhamed:* Hence it is that they ſtick not to commit *ten ſins* againſt *God*, to hide *one ſin* from the eyes of *men*. It is a Mercy that ſin is the matter of mens ſhame, and that all are not arrived to that height of impudence to declare their ſin as *Sodom*, and *Glory in their ſhame*; but to be aſhamed only becauſe men ſee it, and not with *Ezra* to ſay, *O my God I am aſhamed, and bluſh to look up unto thee*, Ezra. 9. 6. Aſhamed that thou ſeeſt it, is but Hypocriſie.

3. *Thirdly*, A graceleſs heart may be troubled for the *rod* that ſin draws after it, but not for ſin it ſelf, as it provokes God to inflict ſuch rods.

But the troubles of *upright ones* for ſin are of another kind and nature.

1. *Firſt*, They are troubled that God is Wronged, and his Spirit troubled by their ſins. So the penitent *Prodigal*, *I have ſinned againſt heaven, and in thy ſight*, Luk. 15. 21. Againſt Heaven; that is, againſt him whoſe Throne is in Heaven, a great, glorious, and infinite Majeſty: a poor worm of the Earth, hath lifted up his hand againſt the God of Heaven.

2. *Secondly*, They are troubled for the *defilement* of their own ſouls by ſin: hence they are compared in *Proverbs* 25. 26. to *a troubled fountain*; you know its the property of a living ſpring, when any filth falls into it, or that which lies in the bottom of it's channel, is raiſed and defiles its ſtreams, never to leave working till it have purged it ſelf of it, and recovered it's purity again.

So it is with a righteous man; he loves purity in the *precept*, *Pſal.* 119. 140. And he loves it no leſs in the principle and practice: *He thinks it is Hell enough to lie under the pollution* of ſin, if he ſhould never come under *Damnation* for it.

3. *Thirdly*, They are troubled for the *eſtrangements*

*ments of God*, and the hiding of his face from them becauſe of their Sin. It would go cloſe to an Ingenuous ſpirit to ſee a dear and faithful friend whom he hath grieved, to look ſtrange and ſhy upon him at the next meeting; as if he did not know him: much more doth it go to the heart of a gracious man to ſee the face of God turned from him, and not to be towards him as in times paſt. This went to *Davids* heart after his fall, as you may ſee, *Pſal.* 51. 11. *Caſt me not away from thy preſence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me*; *q. d.* Lord, if thou turn thy back upon me, and eſtrange thy ſelf from me, I am a loſt man: That is the greateſt miſchief that can befal me.

4. *Fourthly*, Their troubles for ſin run deep, to what other Mens do. They are ſtrong to bear other troubles, but quail and faint under this: *Pſal.* 38. 4. Other ſorrows may for the preſent be violent, and make more noiſe; but this ſorrow ſoaks deeper into the ſoul.

5. *Fifthly*, Their troubles for ſin are more *private* and *ſilent troubles* than others are; *their ſore runs in the night*; as it is *Pſal.* 77. 2. Not but that they may, and do open their troubles to Men, (and it is a mercy when they meet with a judicious, tender, and experienced Chriſtian to unboſom themſelves unto;) but when all is done, it is God and thy ſoul alone that muſt whiſper out matter: *Ille vere dolet, qui ſine teſte dolet*: That is *ſincere ſorrow* for ſin indeed, which is expreſſed ſecretly to God in the Cloſet.

6. *Sixthly*, Their trobles are incurable by creature comforts: it is not the removing ſome outward preſſures and inconveniences, that can remove their burden; nothing but pardon, peace and witneſſed reconciliation can quiet the gracious heart.

7. *Seventhly*, Their Troubles for ſin are *ordinate* and kept in their own place; they dare not ſtamp the dignity of Chriſts blood upon their worthleſs tears and groans for ſin: *Lava lachrymas domine*, Aug. Lord, waſh my ſinful tears in the blood of Chriſt, was once the deſire of a true *Penitent*. And thus our trouble for ſin ſhews us what our hearts are.

## SECT. VI.

(4.) FOURTHLY, The behaviour and carriage of the ſoul with reſpect to *ſubjection* to the commands of ſin, ſhews what our eſtate and condition is. This will ſeparate *droſs* from *Gold*. All unregenerate men are the *ſervants of Sin*, they ſubject themſelves to its commands. This the Scripture ſometimes calls a *Converſation in the luſts of the fleſh*, Eph. 2. 3. Sometimes the *ſelling of themſelves to ſin*, 1 *Kings* 21. 20. Now as a judicious *Divine* obſerves, tho' the Children of God complain with *Paul*, Romans 7. 14, 15. That they are *ſold under ſin*, yet there is a vaſt difference betwixt theſe two: The Saints are ſold to it by *Adam*, but others by their own continued conſent. But to ſhew you the difference in this matter, I conceive it neceſſary to ſhew, wherein the reigning power of ſin doth not conſiſt, and then wherein it doth: That you may plainly diſcern who are in ſubjection to the reigning power of their corruptions, and who are not. Now there be divers things common both to the regenerate and unregenerate, and we cannot ſay the dominion of ſin lies in any or in all of them, *viz.* abſtractly and ſimply conſidered.

Dr. Reynolds.

1. *Firſt*, Both one, and other having *Original Corruption* dwelling in them, may alſo find this fountain breaking forth into groſs and ſcandalous ſins: But we cannot ſay that becauſe original Coruption thus breaks forth into groſs and ſcandalous ſins in both; therefore it muſt needs reign in the one, as well as in the other: a Righteous Man may *fall before the Wicked*, as it is *Proverbs* 25. 26. He may fall in the dirt of groſſer iniquities, and furniſh them with matter of reproach. So did *David*, *Peter*, *Abraham*, and many more of the Lords upright Hearted ones, whoſe ſouls nevertheleſs ſin did not reign over, by a voluntary Subjection to its Commands, nor muſt this embolden any to ſin with more liberty.

2. *Secondly*, Tho an upright Soul fall once and again into ſin, tho' he reiterate the ſame act of ſin, which he hath repented of before; yet it cannot meerly from thence be concluded, that therefore ſin reigns over him, as it doth over a Wicked Man that makes it his daily Trade. I confeſs every *Reiteration* of ſin, puts a further *Aggravation* upon it: And its ſad we ſhould repent, and ſin; And ſin and repent: But yet you read, *Proverbs* 24. 16. *A juſt man falleth ſeven times, and riſeth up again*: *Job*'s Friends were good men, yet he tells them, *Theſe ten times have ye Reproached me*, Job 19. 3. This indeed ſhews a heart that greatly needs purging; For it is with relapſes into ſpiritual as it is with relapſes into natural diſeaſes: A *Recidivation* or return of the diſeaſe ſhews that the *Morbifique matter* was not duly purged; But tho' it ſhew the *foulneſs*, it doth not always prove the *falſneſs* of the Heart.

3. *Thirdly*, Though one may be impatient of the reproof of his ſin, as well as the other; yet that alone will not conclude ſin to be in full dominion over one, as it is over the other.

It's pity any good Man ſhould ſtorm at a juſt rebuke of ſin; That ſuch a precious Oyl as is proper to Heal, ſhould be conceited to Break his head: But yet fleſh will be tender, and touchy; Even in good Men. *Aſa* was a good Man, and yet he was wroth with the *Prophet* who reproved him; As you find, 2 *Chron.* 16. 10. yet I doubt not but their Conſciences ſmite them for it, when pride ſuffers not another to do it: A reproof may be ill tim'd, and ill managed by another; And ſo may provoke; But they will hear the voice of conſcience in another manner.

4. *Fourthly*, Tho in both ſome one *particular ſin* may have more power than another, yet neither doth this alone conclude that therefore that ſin muſt reign in one, as it doth in another. Indeed the beloved Luſt of every Wicked Man is King over his ſoul; but yet a godly mans conſtitution, calling, &c. may incline him more to one ſin than another; And yet neither, that, nor any other may be ſaid to be in dominion; for tho' *David* ſpeaks of *his iniquity*, (*i. e.*) his *ſpecial ſin*, *Pſal.* 18. 23. Which ſome ſuppoſe to be the ſin of lying, from that intimation, *Pſal.* 119. 29. yet you ſee in one place he begs *God to keep him from it*, and in the other he tells us *he kept himſelf from it*, and both ſhew he was not the Servant of it.

5. *Fifthly*, Tho' both may ſin againſt know-

ledge, yet it will not follow from thence, that therefore ſins againſt knowledge muſt needs be ſins in Dominion in the one, as they are in the other: There was too much light abuſed, and violence offered in *Davids* deliberated ſin; as he confeſſes, *Pſal.* 51. 6. and the ſad ſtory it ſelf too plainly ſhews; and yet in the main, *David* was an upright Man ſtill, tho' this conſideration of the fact ſhrewdly wounded his integrity: and ſtands upon record for a caution to all others.

## SECT. VII.

WE have ſeen what doth *not* infer the Dominion of ſin in the former particulars, being ſimply conſidered; I ſhall next ſhew you what *doth*; and how the ſincere and falſe Hearts are diſtinguiſhed in this trial. And

1. *Firſt*, *Aſſent* and *Conſent* upon deliberation notes the ſoul to be under the *Dominion* of ſin: When the mind *approves* ſin, and the will gives its *Plenary conſent* to it; This ſets up ſin in its *Throne*, and puts the ſoul into ſubjection to it: For the Dominion of ſin conſiſts in its Authority over us, and our Voluntary ſubjection to it. This you find to be the character of a Wicked graceleſs Perſon; *Pſal.* 36. 4. *He Deviſeth Miſchief upon his bed, he ſetteth himſelf in a way that is not good, he abhorreth not evil.*

The beſt Men may fall into ſin through miſtake, or be precipitated into ſin through the violence of Temptation; But to *deviſe Miſchief*, and *ſet himſelf* in an evil way; This notes full aſſent of the mind, and then *not to abhor evil*, notes full conſent of the Will, and theſe two being given to ſin, not only *antecedently* to the acting of it; but alſo *conſequently* to it: to like it afterward, as well as before; this puts the ſoul fully under the power of ſin; what can it give more?

This (as one ſaith) in direct oppoſition to the *Apoſtle*, *Rom.* 12. 1. Is to preſent their bodies a dead Sacrifice, Unholy, and abominable to God; Acceptable to the Devil, which is their Unreaſonable ſervice: All Men by nature are given to ſin, but theſe Men give themſelves to it.

Mr. *Caryl*.

2. *Secondly*, The cuſtomary practice of ſin, ſubjects the ſoul to the Dominion of ſin: And ſo *he that is born of God, doth not commit Sin*, 1 John 3. 9. Fall into ſin, yea the ſame ſin, he may, and that often; But then it's not without Reluctance, Repentance, and a *proteſt* entred by the Soul in Heaven againſt it: So that ſin hath not a quiet Poſſeſſion of his Soul; He is not the *ſervant of Sin*, nor doth he Willingly walk after its Commandments: But ſo do its own Servants; It's their Daily Practice: *Jer.* 9. 3. *They proceed from evil to Evil.*

3. *Thirdly*, *Delight* in ſin proves the *Dominion* of ſin. So the Servants of ſin are Deſcribed, *Iſa.* 66. 3. *They have choſen their own Ways, and their Soul Delighteth in their Abominations.*

Look as our delight in God is the *meaſure of our holineſs*; ſo our delight in ſin is *the meaſure of our ſinfulneſs*. Delight in ſin is one of the uppermoſt rounds of the *Ladder*, and much higher the ſoul of a ſinner cannot go, till it be turned off into Hell. *It's a ſport to a fool to do miſchief*, Prov. 10. 23. Never merrier than when he hath the *Devil* for his play-fellow, ſaith one upon that place: Mr. *Trap*.

4. *Fourthly*, *Impatience of Chriſts Yoke and Government*, argues the ſoul to be the ſubject of ſin. This is clear from the *Apoſtles* reaſoning in *Rom.* 6. 17, 18. *But God be thanked that ye were the Servants of ſin, but you have obeyed from the heart the form of Doctrine which was delivered you: Being then made free from ſin, ye became the ſervants of righteouſneſs:* Where you ſee plainly, that no man can have his *manumiſſion* or freedom from ſin, that comes not into Chriſt's ſervice, and yields himſelf up to his Obedience.

So then to fret at Chriſt's Laws that tie us up from our Luſts, to be weary of all ſpiritual imployments as a burden intolerable, never to be in our *Element* and *Centre* till we are off from God and plunging in the World, and our luſts; this is a ſad note of a ſoul in ſubjection to ſin.

Object. *But may not an upright ſoul find ſome wearineſs in ſpiritual things?*

*Sol.* Doubtleſs he may, for he hath *fleſh* as well as *Spirit*, and tho' the ſpirit be willing, the fleſh is weak: He is ſanctified but in part, and his Delight in the Law of God is but according to, or *after the inner man*, *Romans* 7. 22. But he ſees *another law in his members*, (i. e.) contrary inclinations. However, if he be weary ſometimes in the duties of Godlineſs, to be ſure he is more weary out of them, and is not *Centred* and at reſt till he be with his God again: But the Carnal heart is where it would be when it is in the ſervice of ſin: And as a Fiſh upon dry land, when ingaged in ſpiritual duties: Eſpecially ſuch as are ſecret, and have no external allurements of Reputation to engage him to them.

But what ſurpriſals or captivities to ſin ſoever may befal an upright ſoul, yet it appears by theſe eight following particulars, that he is not the ſervant of ſin, nor in full ſubjection to it. For,

1. *Firſt*, Tho' he may be drawn to ſin, yet he cannot reflect upon his ſin without ſhame and ſorrow; Which plainly ſhews it to be an involuntary ſurprize. So *Peter* wept bitterly, *Mat* 26. 75. And *David* mourned for his ſin heartily; others can fetch new pleaſures out of their old ſins by reflecting on them: And ſome can glory in their ſhame, *Phil.* 3. 19. Some are ſtupid and ſenſleſs after ſin; and the ſorrow of a carnal heart for it, is but a morning dew; but it is far otherwiſe with God's people.

2. *Secondly*, Tho' a Saint may be drawn to ſin, yet it is not with a deliberate and full *conſent* of his will: Their delight is in the law of God, *Rom.* 7. 22. *They do that which they would not*, ver. 16. (*i. e.*) there are inward diſlikes from the new nature: And as for that caſe of *David*, which ſeems to have ſo much of counſel and deliberation in it; yet it was but in a ſingle *act*; it was not in the general *Courſe* of his life: He was upright in all things (*i. e.*) in the general courſe and tenour of his life, 1 *Kings* 15. 5.

3. *Thirdly*, Tho an upright ſoul may fall into ſin, yet he is reſtleſs and unquiet in that condition; like a Bone out of joynt: and that ſpeaks him to be none of ſins Servants: as on the contrary, if a Man be ingaged in the external duties of Relgion, and be reſtleſs and unquiet there; his Heart is not in it, he is not at reſt till he be again in his earthly buſineſs; this Man cannot be reckoned Chriſts Servant: a gracious heart, is much after that rate imployed in the

work of ſin, that a carnal heart is when imployed in the work of Religion : That's a good rule, *Ea tantum dicuntur ineſſe, quæ inſunt per modum quietis* : That's a mans true Temper wherein he is at reſt : Poor *David* fell into ſin, but he had no reſt in his bones becauſe of it, *Pſal.* 51. 10, 11,12. if his heart be off from God and Duty for a little while, yet he recollects himſelf, and ſaith, as *Pſal.* 116. 7. *Return unto thy reſt, O my Soul.*

4. *Fourthly*, Tho' a ſincere Chriſtian fall into ſin, and commit evil ; yet he *proceeds not from evil to evil*, as the ungodly do : *Jer.* 9. 3. but makes his fall into one ſin, a caution to prevent another ſin. *Peter* by his fall got eſtabliſhment for time to come : If God will ſpeak Peace to them, they are careful to return no more to folly, *Pſal.* 85. 8. *In that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought ? yea what fear ?* 2 Cor. 7. 11: It is not ſo with the Servants of ſin, one ſin leaves them much more diſpoſed to another Sin.

5. *Fifthly*, A ſincere *Chriſtian* may be drawn to ſin, but yet he would be glad with all his Heart to be rid of ſin. It would be more to him than thouſands of Gold or Silver, that he might grieve and offend God no more ; and that ſhews ſin is not in Dominion over him : He that is under the Dominion of ſin, is loth to leave his Luſts. Sins ſervants are not willing to part with it, they hold it faſt, and refuſe to let it go, as that Text expreſſeth it, *Jer.* 8. 5. but the great Complaint of the upright is expreſſed by the *Apoſtle* according to the true ſenſe of their hearts, in *Rom.* 7. 24. *Who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?*

6. *Sixthly*, It appears they yield not themſelves willingly to obey ſin, in as much as it is the matter of their joy when God orders any Providence to prevent ſin in them : *Bleſſed be the Lord* ( ſaid *David* to *Abigail* ) *and bleſſed be thy advice, and bleſſed be thou, that haſt kept me this day from ſhedding blood*, 1 Sam. 15. 32, 33.

Here's bleſſing upon bleſſing for a Sin-preventing Providence. The Author is bleſſed, the Inſtrument bleſſed, the Means bleſſed. O it's a bleſſed thing in the Eyes of a ſincere Man to be kept from ſin : He reckons it a great Deliverance, a very happy Eſcape if he be kept from ſin.

7. *Seventhly*, This ſhews that ſome who may be drawn to commit ſin, yet are none of the Servants of Sin, That they do heartily beg the aſſiſtance of Grace to keep them from ſin : *Keep back thy ſervant from preſumptuous ſins* ( ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 19. 13. ) *let them not have dominion over me* ; *q. d.* Lord, I find propenſions to ſin in my Nature ; yea, and ſtrong ones too ; if thou leave me to my ſelf, I am carried into ſin as eaſily as a Feather down the Torrent. *O Lord keep back thy ſervant :* And there is no petition that upright ones pour out their Hearts to God in, either more frequently, or more ardently than in this, to be kept back from ſin.

8. *Eighthly*, and *Laſtly*, This ſhews the Soul not to be under the dominion of ſin, that it doth not only cry to God to be kept back from ſin, but uſes the means of prevention himſelf ; he reſiſts it, as well as prays againſt it, *Pſal.* 18. 23. *I was alſo uprigth before him, and kept my ſelf from mine iniquity:* So *Job* 31. 1. *I have made a Covenant with mine eyes*; and yet more fully in *Iſa.* 33. 15. *He ſhaketh his hands from holding bribes, and ſtoppeth his ears from hearing blood ; and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil.* See with what care the *Portals* are ſhut at which ſin uſeth to enter. All theſe things are very relieving conſiderations to poor Souls queſtioning their integrity under the frequent Surpriſals of Sin. And the next Tryal no leſs.

## SECT. VIII.

(5.) Fifthly, Our *Oppoſition* to and *conflicts* with Sin, diſcover what we are, gold, or droſs.

There are *conflicts* with ſin both in the Regenerate, and in the Unregenerate ; but there is a vaſt difference betwixt them, as will appear in the following account.

1. *Firſt*, There is an *univerſal*, and there is a *particular* Oppoſition to ſin ; the former is found in regenerate, the latter in unregenerate Souls : A gracious Heart hates every falſe way, *Pſal.* 119. 104. and muſt needs do ſo, becauſe he hates and oppoſes Sin as Sin; ſo that he can have no *peccatum in deliciis*; no excepted or reſerved Luſt; but fights againſt the whole body, and every limb and member of the body of ſin.

But it is not ſo with the *Hypocrite* or carnal Profeſſor : He hath evermore ſome reſerved ſin, that he cannot part with.

2. *Secondly*, There is an Oppoſition betwixt the *new Nature* and Sin, and there is an Oppoſition betwixt *natural Conſcience* and Sin ; the former is the caſe of an upright Soul, the latter may be of a Self-deceiver.

A regenerate Perſon oppoſeth Sin, becauſe there is an irreconcileable *Antipathy* betwixt it and the new Nature in him, as is clear from *Gal.* 5. 17. *The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh ; and theſe are contrary the one to the other :* By fleſh underſtand corrupt Nature ; by Spirit not only the ſpirit of Man, but the Spirit of *God*, or principle of Regeneration in Man : By the luſting of theſe two againſt each other, underſtand the Deſire and Endeavour of each others deſtruction and ruine : And the ground of all this is the contrariety of theſe two Natures.

*Theſe are contrary one to the other :* There is a twofold Oppoſition betwixt them, one *formal*, their very *Natures* are oppoſite ; the other *effective*, their workings and deſigns are oppoſite, as it is betwixt Fire and Water.

But the Oppoſitions found in unrenewed Souls againſt Sin, is not from their Natures, for Sin is ſuitable enough to that ; but from the Light that is in their Minds and Conſciences which ſcares and terrifies them. Such was that in *Darius*, Dan. 6. 14. *He was ſore diſpleaſed with himſelf, and ſet his heart on Daniel to deliver him ; and laboured till the going down of the Sun to deliver him:* Here the conteſt was betwixt Senſe of Honour upon one ſide, and Conviction of Conſcience on the other ſide.

Sometimes a generous and noble diſpoſition oppoſes ſordid and baſe Actions : *Major ſum, & ad majora natus ; quam ut corporis mei ſim mancipium:* I am greater, and born to greater things ; than that I ſhould be a Slave to my Body, ſaid a brave *Heathen.*

3. *Thirdly*, There is a *permanent*, and there is a *tranſient* Oppoſition to Sin ; the former is the caſe of God's People, the latter of temporary and unſound Profeſſors.

The Saint when he draws the *ſword* in this warfare againſt Sin, throws away the *ſcabbard*; no End of this Combate with ſin till life end; their life and their troubles are finiſhed together, 2 *Tim.* 4. 7. *I have fought the good fight, and have finiſhed my Courſe.*

But in other Men it is but a tranſient quarrel; out with ſin one day, and in another; and the reaſon is plain by what was noted before; it is not the oppoſition of two Natures: It is like the oppoſition of the *Wind* and *Tyde*, theſe may be contrary and make a ſtormy Sea to day; but the Wind may come about, and go as the Tyde goes to morrow: But in a Chriſtian it is as the oppoſition of the *River* and the *Dam*, one muſt give way to the other, there's no reconciling them: But the other like the Dog, returns to his *vomit*, 2 Pet. 2. *ult.*

4. *Fourthly*, There is an oppoſition to the *Root* of ſin, and an oppoſition to the *fruits* of ſin. A gracious Soul oppoſeth root and fruit, but others the latter only. The great Deſign of an upright Soul, is not only to lop off this or that branch, but to kill the root of ſin which is in his Nature, *Rom.* 7. 24. *Who ſhall deliver me from the body of this Death?* But the great care and endeavours of others is to ſuppreſs outward acts of ſin, and eſcape the miſchievous conſequents of it: Yea, their ſtudy is, as *Lactantins* phraſeth it, *Potius abſcondere, quam abſcindere vitia:* To hide, rather than to kill their Luſts.

5. *Fifthly*, There is an oppoſition to ſin, *in the ſtrength of God*, and an oppoſition to ſin, *in our own ſtrength:* The former is proper to a real Chriſtian, the latter is found frequently with unſanctified perſons: When a Chriſtian goes forth againſt any Sin, it is in the ſtrength of God: So you read their rule directs them, *Eph.* 6. 10. *Be ſtrong in the Lord, and the power of his might: Take unto you the whole armour of God:* And ſuitably you ſhall find them frequently upon their knees begging ſtrength from Heaven againſt their Luſts; 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. *For this cauſe I beſought the Lord thrice*, ſaith *Paul*, (*i. e.*) often and earneſtly, that the Temptation might depart from him.

But others go forth againſt ſin only in the ſtrength of their own reſolutions; ſo did *Pendleton* in our Story: Theſe Reſolutions, or Vows which they have put themſelves under, are as frequently fruſtrated, as made.

6. *Sixthly*, There is a *ſucceſsful* oppoſition to ſin, and an oppoſition that comes to *nothing*. The former is that of true Chriſtians, the latter is found among unregenerate men.

The work of Mortification in the Saints is *progreſſive*, and increaſing: Hence *Rom.* 6. 6. *Our old man is Crucified with him, that the Boby of ſin might be deſtroyed.* Sin dyes in Believers much what as crucified perſons uſe to dye; *viz.* a ſlow, lingering, gradual, but ſure death: Its vigour and Life expires by degrees: Or as a conſumptive Perſon dyes; for to that alſo he alludes here: There is a diſeaſe which is called *Conſumptio totius*, a Conſumption of the whole, and thoſe that dye of that diſeaſe languiſh more and more, till at laſt they drop *ſenſim, ſine ſenſu*, by imperceptible degrees and ſteps into the grave.

But in the unregenerate whatever conflicts they have with ſin; no corruption falls before it: It may be ſaid of them, as the Churh in another caſe complains of her ſelf, *Iſa.* 26. 18. *We have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind, we have not wrought any deliverance in the Earth, neither have the Inhabitants of the World fallen.* So it fares with theſe profeſſors, they pray, they hear, they vow, they reſolve; but when all is done, their luſts are as ſtrong and vigorous as ever: No degree of Mortification appears after all.

And thus much of the Tryal of our Sincerity by our carriage towards ſin.

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# CHAP. VII.

*Shewing what Proof and Tryal is made of the Soundneſs or unſoundneſs of our Graces by the Duties of Religion which we perform.*

SECT. I. WE now come (according to the Method propoſed) to make Tryal of the Truth or Falſeneſs of Grace, by the Duties we daily perform in Religion. And certainly they alſo have the Uſe and Efficacy of Fire, for this Diſcovery, 1 *Joh.* 2. 4, 5. *He that ſaith I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments* [*is a lyar*] *and the truth is not in him: But whoſo keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: And hereby know we that we are in him.*

This is a *practical lye*; of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks here, by which Men deceive others for a while, and themſelves for ever: A lye not *ſpoken*, but *done*; when a mans courſe of life contradicts his profeſſion. The life of an Hypocrite is but one long or continued *lye:* He ſaith or profeſſeth he knows God, but takes no care at all to obey him in the Duties he commands: He either neglects them, or if he perform them, it is not as God requires: If they *draw nigh him with their Lips, yet their Heart is far from him*, Iſa. 29. 13. *Thou art near in their mouth, but far from their reins*, Jer. 12. 2.

There are ſome that feel the influence and power of their Communion with the Lord in Duties, going down to their very reins: And there are others whoſe lips and tongues only are toucht with Religion.

This is an age of light and much profeſſion: Men cannot now keep up a reputation in the ſober and profeſſing World, whileſt they let down, and totally neglect the duties of Religion: But ſurely if Men would be but juſt to themſelves, their very performances of duty would tell them what their Hearts are.

## SECT. II.

FOr there are among others theſe following Particulars, that do very clearly difference the ſound from the unſound Profeſſor.

1. *Firſt*, The Deſigns and true Levels and Aims of Mens Hearts in Duty will tell them what they are.

An Hypocrite aims Low, *Hoſ.* 7. 14. *They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds; they aſſembled themſelves for Corn and Wine, and they rebell againſt me.* It is not for Chriſt, and Pardon, for Mortification, and Holineſs; but for Corn, and Wine, thus they make a Market of Religion; all their ends in duty are either carnal, natural, or legal; it is either to accommodate their carnal ends, or ſatisfie and quiet their Conſciences: and ſo their duties are performed as a *ſin-offering* to God.

But an upright heart, hath very high, and pure aims in duty; *the deſire of their ſoul is to God*, Iſa. 26. 8. *Their ſoul follows hard after God*, Pſal. 63. 8. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after; that I might dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life, to ſee the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple*, Pſal. 27. 4. Theſe are the true *Eagles* that play at the *Sun*, and will not ſtoop to low and earthly objects. Alas! if the injoyment of God be miſſed in a duty, it is not the greateſt enlargments of gifts will ſatisfie: He comes back like a man that hath taken a long journey to meet his friend upon important buſineſs, and loſt his labour, his friend was not there.

2. *Secondly*, The *engagements* of mens hearts to God in duties will tell them what they are, The *hypocrite* takes little heed to his heart, *Eſa.* 29. 13. they are not afflicted really for the hardneſs, deadneſs, unbelief, and wandrings of their hearts in duty; as upright ones are: Nor do they engage their hearts, and labour to get them up with God in duty as his people do. *I have intreated thy favour with my whole heart*, ſaith *David.* Pſal 119. 58. They are not pleaſed in duty till they feel their hearts ſtand towards God like a bow in its full bent. I ſay not it is always ſo with them, what would they give that it might be ſo? but ſurely if their ſouls in duty be empty of God, they are filled with trouble and ſorrow.

3. *Thirdly*, The Conſcience men make of *ſecret* as well as *publick* duties, will tell them what their hearts and graces are, true or falſe. A vain Profeſſour is curious in the former, and either *negligent*, or at beſt *formal* in the latter: for he finds no inducements of honour, applauſe, or oſtentation of gifts externally moving him to them: nor hath he any experience of the ſweetneſs and benefit of ſuch duties internally to allure and engage his ſoul to them.

The *Hypocrite* therefore is not for the *Cloſet*, but the *Synagogue*, *Matth.* 6. 5, 6. Not but that education, example, or the impulſe of conſcience may ſometimes drive him thither; but it is not his daily delight to be there; his meat and drink to retire from the clamour of the world to enjoy God in ſecret. 'Tis the obſervation of their duties is the great inducement to theſe men to perform them; and *Verily* ſaith our Lord, *ver.* 2. *they have their reward*, ἀπέχουσι, they have it away; or they have carryed off all the benefit and advantage that ever they ſhall have by Religion. Much good do them with their applauſe and honour, let them make much of that airy reward, for it's all that ever they ſhall have.

But now for a ſoul truly gracious, he cannot long ſubſiſt without ſecret prayer. 'Tis true, there is not always an equal freedom and delight, a like enlargment and comfort in thoſe retirements; but yet he cannot be without them: He finds the want of his *ſecret*, in his *publick duties*: If he and his God have not met in ſecret, and had ſome Communion in the *morning*, he ſenſibly finds it in the deadneſs and unprofitableneſs of his heart and life all the *day* after.

4. *Fourthly*, The *ſpirituality* of our *duties* tryes the *ſincerity* of our *graces*: An unregenerate heart is *carnal*, whileſt engaged in duties that are *ſpiritual*. Some men deceive themſelves in thinking they are ſpiritual men, becauſe their imployment and calling is about ſpiritual things, *Hoſea* 9. 7. This indeed gives them the *denomination*, but not the *frame* of *ſpiritual men*: And others judge themſelves ſpiritual perſons, becauſe they frequently perform and attend upon ſpiritual duties: But alas the heart and ſtate may be carnal notwithſtanding all this. O my friends, it is not enough that the *object* of your duties is ſpiritual, that they reſpect an holy God; nor that the *matter* be ſpiritual, that you be converſant about holy things; but the *frame* of your heart muſt be ſpiritual, an heavenly temper of ſoul is neceſſary, and what are the moſt heavenly duties without it?

The *end* and *deſign* you aim at muſt be ſpiritual, the enjoyment of God, and a growing conformity to him in holineſs; elſe multiply duties as the ſand on the ſea-ſhore, and they all will not amount to one evidence of your ſincerity. *God is my witneſs whom I ſerve with my ſpirit*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 1. 9. He ſeems to appeal to God in this matter. I ſerve God in my ſpirit, and God knows that I do ſo; I dare appeal to him that it is ſo: He knows that my heart is with him, or would be with him in my duties: The arms of my faith do either ſenſibly graſp, or are ſtretched out towards him in my duties. O how little ſavour do gracious hearts find in the moſt excellent duties, if God and their ſouls do not ſenſibly meet in them!

Certainly Reader, There is a time when God comes nigh to men in duty, when he deals familiarly with men, and ſenſibly fills their ſouls with unuſual powers and delights. The near aproaches of God to their ſouls are felt by them, (for ſouls have their ſenſes as well as bodies;) and now are their minds abſtracted and marvellouſly refined from all that is material and earthly, and ſwallowed up in ſpiritual excellencies and Glories.

Theſe are the real *prelibations* or foretaſtes of Glory, which no man can by words make another to underſtand, as he himſelf doth that feels them.

Theſe ſeaſons I confeſs do but rarely occur to the beſt of Chriſtians, nor continue long when they do: alas! this wine is too ſtrong for ſuch weak bottles as we are. *Hold Lord* (ſaid an holy man once) *it is enough, thy poor creature is a clay veſſel, and can hold no more*: This is that *Joy unſpeakable and full of glory*, which is mentioned, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7, 8. Something that words cannot deſcribe: theſe ſeaſons are the *golden ſpots* of our lives, when we are admitted to theſe near and ineffable views and taſtes of God: Poſſibly ſome poor Chriſtians can ſay but little to theſe things; Their ſorrows are exerciſed in duties more than their Joys: They are endeavouring to mount, but the ſtone hangs at the heel: They eſſay, but cannot riſe to that height that others do, who are got up by their labouring faith into the upper Region, and there diſplay their wings and ſing in the Sun-beams: But though they cannot reach this height, yet have they no ſatisfaction in duties wherein there is no intercourſe betwixt God and their ſouls.

*Rara hora, brevis mora; ſapit quidem ſuaviſſime, ſed guſtatur rariſſime.* Bernard.

That which contents another, will not content a Chriſtian: If the *King* be abſent, men will bow to the empty *Chair*; but if God be abſent

ſent, an empty duty gives no Satisfaction to a gracious Spirit. The pooreſt Chriſtian is found panting after God by ſincere Deſires, and labouring to get up that dead and vain Heart to God in duty; though alas! it's many times but the rolling of the returning ſtone againſt the hill: Yet he never expects advantage by that Duty wherein the Spirit of God is not; nor doth he expect the Spirit of God ſhould be, where his own Spirit is not.

5. *Fifthly*, *Aſſiduity* and *Conſtancy* in Duties of Religion makes a notable Diſcovery of the ſoundneſs or rottenneſs of mens hearts. The *Hypocrite* may ſhew ſome zeal and forwardneſs in duties for a time, but he will jade and give out at length: *Job* 27. 10. *Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?* No, he will not. If his motions in Religion were *natural*, they would be conſtant; but they are *artificial*, and he is moved by external inducements; and ſo muſt needs be off and on: He prays himſelf weary of praying, and hears himſelf weary of hearing: His heart is not delighted in his duties, and therefore his duties muſt needs grow ſtale and dry to him after a while. There be three Seaſons in which the zeal of an *Hypocrite* may be inflamed in duties.

*Firſt*, When ſome imminent danger threatens him, ſome ſmart rod of God is ſhaked over him: *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and returned and enquired early after God*, Pſal. 78. 34. O the goodly words they give, the fair Promiſes they make; and yet all the while *they do but flatter him with their Lips and lye unto him with their Tongues*, ver. 36, 37. for let but that danger paſs over, and the Heavens clear up again, and he will reſtrain prayer, and return to his old courſe again.

*Secondly*, When the times Countenance and favour Religion, and the Wind is in his back; O what a zeal will he have for God! So in the ſtony Ground, *Matth.* 3. 5. the ſeed ſprung up and flouriſhed till the Sun of perſecution aroſe, and then it faded away; for it had no depth of Earth: No deep ſolid inward work or principle of Grace to maintain it.

*Thirdly*, When Self-ends and deſigns are accommodated and promoted by theſe things; this was the caſe of *Jehu*, 2 Kings 10. 16. *Come ſee my zeal*, for what? for a baſe Self-intereſt, not for God: How fervently will ſome men pray, preach, and profeſs, whileſt they ſenſibly feel the incomes and profit of theſe duties to their fleſh: Whileſt they are admired and applauded!

Theſe external incentives will put an Hypocrite into an hot fit of zeal, but then as it is with a Man whoſe colours are raiſed by the heat of the Fire, and not by the healthfulneſs of a good conſtitution; it ſoon fades and falls again.

But bleſſed be God it is not ſo with all. The man whoſe heart is upright with his God, will *keep judgment, and do righteouſneſs at all times*, Pſal. 106. 3. Whether dangers threaten or no; whether times favour Religion or no; whether his earthly intereſt be promoted by it or no; he will be holy ſtill: He will not part with his duties when they are ſtript naked of thoſe external advantages: As the *Addition* of theſe things to Religion did not at firſt engage him, ſo the *Subſtraction* of them, cannot diſengage him.

If his duty become his *reproach*, yet *Moſes* will not forſake it: *Heb.* 11. 26. If he loſe his Company, and be left alone, yet *Paul* will not flinch from his duty, 2 *Tim.* 4. 16. if hazard ſurround duty on every ſide, yet *Daniel*, will not quit it, *Dan.* 6. 10. for they conſidered theſe things at firſt, and counted the coſt, they ſtill find Religion is rich enough to pay the coſt of all that they can loſe or ſuffer for its ſake: Yea, and that with an hundred-fold reward, now in this life. They never had other deſign in engaging in Religious duties, but to help them to Heaven, and if they recover Heaven at laſt, whether the way to it prove better, or worſe; they have their deſign, and ends: And therefore they will *be ſtedfaſt, always abounding in the work of the Lord*, as knowing their *labour is not in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. *ult.*

*Sixthly*, The *humility* and Self-denyal of our hearts in duties will try what they are for their integrity and ſincerity towards God. Doth a Man boaſt his own Excellencies in Prayer as the Phariſee did, *Luke* 18. 10, 11. *God I thank thee I am not as other Men:* Which he ſpeaks not in an humble acknowledgement of the Grace of God which differences man from man; but in a proud oſtentation of his own Excellencies? Doth a man make his duties his *Saviours*, and truſt to them in a vain confidence of their worth and dignity? *Luke* 18. 9. Surely *his heart which is thus lifted up within him, is not upright*, *Hab.* 2. 4. But if the heart be upright indeed, it will expreſs its humility, as in all other things, ſo eſpecially in its duties wherein it approaches the great and holy God.

*Firſt*, It will manifeſt its humility in thoſe awful and reverential apprehenſions it hath of God, as *Abraham* did, *Gen.* 18. 27. *And now I that am but duſt and aſhes* (ſaith he) *have taken upon me to ſpeak unto God.* The humility of *Abrahams* ſpirit is in ſome meaſure to be found in all *Abrahams* Children.

*Secondly*, In thoſe low and vile thoughts they have of themſelves, and their religious performances: Thus that poor Penitent, *Luke* 7. 38. ſtood behind Chriſt weeping: *Yet the dogs eat the crumbs*, ſaith another, *Mark* 7. 28. *I am more brutiſh than any man*, ſaith a third, *Prov.* 30. 7. *I abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes*, ſaith a fourth, *Job* 42. 6. and as little eſteem they have for their performances, *Iſa.* 64. 6. *All our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags.* I deny not but there is pride and vanity in the moſt upright ones; but what place ſoever it finds in their converſes with men, it finds little room in their converſes with God; or if it do, they loath it, and themſelves for it.

*Thirdly*, But eſpecially their humility in duty is diſcovered in renouncing all their duties in point of dependance, and relying intirely upon Chriſt for righteouſneſs, and acceptance: They have ſpecial regard to duties in point of Obedience, but none at all in point of *Relyance.*

*Seventhly*, The *Communion* and *intercourſe* which is betwixt God and Men in duties, notably diſcovers what their Perſons and Graces are. And it muſt needs do ſo, becauſe what communion ſoever the *Hypocrite* hath with duties, or with *Saints* in duties; to be ſure he hath none with God.

None can *come nigh* to God in duty, but thoſe that are *made nigh* by reconciliation: All ſpecial Communion with Chriſt, is founded in real union with Chriſt: But *The wicked are eſtranged from the womb*, Pſal. 58. 3.

But now there is real communion betwixt God and his People in duties. Truly our fellowſhip *κοινωνία*, our Communion is with the Father and

Son, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. God pours forth of his Spirit upon them, and they pour forth their hearts to God. It is ſenſibly manifeſt to them when the Lord comes nigh to their Souls in duty, and as ſenſible they are of his retreats and withdrawments from their Souls, *Cant.* 3. 1, 4. They find their hearts like the *Helotrope*, open and ſhut according to the acceſſes and receſſes of the divine preſence. They that never felt any thing of this Nature, may call it a Fancy, but the Lords People are abundantly ſatisfied of the reality thereof.

Their very Countenance is altered by it, 1 *Sam.* 1. 18. the ſad and cloudy countenance of *Hannah* cleared up, there was fair weather in her very face, aſſoon as ſhe knew ſhe had audience and acceptance with her God. I know all communion with God doth not conſiſt in Joyes and Comforts, there is as real communion with God in the mortifying and humbling influences of his Spirit upon Men, as in the cheering and refreſhing Influences thereof. I know alſo there is a great diverſity in the Degrees and Meaſures thereof. It is not alike in all Chriſtians, nor with the ſame Chriſtian at all times: But that real Chriſtians have true and real Communion with God in their Duties, is a truth as manifeſt in ſpiritual ſenſe and experience of the Saints, as their Communion is one with another.

8. *Eighthly*, *Growth* and improvement of Grace in duties notably differences the ſound, and unſound heart. All the duties in the World will never make an Hypocrite more holy, humble, or heavenly than he is: But as the watering of a dry ſtick will ſooner rot it, than make it flouriſhing and fruitful. What was *Judas* the better for all thoſe heavenly Sermons, Prayers, and Diſcourſes of Chriſt which he heard? and what will thy Soul be the better for all the Duties thou performeſt weekly and daily, if thy heart be unſound? It's plain from *Joh.* 15. 4. there muſt be an implantation into Chriſt, before there can be an improvement in fruitful Obedience. And it is as plain from 1 *John* 2. 14. that the virtues of ordinances muſt remain, the efficacy and powers that we ſometimes feel under them, muſt abide and remain in the Heart afterwards; or we cannot grow, and be made fruitful by them.

But the falſe Profeſſor is neither rooted in Chriſt by union with him, nor doth or can retain the vertue of ordinances within him: But like one that views his face in a glaſs, quickly forgets what manner of man he was: His head indeed may grow, his knowledge may increaſe, but he hath a dead and withered heart.

But as the Saints have real Communion with God in duties, ſo they do make improvements anſwerable thereunto: There is more certainly ripening of their graces that way; a changing or gradual transformation from glory to glory; ſpringing up to that full ſtature of the Man in Chriſt. *They that are planted in the Houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the Courts of our God*, Pſal. 92. 13, 14. There is pure and ſincere milk in the breaſts of ordinances: A believer ſucks the very breaſts of Chriſt in his duties, and doth grow thereby, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. they do grow more and more judicious, experienced, humble, mortified, and heavenly, by converſing with the Lord frequently in his appointments.

There is I confeſs a more diſcernable growth and ripening in ſome Chriſtians, than in others: The Faith of ſome groweth exceedingly, 2 *Theſ.* 1. 3. others more ſlowly, *Heb.* 5. 12. but yet there are improvements of grace in all upright ones: Habits are more deeply radicated, or fruits of obedience more increaſed.

Obj. I*f any upright Soul be ſtumbled at this, as not being able to diſcern the increaſe of his graces after all his duties*;

*Sol.* Let ſuch conſider, the growth of grace is diſcerned as the growth of plants is, which we perceive rather *creviſſe, quam creſcere:* To have grown, than to grow: Compare time paſt and preſent, and you may ſee it: But uſually our Eager deſires after more, make us over-look what we have as nothing.

9. *Ninthly*, The *Aſſiſtances* and influences of the ſpirit in duties, ſhews us what we are: No vital ſanctifying influences can fall upon carnal hearts in duties. The ſpirit helps not their infirmities, nor makes interceſſion for them with groanings which cannot be utered, as he doth for his own people: *Rom.* 8. 26, 27. they have his aſſiſtances in the way of common *Gifts*, but not in the way of ſpecial *Grace:* He may enable them to preach *judiciouſly*, not *experimentally:* To pray orderly and *neatly*, not *feelingly*, believingly, and broken-heartedly: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the ſons of God*, Rom. 8. 14. he never ſo aſſiſts, but where he hath firſt ſanctified. Carnal men furniſh the materials of their duties out of the ſtrength of their parts; a ſtrong *Memory*, a good *Invention*, are the Fountains whence they draw.

But it is otherwiſe with Souls truly gracious: they have ordinarily a three-fold aſſiſtance from the Spirit in reference to their duties.

*Firſt*, Before duties, *exciting* them to it, making them feel their need of it: like the call of an empty ſtomach: *Pſal.* 27. 8. *Thou ſaidſt, Seek my face: My heart anſwered, Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek.*

*Secondly*, In their duties, furniſhing both matter and affection; as in that Text lately cited, *Rom.* 8. 26. guiding them not only *what* to ask, but *how* to ask.

*Thirdly*, After their duties, helping them not only to ſuppreſs the pride and vanity of their ſpirits, but alſo to wait on God for the accompliſhment of their deſires.

Now though all theſe things wherein the ſincerity of our Hearts is tryed in duties, be found in great variety (as to degrees) among Saints, yet they are Myſteries unknown by experience to other Men.

## CHAP. VIII.

### *Opening the Tryals of Sincerity and Hypocriſie by ſufferings upon the account of Religion.*

SECT. I. WE are now arrived at the laſt Tryal of Grace propounded, *viz.* by ſufferings for Religion.

Thouſands of Hypocrites embarque themſelves in the profeſſion of Religion in a Calm; but if the Wind riſeth, and the Sea rageth, and they ſee

Religion will not tranſport them ſafely to the *Cape* of their earthly hopes and expectations: They deſire to be landed again aſſoon as may be, for they never intended to ride out a ſtorm for Chriſt: So you find *Matth.* 13. 20, 21. *He dureth for a while, but when Tribulation or Perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the Word, by and by he is offended.*

But yet it is not every Tryal by ſufferings that ſeparates Gold from droſs, and therefore my Buſineſs will be to ſhew,

1. *Firſt*, When the Fire of ſufferings and Perſecution is hot and vehement enough to ſeparate them.

2. *Secondly*, Why it muſt needs diſcover Hypocriſie when it is at that height.

3. *Thirdly*, What advantages ſincere Grace hath to endure that ſevere and ſharp Tryal

## SECT. II.

1. NOw the Fire of Perſecution or Sufferings for Religion, may be judged intenſe and high enough to ſeparate Gold and Droſs,

*Firſt.* When Religion expoſes us to eminent hazard of our deepeſt and deareſt Intereſts in this World. Such are our Liberties, Eſtates and Lives: Now 'tis a fierce and fiery Tryal indeed. Sometimes it expoſes the Liberties of its Profeſſors, *Revel.* 2. 10. *The Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon:* Sometimes their Eſtates, *Heb.* 10.34. *Te took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods*; and ſometimes their Lives, *Heb.* 11.37. *They were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, they were ſlain with the ſword.* Whileſt it goes no higher than ſome ſmall inconveniencies of Life, Reputation and Senſe of Honour will hold a falſe heart; but when it comes to this, few will be found able to endure it, but thoſe that expect to ſave no more by Religion but their Souls, and account themſelves in good caſe if they can but ſave them with the loſs of all that is dear to them in this World.

Here the falſe heart boggles, here it uſually jades and faulters.

*Secondly*, The fiery Tryal is then high, when there remains no viſible hopes of deliverance or outward incouragements to ſenſe, that the *Scene*, will alter: When *we ſee not our ſigns, there is no more any Prophet; nor any that can tell us how long*, as the caſe with the *Church* was in *Pſal.* 74. 9. then their hands hang down, and their hearts faint: Nor is it to be wondred at, when the length of Troubles prove ſo ſore a Temptation even to the upright, to put forth their hands to Iniquity, as it is *Pſal.* 125. 3. if ſuch a Temptation ſhake ſuch men as build on the rock, it muſt quite overturn thoſe whoſe foundation is but ſand.

*Thirdly*, When a falſe Profeſſor is engaged alone in ſufferings, and is ſingled out from the Herd as a *Deer* to be run down, now it's a thouſand to one but he quits Religion to ſave himſelf: Good Company will encourage a faint hearted *Traveller* to jogg on a great way: But if he be forſaken by all, as *Paul* was, no man to ſtand by him, if left alone, as *Elijah* was, what can encourage him to hold out?

Indeed if they had the ſame inviſible ſupports thoſe good men had, that the Lord was with them, that would keep them ſteady: But wanting that Encouragement from within, and all ſhrinking away from without; they quickly tyre downright.

*Fourthly*, When near relations and intimates oppoſe and tempt us. The *Prophet* ſpeaks of a time *when a mans Enemies ſhall be the men of his own houſe*, it may be the wife of his boſome, *Mica* 7. 5, 6. O what a Tryal is that which Chriſt mentions in *Luke* 14. 26. when we muſt hate Father and Mother, Wife and Children, or quit claim to Chriſt and Heaven! This is hard work indeed.

How hard did that truly noble and renowned *Galeacius Caracciolus* find this! O what a conflict found he in his bowels! Now Chriſt and our deareſt Intereſt come to meet like two men upon a narrow bridge, if one go forward, the other muſt go back, and now the predominant Intereſt can no longer be concealed.

*Fifthly*, When powerful Temptations are mixed with cruel ſufferings, when we are ſtrongly tempted, as well as cruelly perſecuted; this blows up the Fire to a vehement height. This was the Tryal of thoſe precious primitive Believers, *Heb.* 11. 35, 37. *They were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, they were tempted:* Here was life, liberty and preferment ſet upon one hand; and death in the moſt formidable ſhape upon the other. This cannot but be a great Tryal to any: But eſpecially when a cruel death, and tender Temper meet; then the Tryal goes high indeed.

## SECT. III.

(2.) AND that ſuch ſufferings as theſe will diſcover the falſeneſs and rottenneſs of Mens hearts cannot be doubted, if you conſider that this is the fire deſigned by God for this very uſe and purpoſe, to ſeparate the *Gold* from the *droſs*, ſo you will find it, 1 *Pet.* 4. 12. *Beloved think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery tryal, which is to try you*, (*i. e.*) the very deſign and aim of Providence in permitting and ordering them is to try you. The deſign of *Satan* is to *deſtroy* you, but God's deſign is to *try* you. Upon this account you find the hour of Perſecution (in a ſuitable notion) call'd *the hour of Temptation*, or Probation, *Rev.* 3. 10. for then Profeſſors are ſifted to the very bran: Searched to the very bottom principles. This is *the day that burns as an Oven, in which all the proud, and all that do wickedly ſhall be as ſtubble*, Mal. 4. 1. for,

1. *Firſt*, In that day the predominant Intereſt muſt appear, and be diſcovered: It can be concealed no longer, *No man can ſerve two Maſters*, ſaith Chriſt, *Luke* 16. 13. A man may ſerve many Maſters, if they all command the ſame things, or things ſubordinate to each other; but he cannot ſerve two Maſters if their Commands claſh and interfere with each other; and ſuch are the Commands of Chriſt and the fleſh in a ſuffering hour: *Chriſt* ſaith, *Be thou faithful to the death*; the *fleſh* ſaith, *ſpare thy ſelf*, and ſecure the comforts of life. *Chriſt* ſaith, *He that loveth Father, or Mother, Wife or Children, Lands or Inheritances more than me, is not worthy of me. Fleſh* ſaith, He that will grieve and break the Hearts of ſuch dear Relations, and forſake when he might keep ſuch earthly accommodations, is not worthy of them.

Thus the two Intereſts come in full oppoſition: And now have but patience to wait a little, and you ſhall diſcern which is predominant. A *dog* follows two men while they both walk one way; and you know not which of the two is his maſter; ſtay but a little till their path parts, and then you ſhall quickly ſee who is his Maſter. So is it in this caſe.

2. *Secondly*, In that day ſenſible ſupports fail, and all a mans relief comes in by the pure and immediate actings of faith; and were it not for thoſe reliefs, his heart would ſoon faint and dye away under diſcouragements, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. *We faint not, whilſt we look not at the things which are ſeen, for they are temporal, but at the things which are not ſeen, for they are Eternal: q. d.* No longer than we keep our eye intently fixed upon the inviſible and eternal things in the coming World; we feel our ſelves fainting, and dying away under the troubles and afflictions of this World. *I had fainted* (ſaith *David*) *if I had not believed.* How then ſuppoſe ye ſhall the *Hypocrite* live at ſuch a time, who hath no faith to ſupport him? No relief but what comes in through his ſenſes?

3. *Thirdly*, In that day all meer Notions and Speculations about Religion vaniſh, and nothing relieves and ſatisfies the ſuffering ſoul, but what it really believes, and what it hath ſatisfying proof and experience of *in himſelf*. There are a great many pretty pleaſing notions with which our minds are entertained with ſome delight in times of peace, which can do us no ſervice at all in the day of trouble: and for our ſpeculative unpracticable knowledge of the greateſt truths in Religion, as little ſervice is to be expected from them. Except we have better evidence and ſecurity about them, we ſhall be loth to venture all upon the credit of them: that's a very conſiderable paſſage to this purpoſe in *Heb.* 10. 34. *Ye took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods,* [*knowing in your ſelves,*] *that ye have in Heaven a better and more enduring ſubſtance:* This *knowing in your ſeves* is by inward ſenſible experience, taſte and feeling, which is abundantly ſatisfying to the Soul; and ſtands oppoſed to all that traditional knowledge we receive from others; which, as it leaves the mind fluctuating, ſo the heart alſo dead and comfortleſs.

4. *Fourthly*, In that day the root and foundation of a mans faith and hope is tryed, and then they that have built upon the ſand muſt needs fail: for every thing is as its foundation is: Principles are to us, what a root is to a tree, or a foundation to an houſe; a flaw, or grand defect there ruines all: This we find to be the very ſcope of thoſe two famous parables, *Luke* 14. 25. and *Matth.* 13. 21. Leſſer troubles ſhake but the branches, but theſe try the root: If nothing be found there but ſelf-ends, the force of education, the influence of examples; ſurely when the winds riſe high, and beat upon it, they will quickly lay the loftieſt profeſſour even with the ground.

And thus you ſee what a *Criſis* an hour of temptation, the ſuffering hour is, and what diſcoveries of *Hypocriſie* it muſt needs make; for now the *Hipocrite* like *Orpha* will forſake Religion, but ſincerity will make the ſoul cleave to it, as *Ruth* did to *Naomi*.

## SECT. IV.

3. WHAT Advantages Sincerity gives the ſoul for its eſtabliſhment and perſeverance in ſuffering times, I ſhall briefly account for in the following particulars.

1. *Firſt*, Sincere godlineſs dethrones that *Idol* the love of this World, in all true Chriſtians; and this is it that makes men ſhrink and flinch from Chriſt in a day of ſuffering. I do not deny but even believers themſelves love the world too much, but they love it not as their chief good; it is not their portion or happineſs, if any man ſo love the world, *the love of the Father is not in him*, 1 John 2. 15. How much ſoever a ſincere Chriſtian loves the world, yet ſtill it is in ſubordination to the love of God, *John* 21. 15. Sincerity can conſiſt with no other love of the world, it will not ſuffer ſuch a curſed plant to grow under its ſhadow.

Now, what is it but this inordinate ſupream love of the Creature that makes men forſake Chriſt in time of temptation? This was the ruine of that young man, Mat. 19. 22. *He went away ſorrowful, for he had great poſſeſſions.* This was the overthrow of *Demas*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. *He hath forſaken me* (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) *having loved this preſent World:* The love of this world like ſap in green wood will not ſuffer you to burn for Chriſt; get but the heart mortified to the Creature, by a diſcovery of better things in heaven; and it will eſtabliſh and fix your ſpirits, that it ſhall not be in the power of creatures to ſhake you off from Chriſt your foundation.

2. *Secondly*, Sincerity knits the ſoul to Chriſt, and union with him ſecures us in the great tryals: *Munimur quatenus unimur.* The Hypocrite having no union with Chriſt, can have no communion with him; nor communications of grace from him; and ſo that little ſtock of his own being quickly ſpent, (I mean natural courage and reſolution) and no incomes from Chriſt, he muſt needs give up in a ſhort time; but it is with a believer in a day of trouble, as it is with a *Garriſon* beſieged by Land, but free and open to the Sea; whence freſh ſupplys are daily ſent in to relieve it: ſee 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. *As the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt:* freſh aids and daily ſupplyes proportionable to our expences, and decays of ſtrength. So *Col.* 1. 11. *Strengthned with all might in the inner man, according to his glorious power; unto all patience, and longſuffering with joyfulneſs:* And this is the believers great advantage by his union with Chriſt in a day of Tryal.

3. *Thirdly*, As ſincerity unites the ſoul with Chriſt, ſo it ſets the heart upon heaven and things eternal, *Col.* 3. 1, *&c.* ſurely nothing is more conducive to our ſtability than this, in the hour of temptation.

This is the moſt effectual preſervative from temptations upon the right hand, and upon the left. *Moſes* could caſt a Kingdom at his heels, deſpiſe the riches, pleaſures and honours of *Egypt*, whilſt his eye was fixed upon him that is inviſible; and had reſpect to the recompence of reward, *Heb.* 11. 24, 25, 26. And it was a brave reply of the *Forty Martyrs* to *Valence* the *Emperour*, tempting them with the preferments and honours of the world; *Why offer you theſe trifles to* *us, when you know how the whole world is contemned by us?* And for temptations on the left hand, how little can they move that ſoul, who realizes the glory of the approaching world, and ſees the afflictions and ſuffering of this world preparing him for, and haſtening him to the enjoyment of it; temptations meet but with cold entertainment from ſuch ſouls.

4 *Fourthly*, Sincerity drives but one deſign, and that is to pleaſe and injoy God; and what can more eſtabliſh and fix the ſoul in the hour of Temptations than this? The reaſon why the Hypocrite is unſtable in all his ways, is gven us by the Apoſtle *James*, 1. 8. He is a double minded man, δίψυχος ἀνὴρ, a man of two Souls in one Body; as a prophane wretch once boaſted, that he had one Soul for God, another for any thing: But all the deſigns of a gracious heart, are united in one: And ſo the intire ſtream of his affections runs ſtrong.

'Tis baſe by-ends and ſelf-intereſts, that like a great many ditches cut out of the bank of a River, draw away the ſtream out of its proper Channel, and make its waters fail: But if the heart be united for God as the expreſſion is, *Pſal.* 86. 11. Then we may ſay of ſuch a *Chriſtian*, as was ſaid of a young *Roman*, *Quicquid vult, valde vult*; What he doth, is done with all his might. And this was the ground of that ſaying, *liberet me Deus ab homine unius tantùm negotii:* A man of one only deſign puts to all his ſtrength to carry it: nothing can ſtand before him.

5 *Fifthly*, Sincerity brings a mans will into ſubjection to the will of God; and this being done, the greateſt danger and difficulty is over with ſuch a man. This is that holy Oyl, which makes the Wheels of the ſoul run nimbly even in difficult paths of obedience, *non tardat uncta rota.* Let but a man be once brought to that, *The will of the Lord be done*; as it is. *Acts* 21. 13. To ſee the higheſt reaſon of cheerful obedience in the holy, juſt and good will of God; and then the difficulty is over: He can ſuffer quietly, what men inflict unjuſtly.

6 *Sixthly*, Sincerity takes its meaſures of preſent things by the rules of faith, and eternity: it goes not by the ſame reckoning and account that others do, who judge of things by ſenſe, and the reſpects they have to the preſent World: 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. *We look not at the things that are ſeen, but at the things that are not ſeen*; And this is there given as the reaſon of his not fainting under preſent difficulties: ſo Rom. 8. 18. *I reckon that the ſufferings of the preſent time, are not worthy to be compared with glory which ſhall be revealed in us:* He will not allow himſelf to undervalue eternal glory by once mentioning preſent ſufferings, in a way of bemoaning himſelf for them: A ſteady eye upon the other world makes us more than Conquerours over the troubles of this World.

7 *Seventhly*, To conclude, Sincerity alone hath all the heavenly aids and aſſiſtances to ſtability and perſeverance in ſuffering times. Upright ones (and ſuch only) have Chriſts *interceſſion* in heaven for them, *Rom.* 8. 34. The Spirits *conſolation* in all their troubles, 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. The ſpirit of glory and of God reſteth on them: The beneficial *Miniſtry of Angels*, who are ſent forth upon their account, *Heb.* 1. 14. *A ſtock of Prayers* going for them all the World over, *Eph.* 6. 18. Multiudes of precious promiſes in the Scriptures, for every line, word and ſyllable of which the faithfulneſs of God ſtands engaged: So that it's impoſſible ſuch gold can periſh in the fire.

And thus of the ſeveral ways by which grace is here tryed.

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# CHAP. IX.

## *Opening the deſigns and ends of God in bringing of the profeſſours of Religion into ſuch various tryals of their graces in this World.*

### SECT. I.

THESE are ſome of the ways and methods in which God brings his Gold to the Touchſtone, and to the fire, even in this world; before the awful and ſolemn Tryal they muſt come to in the final Judgment. And if we deſire to be ſatisfied what the deſign and end of God in making ſuch probations of his people is;

We muſt conclude in the general, he certainly deſigns his own glory, and his peoples advantage, and profit in them. If he ſuffer them to be tryed by reproaches, *happy are they, the ſpirit of God and glory reſteth on them*; there's their *profit*, and though his name be evil ſpoken of, yet in the meekneſs of their ſpirits, *he is glorified*, as it is, 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. *If the ſcourge ſlay ſuddenly, he laugheth at the tryal of the innocent*, Job. 9. 23. Not at their afflictions, but at the effects and bleſſed iſſues and reſults of them: Not that it gives them *pain*, but that it gives him *Glory:* Upon this account the *Apoſtle* bids us count it all Joy when we fall into divers temptations or tryals: And ſtill the more tryals the more joy; for thereby God will produce ſuch effects, as are more precious than gold that periſheth, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. O who can value the comfort that is taſted by the ſoul upon the tryal and diſcovery of its ſincerity! When after ſome ſore temptation, wherein God hath helped us to maintain our integrity; or after ſome cloſe pinching affliction, wherein we have diſcovered in our ſelves a ſweet reſignation to, and contentment in the will of God; an heart cleaving to the Lord, purged and made more ſpiritual under the rod; we can turn to the Lord, and appeal to him as the Prophet did, *Jer.* 12. 3. *But thou O Lord knoweſt me, thou haſt ſeen me, and tryed mine heart towards thee.*

I ſay who can duly value ſuch an advantage? who would exchange ſuch a comfort for all the gold and ſilver in the world? How many tryals ſoever God brings his people under, to be ſure neither his own glory nor their intereſt ſhall ſuffer any damage by them.

### SECT. II.

BUT more particularly, let us bring our thoughts cloſe to the matter before us; and we ſhall find many great advantages and benefits riſing out of theſe Tryals of ſincerity; for, 1 *Firſt*, Hereby Hypocriſie is unmasked and diſcovered; The vizard is pluckt off from the falſe profeſſor, and his true natural face and complexion ſhewn to the world; and in this there is a great deal of good.

Object. *Good, you will ſay, where lyes it? all the world ſees the miſchief and ſad effects of it; many are ſtumbled, many are hardned by it, woe to the world becauſe of offences*, Mat. 16.7.

*Sol.* True, ſome are prejudiced and hardned by it, ſo as never to have good thoughts of the ways and people of God more; that's ſad indeed; however therein God accompliſhes his word, and executeth his decree. And though theſe periſh; yet

*Firſt*, Others are warned, awakened, and ſet a ſearching their own hearts more narrowly than ever; and this is good: 1 *Cor.* 10. 11, 12. Now theſe were our examples, *wherefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.*

*Secondly*, Hereby ſin is aſhamed, and it is good when ſin that hath expoſed men to ſo much ſhame, ſhall be it ſelf expoſed to ſhame. This is the juſt reward of ſin, *Jer.* 13. 25, 26. *This is thy lot, the portion of thy meaſures from me, ſaith the Lord; becauſe thou haſt forgotten me, and truſted in falſhood, therefore will I diſcover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy ſhame may appear.*

The turning up the skirt is a modeſt expreſſion of expoſing a perſon to the greateſt ſhame: in the day of Tryal, God by diſcovering Hypocriſie ſhames the Hipocrite: and ſurely many ſuch diſcoveries are made of Men at this Day; we may ſee ſin that lurked cloſe in the Heart before, now laid open before all *Iſrael* and before the Sun.

*Thirdly*, Hereby the poor ſelf-couzening Hypocrite hath the greateſt opportunity and advantage that ever was before him in all his life, to recover himſelf out of the ſnare of the Devil: Now all his pretences are gone; Now that which like a ſhield was advanced againſt the arrows of reproof and conviction is gone: Now a poor Creature ſtands Naked and Stript out of all his pleas as a fair and open mark to the Word, and his own Conſcience; and happy will it be for him if now the Lord make conviction to enter point-blank into his ſoul: All theſe are bleſſed effects of the Diſcovery of Hypocriſie.

2. *Secondly*, By theſe Tryals integrity is cleared up, and the doubts and fears of many upright and holy ones allayed and quieted, reſolved and ſatisfied.

O what would many a poor Chriſtian give for ſatisfaction in that point of ſincerity! How many tears have been ſhed to God in ſecret upon that account? How many hours have been ſpent in examination of his own heart about it, and ſtill jealouſies and fears hang upon his heart? He doubts what he may prove at laſt: Well, ſaith God, let his ſincerity then come to the teſt; kindle the fire and caſt in my gold. Tryals are the high way to aſſurance: Let my child ſee that he loves me more than theſe, that his heart is upright with me. I will try him by proſperity and by adverſity; By perſecutions and temptations, and he ſhall ſee his heart is better than he ſuſpects it to be. This ſhall be the day of reſolution to his fears and doubts.

The Apoſtle ſpeaking of Hereſies, 1 *Cor.* 11. 7, 9. puts a neceſſity upon them. *There muſt be Hereſies* (*ſaith he*) *that they which are approved may be made manifeſt.* The ſame neceſſity there is (and for the ſame end) of all other tryals of grace, that the lovely beautiful ſweet face of ſincerity may be opened ſometimes to the world to enamour them, and to the ſoul in whom it is, to ſatisfie it that it doth not perſonate a Chriſtian, but lives the very Life of a Chriſtian, and hath the very ſpirit and principles of a Chriſtian in him.

3. *Thirdly*, By theſe tryals pride and ſelf-confidence is deſtroyed and mortified in the ſaints, as much as by any thing in the world: We never ſee what poor weak creatures we are, till we come to the tryal. It's ſaid, *Deut.* 8. 2. God led *Iſrael* through the deſart to prove them and to humble them: When we are proved, then we are humbled. Thoſe that over-reckon their graces before the tryal, ſee they muſt come to another account, and take new meaſures of themſelves after they have been upon tryal.

Ah! little did I think, ſaith one, that I had ſo much love for the World, and ſo little for God, till afflictions tryed it. I could not have believed that ever the creature had got ſo deep into my heart, till providence either threatned or made a ſeparation, and then I found it. I thought I had been rich in faith, till ſuch a danger befell me; or ſuch a want began to pinch hard; and then I ſaw how unable I was to truſt God for protection, or proviſion. O it's a good thing that our hearts be kept humble and lowly, how rich ſoever they be in grace.

4. *Fourthly*, By tryals grace is kept in exerciſe, and the gracious ſoul preſerved from ſecurity and ſpiritual ſlothfulneſs: Tryals are to grace what the eſtuations and continual agitations of the waters are to the ſea: or what the racking of Wines from the Lees is to it: Were it not for our frequent tryals and exerciſes, we ſhould quickly ſettle upon the Lees; and our duties would be (as God complains of *Ephraim*) like ſowre or dead drink, *Hoſ.* 4. 18. flat, and ſpiritleſs. *Moab hath been at eaſe from his youth, and he hath ſettled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from veſſel to veſſel; Neither hath he gone into Captivity; Therefore his taſte remained in him, and his ſcent is not changed*, Jer. 48. 11.

Much after that rate it would be with our hearts, did not the Lord frequently try and exerciſe them: let the beſt man be without ſome tryal or other but a few Months, and you may find the want of it in his prayers and conferences quickly. O what a tang of formality will be found in them! and is it for the honour of God, or profit of his people that it ſhould be ſo? No, no, the Lord knows it is not; but how ſhall their ſpirits be reduced to the former zealous heavenly temper again? Why, ſaith the Lord, they muſt into the furnace again. *I will melt them and try them, for how ſhall I do for the Daughter of my people!* Jer. 9. 7. I love them too well to loſe them for want of a Rod: Alas! if I ſhould ſuffer things to go on at this Rate, what will become of them in a little time? what delight can I take in their duties! When the Faith, Fervour, Humility, and holy *Seriouſneſs* of their Spirits is wanting in them? I will therefore *refine them as Siver is refined, and try them as Gold is tryed ; and they ſhall call upon my Name, and I will hear them ; and I will ſay it is my people ; and they ſhall ſay the Lord is my God*, Zech. 13. 9. and thus the Lord chides himſelf friend again with his People.

Thus he recovers them to their true temper, and thus his viſitations do preſerve their ſpirits: And when the Lord ſees theſe ſweet effects of his Tryals upon them, it greatly pleaſeth him. O now ſaith God, I like it. This Providence hath done them good, this rod was well beſtowed, the letting looſe of this Temptation or that Corruption upon them, 'hath made them find their knees again, now I hear the Voice of my Child again.

Beloved, this is a bleſſed fruit and effect of our frequent Tryals, and how ungrateful ſoever they are to fleſh and blood, that affects eaſe and is loth to be diſturbed ; yet it is neceſſary to the preſervation of our ſpirits.

5. *Fifthly*, By the Tryal of our graces *Satan* is defeated, and his accuſations of the Saints found to be meer ſlanders. It is a very common thing with the *Devil* and wicked men, to accuſe the people of God of Hypocriſie, and to tell the World they are not the men and women they are taken to be ; and that if their inſide were but turned out by ſome through Tryal, or deep ſearch, it would appear that Religion did not indeed live in their ſouls as they pretend ; but that they only act a part, and perſonate heavenly and mortified perſons upon the publick ſtage of profeſſion.

Thus the Accuſer of the Brethren ſuggeſts the Hypocriſie of *Job*, Cap. 2. 5. *Put forth thine hand now and touch his bone and his fleſh, and he will curſe thee to thy face. q. d.* Well might *Job* ſerve thee, whileſt thou haſt been ſo bountiful a Maſter to him ; he hath been well rewarded for all the ſervice he hath done thee ; but if thou ſtop the current of his proſperity, thou ſhalt ſee how quickly he will ſtop the courſe of his duty: A few laſhes from thy hand, will make him curſe thee to thy face: But O what ſhame and diſappointment was it to that envious ſpirit, what a vindication of *Job*'s integrity, when under the greateſt Tryals of his Faith and Patience, he ſtill held faſt his integrity, and ſhews himſelf as great a pattern of patience under the Croſs, as he had been of piety in the days of his greateſt proſperity! Satan gets nothing by bringing forth the Saints upon the ſtage, to be made a Spectacle to Angels and Men, as it is, 1 *Cor*. 4. 9.

6. *Sixthly*, and Laſtly, The frequent Tryals of grace, exhibit a full and living Teſtimony againſt the Atheiſm of the world. Theſe prove beyond all words or arguments that Religion is no fancy, but the greateſt reality in the world: men would make Religion but a fancy, and the zeal of its profeſſors, but the intemperate heat of ſome crazy brains, overheated with a fond notion.

They that never felt the real influences of Religion upon their own ſouls, will not believe that others do feel them. Serious piety is become the ludicrous ſubject with which the wanton Wits of this Athieſtical world ſport themſelves. But behold the wiſdom and goodneſs of God exhibiting to the world the undeniable teſtimonies of the truth of Religion, as often as the ſincere profeſſours thereof are brought to the teſt by afflictions from the hand of God, or perſecutions from the hands of Men. Lo *here is the faith and patience of the Saints*: Here is their courage, meekneſs, and ſelf-denyal ſhining as gold in the fire: They have the real proofs of it before their eyes: inſtead of caſting them into hell, and convincing them by eternal fire, he is pleaſed to caſt his own people into the fire of affliction, that they who ſcoff at them may be convinced at an eaſier and Cheaper rate. It is no new thing to ſee the Enemies of Religion brought over to embrace it, by the conſtancy and faithfulneſs of the Saints in their Tryals and Sufferings for it. God grant that the Atheiſm of this preſent generation do not occaſion a more fiery Tryal to the people of God in it, than they have yet ſuffered.

# CHAP. X.

*Shewing that that grace only is to be reckoned ſincere and real, which can endure thoſe tryals which God appoints, or permits for the diſcovery of it.*

SECT. I. BEFORE I offer you the proofs and Evidences of this truth, it will be Neceſſary to Prevent ſome miſtakes that may be occaſioned by miſunderſtanding of it.

*Caution* 1. And in the firſt place, we are not to think aſſurance of our ſincerity impoſſible to be had in this life, becauſe as long as we live here we are in a ſtate of Tryal ; and how many Tryals ſoever have been made upon us already, yet ſtill there are more to come ; and we know not what we ſhall prove in future tryals, though God hath kept us upright in former Tryals ; No, no, this is none of my meaning ; Nor doth ſuch a Concluſion Neceſſarily follow this Aſſertion: for a Chriſtian that hath rightly cloſed with Chriſt at firſt, and been faithful in the duties of active and paſſive obedience hitherto, may be aſſured upon good grounds of a Victory before he come to the fire of his remaining tryals. So was the Apoſtle, Rom. 8. 35, &c. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? ſhall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword? nay in all theſe we are more than conquerours, through him that hath loved us*: Here's an aſſured triumph before the Combate. So Job 23. 10. *But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tryed me, I ſhall come forth as gold*, he appeals to God for the ſincerity of his heart, ſo far as he had hitherto gone in the way of Religion ; and thence concludes that what ever tryals God ſhould bring him to for time to come, he ſhould come forth as gold, (*i. e.*) he ſhould not loſe one grain by the fire ; And this confidence of a gracious ſoul, is built not only upon experience gained in former Tryals, but upon faith in the *Power*, *Promiſes*, and *Faithfulneſs* of God which are engaged for him in the Covenant of grace, to keep him in the greateſt dangers that befall him in this world.

He believes the power of God is able to make him ſtand, though he hath no power nor might in himſelf to overcome the leaſt Temptation, 1 *Pet*. 1. 5. You *are kept*, φρουρουμένους, (kept as with a garriſon) *by the Power of God through Faith unto ſalvation*: when Chriſt hath once taken poſſeſſion of the ſoul by his Spirit, he fortifies it by his power as a garriſon, that uſing the means, it be ſurprized or betrayed no more into the enemies hand, ſo as finally to be loſt.

He builds this confidence alſo upon the *promiſes* of God, which are his ſecurity in all future dangers, and how are all the pages of the Bible beſpangled with ſuch promiſes, as the firmament is with bright and glorious Stars! ſuch are theſe of the firſt magnitude, 1 Cor. 1. 8, 9. *Chriſt ſhall confirm you to the end, that ye may be blameleſs in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; God is faithful by whom ye are called unto the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord:* and no leſs ſatisfying and ſweet is that, Jer. 32. 40. *And I will make an everlaſting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me:* And of the ſame nature is that alſo, John 10. 27, 28. *My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they ſhall never periſh; neither ſhall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

If there be any *Hypocrite* in *ſheeps-cloathing*, he hath no part nor lot in this Promiſe; but it ſecures the whole flock of Chriſt, great and ſmall, againſt all danger.

He alſo builds his aſſurance upon the faithfulneſs of God, which ſtands engaged to make good every line, word and ſyllable of his promiſes to his people: ſo we find it in 1 Cor. 10. 13. *There hath no temptation taken you but ſuch as is common to man; but God is faithful; who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with every temptation make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it:* and 2 Theſ. 3. 3. *but the Lord is faithful, who ſhall ſtabliſh you, and keep you from evil.*

Add to this the conſtant prevalent interceſſion of Chriſt in heaven for his people in all their tryals, and then you will ſee a ſincere Chriſtian need not to deny himſelf the joy and comfort of his aſſurance upon the account and ſuppoſition of his future tryals.

## SECT. II.

Caution 2. NOR do we here ſuppoſe in this aſſertion, that inherent grace in the ſaints hath a ſufficiency of ability in it ſelf to endure the greateſt and ſevereſt tryals that can befal it in this World. It is certain that it ſhall be carryed ſafely through all, but not in its own ſtrength and ability.

That is a true obſervation of the learned *Gerſon: Perfectiones ſibi relictæ, ſunt pondera ad ruinam:* The moſt perfect creature left to it ſelf will fall into ruine. This was exemplified in the *Angels* that fell, and in *Adam*, though in a perfect ſtate: Divine preſervation is the prop which ſupports the beſt creatures from ruine. Grace it ſelf is but a creature, and therefore a dependant being: It is but a ſtream, depends upon the ſupply of the fountain; if the fountain let not forth it ſelf, what becomes of the ſtream? That's a true and judicious obſervation of the learned Dr. *Ames*; *Perſeverantia fidelium, vel immutabilis eorum conditio ſecundum integram ejus rationem, non provenit à principio intrinſeco ſolo, nec a ſolo extrinſeco; ſed partim ab intrinſeco, ex natura vitæ ſpiritualis a Chriſto fluentis; & partim ab extrinſeco, ex cuſtodia, protectione, & directione Dei: Ameſii Coronis*, Art. 5. The perſeverance of believers, or the immutability of their condition, if we view the whole ground and reaſon of it, is not wholly from within, nor wholly from without it ſelf: But partly from Chriſt into them; and partly from the nature of the ſpiritual life which flows from the keeping, protection and direction of God. That protection is always afforded to this life of grace, and this life of grace always needs that protection. The beſt of men are but men at beſt, as one ſpeaks: It was not *Peters* grace and reſolution that kept him, but Chriſts care of him and interceſſion for him, Luke 22. 32. *Be ſtrong in the Lord*, (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) *and in the power of his might*, Epheſ. 6. 10. *Without me* (ſaith *Chriſt*) *you can do nothing*, John 15. 5.

Neither of theſe is that which I have before me to prove, but this is that which I aim at; That ſuch ſeeming grace as was never yet brought to the tryal, nor will be able to bear the tryal when God ſhall bring it thereto; muſt not paſs for currant (as too frequently it doth) among us; ſuch grace will neither comfort us now, nor ſave us hereafter: for,

## SECT. III.

1. FIRST, Great numbers of perſons in the profeſſing world are deceived and deſtroyed by truſting to ſeeming and untried grace. This was the miſerable condition of theſe *Laodicean profeſſours* in the Text: They reckoned themſelves rich, but were really poor, all is not gold that gliſters: Their Gold (as they accounted it) was never tryed in the fire: If a mans whole Eſtate lay in ſome precious ſtone, ſuppoſe a rich *Diamond*, how is he concerned to have it throughly tryed? to ſee whether it will bear a ſmart ſtroke with the hammer, or fly like a *Briſtol* Diamond under it? All that you are worth lyes in the truth and ſincerity of your grace: And till that be tryed you know not whether you be worth any thing or nothing.

*Reader*, There are two ſad ſights in the world, which cannot but deeply affect every upright heart: one is to ſee ſo many thouſands of rational and ingenious men in the *Romiſh Church*, by an implicit faith in their guides, venturing their ſouls upon their bare word, never ſearching the Scriptures with their own eyes, but wholly truſting to the infallibility of the *Pope*, or a *Council*, when in the mean time, they would fear to take their word for a ſum of money without ſome farther ſecurity. It is amazing to behold the ſoul-deſtroying, eaſie credulity of theſe men: But this is a ſtroke of madneſs and ſpiritual infatuation judicially inflicted upon them; That the judgment which is written might be fulfilled in them, *God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lye*, 2 Theſ. 2. 11.

And yet more amazing is that ſtroke of God upon multitudes of vain and formal profeſſours even in the Reformed Proteſtant Churches; where no man is reſtrained from ſearching the Scriptures; nay, where men are ſo frequently and earneſtly preſſed from Sabbath to Sabbath to examine themſelves; and prove their own work, that yet ſo many are content to leave all at hazard; and without any more ado or farther ſearch in the matter, credit the report of their own deceitful Hearts, and take all for Granted, without due Tryal or Examination of the matter.

Surely, no one thing ſends down more ſouls daily to hell out of the profeſſing world, than this doth. The five fooliſh Virgins ( *i. e.* the unprincipled Profeſſours in the Reformed Churches) periſhed this Way. They took it for granted all was well, becauſe they had lamps of profeſſion as well as others; and ſaw not the cheat, till the cry was heard at midnight, and their unfurniſhed Lamps went out, *Mat.* 25.

2. *Secondly*, The promiſes of ſalvation are made over to tryed grace, and ſuch only as will endure the tryal: So James 1. 12. *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation: For when he is tryed he ſhall receive the Crown of life which God hath promiſed to them that love him*: We muſt be firſt tryed, and then crowned *If a man ſtrive for maſteries, yet is he not Crowned, except he ſtrive lawfully*, 2 Tim. 2. 5. He manifeſtly alludes to the *Roman Games* to which there were Judges appointed, to ſee that no foul play were offered contrary to the Law for Wreſtling: And where it was found, the Crown was denyed them. Not to him that ſets forth in the morning with reſolution and gallantry, but to him that holds out till the evening of his life, is the promiſe made, Mat. 10. 22. *He that endureth to the end ſhall be ſaved*: ſo Rom. 2. 7. *To them who by patient continuance in well doing ſeek for glory and Honour, and Immortality; eternal life*: And once more, Heb. 3. 15. *We are made partakers of Chriſt, if we hold the beginning of our confidence, ſtedfaſt unto the end.* So that if you ſhould endure ſome few ſlighter troubles, and faint at laſt; give out when a cloſer tryal befals you; all your labours and ſufferings are in vain. Sincerity and final perſeverance are the conditions of all ſpecial promiſes.

3. *Thirdly*, Every mans graces and duties muſt be tryed and weighed by God in the great day; and if they cannot endure theſe leſſer Tryals, to which God expoſes them now, how will they endure that ſevere and exact tryal to which he will bring them then? No man can ſearch his own heart with that exactneſs in this World, as God will ſearch it in the world to come.

I may ſay in this caſe to you as the Lord ſpake to *Jeremiah*, Chap. 12. 5. *If thou haſt run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee; Then how canſt thou contend with horſes? And if in the land of peace wherein thou truſtedſt, they have wearied thee; then how wilt thou do in the ſwelling of Jordan?* This was ſpoken to encourage the *Prophet* to conſtancy in his work; and as if the Lord had ſaid, O *Jeremy*, do the ſtrivings of the men of *Anathoth* thine own Town, diſhearten thee? pluck up thy ſpirits and faint not; there are harder Tryals than theſe that thou muſt undergo at *Jeruſalem*: Theſe are no more to what is coming, than the running with footmen, is to contending with horſes: or the paſſing a ſmall Rivulet, to the ſwellings of *Jordan*.

To allude to this, If our graces and duties cannot bear theſe lighter tryals, if a little lift of proſperity, or lighter ſtroke of adverſity diſcover ſo much falſneſs, Rottenneſs, Pride, and ſelfiſhneſs in the heart: If we cannot reſiſt the motions of corruptions, but yield our ſelves to obey ſin in the luſts of it: If we can neither keep our hearts with God in duties, nor mourn for our wanderings from him: If a few ſcoffs from wicked tongues, or tryals of perſecution from the hands of men will cauſe us to faint in the way, and turn back from following the Lord: What ſhall we do when he comes whoſe fan is in his hand, and who will throughly purge his floor, *Mat.* 3. 12. Who will try every mans work as by fire, 1 *Cor.* 3. 13. Search the ſecrets of all hearts, *Romans* 2. 16. Weigh every man to his ounces and drachms; Surely we can take little comfort in that which is ſo unable to bear the ſevere tryals of that day, that it cannot ſtand before the ſlighter Tryals of this day.

4. *Fourthly*, True grace is willing to be tryed, and nothing is more deſirable to an upright ſoul, than to know his own condition. If therefore we ſhun the tryal, and are loth to ſearch our ſelves, or be ſearched by the Lord, our condition is ſuſpicious, and we can take little comfort in it. It was *Davids* earneſt deſire, *Pſal.* 139. 23. That God would throughly ſearch his heart and reins, and ſee if there were any way of Wickedneſs in him: Falſe grace is ſhy of Gods eye; it cares not to be examined; but this is the delight of ſincere ones: *Every one that doth evil hateth the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved; but he that doth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God*, John 3. 20, 21.

The reaſon is plain why Hypocriſie cannot endure to come to the Touchſtone and teſt, for Hypocrites having a ſecret conſciouſneſs of their own guilt and unſoundneſs, know that by this means their vain confidence would quickly be confuted, and all their reputation for Religion blaſted: but O if men dare not ſtand before the word, as it is now opened and applyed by Miniſters; How will they ſtand when it ſhall be opened and applyed in another manner by Jeſus Chriſt?

O profeſſour, if thy condition be good, thy heart right, thou wilt deſire to know the very worſt of thy ſelf; and when thou haſt made the deepeſt ſearch thou canſt, thou wilt ſtill fear thou haſt not been ſevere enough, and impartial enough to thy ſelf: Nothing will give thee more conten than when thou feeleſt the word dividing thy ſoul and ſpirit, thy joynts and marrow: Nothing ſo much comforts thee under, or after an afflicti-on, as the diſcovery it hath made of thy heart, thou wilt ſeem to feel with what affections thoſ words came from the prophets lips, Jer. 12. 3. *But thou O Lord knoweſt me, thou haſt ſeen me, an tryed my heart towards thee.* O what a refreſhing ſweetneſs will ſtream through thy heart; and a the powers of thy ſoul, when thou canſt make th like appeal to God with like ſincerity! And cer tainly without ſuch a diſpoſition of ſpirit toward the tryal of our graces, we can have little evidenc of the truth of them.

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# CHAP. XI.

*Containing divers practical inſtructive Inference from this doctrine, with a ſerious Exhortation t ſelf-tryal, and through examination.*

## SECT. I.

*Infer.* I. ARE there ſuch variety of trya appointed to exame the ſince ty of Mens graces, *how great a vanity then is Hypocriſie, and to how little purpoſe do men endeavour to conceal and hide it!* We ſay, *Murder* will out, and we may as confidently affirm *hypocriſie* will out. When *Rebekah* had laid the plot to diſguiſe her Son *Jacob*, and by perſonating his brother to get the bleſſing, *Jacob* thus objects againſt it, *My Father peradventure will feel me, and I ſhall ſeem to him as a deceiver; and I ſhall bring a curſe upon me, and not a bleſſing*, Gen. 27. 12. as if he ſhould ſay; But what if my Father detect the cheat, how then ſhall I look him in the face? how ſhall I eſcape a curſe? After the ſame manner every upright Soul ſcares it ſelf from the way of Hypocriſie. If I diſſemble, and pretend to be what I am not: My Father will find me out. Ah there is no darkneſs nor ſhadow of death that can conceal the Hypocrite: But out it will come at laſt, let him uſe all the art he can to hide it. Oftentimes God diſcovers him by the Tryals he appoints in this World, and men in that day ſhall *return and diſcern betwixt the righteous and the wicked; between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not*, Mal. 3. 18. but if he make an hard ſhift to get by a private way to hell, carryiug this comfort with him to the laſt ſtep; that no body knows or thinks he is gone thither; yet there will be a day when God will ſtrip him naked before the great Aſſembly of Angels and Men, and all ſhall point at him and ſay,

*Loe this is the Man that made not God his hope:* This is he that wore a garment of profeſſion to deceive, but God hath now ſtript him out of it, and all men ſee what he is: For, *There is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed, and hid that ſhall not be known:* Mat. 10. 26. and the *Apoſtle* aſſures us, 1 *Tim.* 5. 24, 25. *That they that are otherwiſe cannot be hid:* If mens works be not good, it's impoſſible they ſhould be hid long: A gilded piece of braſs may paſs from hand to hand a little while; but the *Touch-ſtone* will diſcover the baſe metal: If that do not, the fire will.

O Sinners, away with your Hypocriſie, be honeſt, ſincere, plain, and hearty in Religion; if not, confuſion of face ſhall be your recompence from the Lord, that is what you ſhall get by it.

*Infer.* 2. Secondly, Are there ſuch Tryals appointed and permitted by the Lord for the diſcovery of his Peoples ſincerity in this World, *then let none of God's People expect a quiet ſtation in this World:* Certainly you ſhall meet with no reſt here: You muſt out of one fire into another, and it is a merciful condeſcenſion of the Lord to poor Creatures, thus to concern himſelf for their ſafety and benefit: *What is Man that thou ſhouldſt magnifie him? and that thou ſhouldſt ſet thine heart upon him? that thou ſhouldſt viſit him every morning, and try him every moment?* Job 7. 17, 18.

O 'tis a great deal of honour put upon a poor worm, when God will every moment try him and viſit him: It argues the great eſteem the Goldſmith hath of his Gold, when he will ſit by the Furnace himſelf, and order the Fire with his own hand: When he pries ſo often, and ſo curiouſly into the fining pot, to ſee that none of his precious Metal, upon which he ſets his heart, be loſt. Think it not then a debaſing to you to be ſo ften expoſed to Tryals: If God did not value ou highly, he would not try you ſo frequently: What would become of you, if your condition ere ſhould be more ſettled and quiet than now it s? I believe you find droſs enough in your hearts after all the fires into which God hath caſt you: Surely there is filth enough in the beſt of God's People to take all this: It may be a great deal more trouble than they have yet met with: We fancy it a brave life to live at eaſe, and if we meet with long reſpits and intervals of tryal than uſual, we are apt to ſay, We ſhall never be moved, as *David* did, *Pſal.* 30. 6. or we ſhall dye in our neſt as it is, *Job* 29. 18. our hard and difficult days are over; but woe to us if God ſhould give us the deſire of our hearts in this: See what the Temper of thoſe Mens ſpirits is, that meet with no changes, *Pſal.* 55. 19. *Becauſe they have no changes, therefore they fear not God*: O it's better to be preſerved ſweet in *brine*, than to rot in *honey*.

*Infer.* 3. *Thirdly, Let none boaſt in a carnal confidence of their own ſtrength and ſtability*; you are yet in a State of Tryal: Hitherto God hath kept you upright in all your Tryals, bleſs God but boaſt not: You are but feathers in the Wind of Temptation, if God leave you to your ſelves. *Peter* told Chriſt (and doubtleſs he ſpake no more than he honeſtly meant) *Though all men forſake thee yet will not I:* And you know what he did when the hour of his Tryal came: *Matth.* 26. 35. *Angels* left to themſelves have fallen: It's better be a *humble worm*, than a *proud Angel*.

Ah how many *Pendletons* will this profeſſing age ſhew, if once God bring us to the fiery Tryal? *Let him that thinks he ſtands take heed leſt he fall:* You have not yet reſiſted unto blood ſtriving againſt ſin: None ſtand upon firmer ground, than thoſe that ſee nothing in themſelves to ſtand upon: He that leans upon his own arm, uſually benumbs it, and makes it uſeleſs.

*Infer.* 4. *Fourthly*, Doth God kindle ſo many fires in *Sion*, and ſet his Furnaces in *Jeruſalem*, to diſcover and ſeparate the droſs from the Gold, *how contrary are thoſe men to God that allow, yea and prize the droſs of Hypocriſie which God hates, and ſtick not to make the holy God a patronizer and countenancer of it in the hearts and lives of men!*

It is amazing to read what *Popiſh* pens have impudently written about this matter: *Sylveſter* puts the queſtion, whether it be a Sin to make a falſe ſhew of *Sanctity*? and anſwers it thus: If it be for the honour of God, and profit of others, it is no ſin: Nay, they have a reverence for Hypocriſie as an holy Art. *Vincentius* ſpends a whole Chapter in commendation of the Hypocriſie of St. *Dominick*; and entitles it, *de ſancta ejus Hypocriſi* (*i. e.*) of the holy Hypocriſie of that Saint: Reckoning it among his commendations, that he had the art of diſſembling. And yet one peg higher, A Religious perſon (ſaith another) that feigns himſelf to have more holineſs than he hath, that others may be edified, ſins not but rather merits.

*A ſum. advi*
*ſimulatio.*
n. 4.

*Roſella in v.*
*Hypocriſis.*
n. 1.

Bluſh O Heavens! that ever ſuch factors for Hell ſhould open and vend ſuch ware as this in the publick Market, and invite the World to Hypocriſie, as that which makes for the Glory of God, the edification of Men, and a work meritorious in the Hypocrite himſelf. This is the doctrine of Devils indeed.

*Infer.* 5. *Fifthly*, If it be ſo, that all grace muſt come to the Teſt, and be tryed as Gold in the fire, even in this World: *How are all men concerned*

*cerned to lay a ſolid foundation at firſt, and throughly deliberate the terms upon which they cloſe with Chriſt, and engage in the profeſſion of his name! Which of you* ſaith *Chriſt, intending to build a Tower, ſitteth not down firſt, and counteth the coſt?* Luk. 14. 28. If ſome men had ſate down at firſt and pondered the conditions and terms of Chriſt, they had not ſate down now diſcouraged and tyred in the way. The Apoſtle *Paul* went to work at another rate: He accounted all but dung and droſs for Chriſt, *Phil.* 3. 8. and was of the ſame mind, when the actual Tryal came; for then he tells us, *he counted not his life dear unto him*, Acts 20. 24. And the Apoſtle *Peter* admoniſhes believers *not to think it ſtrange concerning the fiery Tryal which was to try them*, 1 Pet. 4. 21. *q. d.* Let none of theſe things be ſurpriſals to you, you were told before-hand what you muſt truſt to: Every Chriſtian muſt be a *Martyr*, at leaſt in the diſpoſition and reſolution of his heart.

O that men would ballance the advantages and diſadvantages of Religion, and throughly ponder the matter in their deepeſt thoughts: To the teſt you muſt come: The rain will fall, and the ſtorm beat upon your buildings, look carefully therefore to the foundations.

*Infer.* 6. *Sixthly* and Laſtly, *Learn from this point the unavoidableneſs of ſcandals and offences in the way of Religion*; for if there be a neceſſity of Tryal, there is alſo a neceſſity of Scandal. *It muſt needs be that offences come*, Luke 17. 1. Why muſt it needs be? The reaſon is evident, all muſt come to the Tryal, and all are not able to bear it. Our Lord tells us, *Matth.* 24. 8, 9, 10. of a day of great ſtraits and perplexity coming: *And then* (ſaith he) *ſhall many be offended*. The day of Tryal is the day of Scandal: By theſe offences ſome are put a ſearching themſelves, and ſome fall a cenſuring all others; but the holy God brings about his end both wayes, in them that are ſaved and in them that periſh.

## SECT. II.

WEll then, if it be ſo that all muſt into the furnace, let every man try his own work; Examine your ſelves, profeſſors, ſearch your Hearts, commune with your reins: Nothing more concerns you in all the World than this doth. O that you would be more in your Cloſets, and oftner upon your knees: O that you would look into the Bible, then into your hearts; & then to God, ſaying with *David*, *Search me O God and know my heart; prove me, and try my reins, and ſee if there be any way of iniquity in me:* Never did Religion thrive in the World ſince mens heads have been ſo over-heated with Notions and Controverſies, and their hearts ſo ſenſibly cooled in their Cloſet-work. I have elſe where more largely preſſed this duty upon the profeſſors of this generation, and thither ſhall refer the Reader for the preſent to ſee the neceſſity and importance of this work.

See my *Saint Indeed*, p. 191, 192, 193, *&c.*

Here I ſhall only urge the duty of ſelf-tryal by ſome preſſing Motives, and awakening Conſiderations.

*Motive* 1. And the firſt ſhall be, the exceeding difficulty of this work: Difficulty in ſome caſes may be a diſcouragement, but where the matter is of abſolute neceſſity, as it is here; nothing provokes more to diligence; *Strive* (ſaith our Lord) *to enter in at the ſtrait gate, for many will ſeek to enter in and ſhall not be able*, Luke 13. 24. A double difficulty is found attending this work of Self-tryal. Difficulty in bringing the heart to it, and difficulty in the right and ſucceſsful management of it: Who find it not hard to perſwade his heart to ſuch work as this? Nature declines it, fleſh and blood reliſh it not: It's one of the great Severities in Religion: 'Tis no eaſie thing to bring a man and his own heart together.

It is in this caſe as in the ſtudy of *Geography*, we are more inquiſitive to know, and delighted when we diſcover the the Rarities of forraign Countreys, and ſtrange things in the remote parts of the world; than thoſe of our own native Countrey. I fear there be many profeſſors of Religion that can ſpend day after day in hearing, and love to be diſputing fruitleſs controverſies, that never ſpent one day in ſearching what influence all thoſe Sermons they have heard, have had upon their hearts, or in rightly ſtating and determining that great Controverſie, in whoſe right and poſſeſſion their ſouls are, and which way they ſhall go aſſoon as death hath divided them from thoſe mortal bodyes; yea, I doubt many ſinful hours are ſpent in prying into, reporting and cenſuring the failings of others, and not one hour faithfully imployed in judging their own hearts before the Lord: O men had rather be about any other work than this: There's no pleaſure in it to the fleſh.

And yet how difficult ſoever it be to bring our hearts to the work, it's certainly much more difficult to manage it ſucceſsfully, and bring the great queſtion of our ſincerity to a clear reſult and iſſue. O how many upright hearts have ſate cloſe to this work many a Year, and lifted up many a cry to Heaven, and ſhed many a ſecret and undiſſembled Tear about it; and yet ſtill are in the dark, and their minds greatly perplext, and filled with fear about it: What would they not do, what would they not ſuffer? what pleaſant Enjoyment would they not gladly part with to arrive at the deſire of their Souls, the full aſſurance of their ſincerity! It was the ſaying of a pious Woman, I have born (ſaid ſhe) ſeven Children, and they have coſt me as dear as ever Children did coſt a Mother; yet would I be content to endure all that ſorrow over again, to be aſſured of the love of God to my Soul.

*Motive* 2. *Seccndly*, And as the work is full of difficulty, ſo the diſcovery of your ſincerity will be full of ſweetneſs, and joy unſpeakable: It will never repent you that you have prayed and mourned, that you have trembled and feared, that you have ſearched and tryed: Nay, it will never repent you that God hath tryed you by thouſands of ſharp Afflictions and deep ſufferings, if after all, your ſincerity may be fully cleared up to the ſatisfaction of your ſouls; for in the ſame day your ſincerity ſhall be cleared, your title to Chriſt will be made as clear to your Souls as your ſincerity is: You may then go to the promiſes boldly, and take your own Chriſt into the arms of your Faith and ſay, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his:* Yea you may be confident it ſhall be well with you in the Judgment of the great day, for *God will n* *caſt away the upright man,* Job 8. 20. if the word clear you now, it cannot condemn you then.

O what an eaſe is it to the Soul when the fears and doubts that hanged about it are gone! when a Man ſees what he is, and what he hath in Chriſt and the Promiſes; and what he hath to do; even to ſpend the time betwixt this and Heaven in admiring the Grace of God that hath delivered him from the ruining Miſtakes and Miſcarriages by which ſo great a part of the profeſſing World periſh to all Eternity.

*Motive* 3. *Thirdly*, The deep concernment of your Souls in the matter to be tryed, ſhould awaken you to the utmoſt diligence about it. The Tryals of men for their life, at humane bars, is but a trifle to this: 'Tis your eternal happineſs that ſtands or falls with your ſincerity.

It's ſaid in the Tryal of opinions, that if a man ſuperſtruct hay or ſtubble upon the foundation, he ſhall ſuffer loſs, yet he himſelf may be ſaved, 1 *Cor.* 3. 12. But if Hypocriſie be in the foundation, there is no ſuch relief, there is no poſſibility of ſalvation in that caſe.

Ah *Reader*, thou muſt be caſt for ever according to the Integrity or Hypocriſie of thy heart with God. Summon in then all the Powers of thy ſoul, bring thy thoughts as cloſe as it is poſſible to bring them to this matter: If there be any Subject of Conſideration able to drink up the ſpirits of man, here it is: Never was time put to an higher improvement, never were thoughts ſpent upon a more important buſineſs than this is: Happy is the man that reſcues the Years, Months, Days, yea, the very Moments of his life from other imployments, to conſecrate them unto this ſolemn, awful, and moſt important buſineſs.

*Motive* 4. *Fourthly*, How evidential will it be of your ſincerity, when you are willing to come to the Tryal of your own hearts!

Suppoſe your doubts and fears ſhould in ſome degree remain with you, yet in this you may take ſome comfort, that if Hypocriſie be in your heart, it is not there by conſent: You are not loth to riſe and come to the Tryal, becauſe like *Rachel* you ſit upon your *Idols*: Certainly it is a good ſign thy heart is right, when it is filled with ſo much fear leſt it ſhould be falſe: You know all the *Diſciples* ſaid, Maſter, *Is it I?* before *Judas* who was the *Traytor* ſpake a word. *Laſt of all* (ſaith the Text) *Judas ſaid, Is it I?* Our willingneſs to be tryed, is a good ſign that the deſire of our Soul is to be right with God.

*Motive* 5. *Fifthly*, Conclude it to be your great advantage to be throughly tryed, whatever you be found to be in the Tryal: If you be found ſincere, you are richly rewarded for all your pains and labour: Never did that man repent of digging and toyling, that after all hit upon the rich vein that he digged for: What is a vein of Gold to a vein of ſincerity!

If upon ſearch you find the contrary, a falſe Hypocritical unſound heart, yet in that very ſad diſcovery you meet with the greateſt advantage that ever you had in your lives for ſalvation. This diſcovery is your great advantage: For now your vain Confidence being over-turned, and your ungrounded hopes deſtroyed; you lye open to the ſtroke of a deep and effectual conviction of your ſin and miſery, which is the introductive Mercy to all other Mercies to your Souls; and ſurely till you come to that, to give up your falſe hopes, and quit your vain pretenſions; there is no hope of you. Chriſt told the *Phariſees*, Mat. 21. 31. *Publicans* and Harlots enter into the Kingdom of Heaven before you: *Publicans* were the worſt ſort of *men*, and *Harlots* the worſt ſort of *women*, and yet they ſtood in a fairer way for Heaven than the Hypocritical *Phariſees*, becauſe conviction had eaſier acceſs to their conſciences: They had not thoſe defences and pleas of duty and ſtrictneſs to ward off the word, that the ſelf-couzening *Phariſees* had.

I may ſay of your vain and groundleſs hopes, as Chriſt in another Senſe ſaid to the Officers that came to ſeize him in the Garden: *If you ſeek me, let theſe go their way.* So 'tis here, if you expect *Chriſt* and ſalvation by him; let your vain confidences go their way: Away with your Maſques and Vizards, if ever you expect to ſee Chriſt. O 'tis your happineſs to have all theſe things ſtript off, and your nakedneſs and poverty diſcovered, that you may be rich, as the Text ſpeaks.

*Motive* 6. *Sixthly* Conſider how near the day of Death and Judgment approach you. Oh theſe are ſearching days wherein you cannot be hid: Will your Conſciences, think you, be put off in a dying day as eaſily as they are now? No, no; you know they will not.

I have heard of a good Man that conſumed not only the greateſt part of the day, but a very conſiderable part of the night alſo in Prayer, to the great weakening of his body; and being asked by a Relation why he did ſo, and prayed to favour himſelf, he returned this anſwer, *O I muſt dye, I muſt dye*: Plainly intimating, that ſo great is the concernment of dying in a clear aſſured condition, that it's richly worth the expence of all our time and ſtrength to ſecure it.

You know alſo that *after Death the Judgment*, *Heb.* 9. 27. you are haſtening to the Judgment of the great and terrible God. Death will put you into his ballance to be weighed exactly: And what gives the Soul a louder call to ſearch it ſelf with all diligence, whileſt it ſtands at the door of Eternity, and its turn is not yet come to go before that awful Tribunal? O that theſe conſiderations might have place upon our hearts!

# CHAP. XII.

*Containing divers Helps for the clearing of Sincerity, and diſcovery of Hypocriſie.*

## SECT. I.

YOU ſee of what importance the duty of ſelf-examination is, how many things put a neceſſity and a ſolemnity upon that work. Now in the cloſe of all, I would offer you ſome Helps for the due management thereof, that is as far as I can carry it; the Lord perſwade your hearts to the diligent and faithful Application and uſe of them. The general Rules to clear ſincerity are theſe that follow.

## Rule 1.

*We may not preſently conclude we are in the ſtate of Hypocriſie, becauſe we find ſome Workings of it, and tendencies to it in our ſpirits:* The beſt gold hath ſome droſs and alloy in it. Hypocriſie is a weed naturally ſpringing in all ground, the beſt heart is not perfectly clear or free of it: It may be we are ſtumbled when we feel ſome workings or grudgings of this diſeaſe in our ſelves, and looking into ſuch Scriptures as theſe, John. 1. 47. *Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom there is no guile:* and Pſal. 32. 1. *Bleſſed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whoſe ſpirit there is no guile.*

This I ſay may ſtumble ſome upright ſoul, not underſtanding in what an allayed and qualified ſenſe thoſe Scriptures are to be underſtood: For by a *Spirit without guile*, is not underſtood a perſon abſolutely free from all deceitfulneſs, and falſeneſs of heart; this was the ſole *prerogative* of the *Lord Jeſus*, who was ſeparated from ſinners, in whoſe mouth was no guile found: In whom the Prince of this World in all his tryals and attempts upon him found nothing: But we muſt underſtand it of reigning and allowed Hypocriſie: There is no ſuch guile in any of the Saints: Diſtinguiſh the preſence from the predominance of Hypocriſie, and the doubt is reſolved.

## Rule 2.

*Every true ground of humiliation for ſin, is not a ſufficient ground for doubting and queſtioning our eſtate and condition.*

There be many more things to *humble* us upon the account of our *infirmity*, than there are to *ſtumble* us upon the account of our *integrity*: It is the ſin and affliction of ſome good ſouls to call their condition in queſtion, upon evey ſlip and failing in the courſe of their obedience. This is the way to debar our ſelves from all the peace and comfort of the Chriſtian life: We find that *Joſeph* was once minded to put away *Mary* his Eſpouſed Wife; not Knowing that the holy thing which was conceived in her was by the Holy Ghoſt. It is the ſin of Hypocrites to take *Braſs* for *Gold*, and the folly of Saints to call their *gold*, *braſs*: Be as ſevere to your ſelves as you will, always provided you be juſt: *There is that maketh himſelf rich, and yet hath nothing; And there is that maketh himſelf poor, and yet hath great riches*, Prov. 13. 7. *Hiram* called the Cities *Solomon* gave him *Cabul*, dirty, for they pleaſed him not, 1 *Kings* 9. 13. 'Tis but an ill requital, an ungreateful return to God, for the beſt of mercies, to undervalue them in our hearts, and be ready upon all occaſions to put them away as worth nothing.

## Rule 3.

*A ſtronger propenſion in our Nature, and more frequent incidence in our practice to one ſin than another, doth not preſently infer our hypocriſie*, and the unſoundneſs of our hearts in Religion. 'Tis true, every Hypocrite hath ſome way of Wickedneſs: Some *peccatum in deliciis*, iniquity that he delights in, and rolls as a ſweet morſel under his tongue; ſome luſt that he is not willing to part with, nor can endure that the knife of mortification ſhould touch it, and this undoubtedly argues the inſincerity and rottenneſs of his heart: And it is true alſo, that the nature and conſtitution of the moſt ſanctified man inclines him rather to one ſin than to another, though he allow himſelf in none; yea, though he ſet himſelf more Watchfully againſt that ſin than another, yet he may ſtill have more trouble and vexation, more temptation and defilement from it than any other.

As every man hath his proper gift, one after this manner and another after that, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Cor.* 7. 7. So every man hath his proper ſin alſo, one after this manner, and another after that: For it is with original ſin, as it is with the juice or ſap of the Earth, which though it be the common matter of all kinds of fruits, yet it is ſpecificated according to the different ſorts of plants and ſeeds it nouriſhes: In one it becomes an *Apple*, In another a *Cherry*, &c. Juſt ſo it is in Original Corruption, which is turned into this or that Temptation and ſin, according to this or that conſtitution or employment it finds us in: One it's Paſſion, in another Luſt, in a third Covetouſneſs, in a fourth Levity, and ſo on. Now I ſay the frequent aſſaults of this ſin, provided we indulge it not, but by ſetting double guards labour to keep our ſelves from our *own iniquity*, as *David* did, *Pſal.* 18. 23. will not infer the hypocriſie of our hearts.

## Rule 4.

*A greater backwardneſs and indiſpoſedneſs to one duty rather than another, doth not conclude the heart to be unſound and falſe with God, provided we do not inwardly diſlike and diſapprove any duty of Religion, or except againſt it in our agreement with Chriſt, but that it riſeth meerly from the preſent weakneſs and diſtemper we labour under.*

There be ſome duties in Religion, as ſufferings for Chriſt, bearing ſharp reproofs for ſin, &c. that even an upright heart, under a preſent diſtemper may find a great deal of backwardneſs and lothneſs to; yet ſtill he conſents to the Law that it is good, is troubled that he cannot comply more cheerfully with his duty: And deſires to ſtand compleat in all the will of God: Perfection is his aim, and imperfections are his ſorrows.

Some Chriſtians have much ado to bring their hearts to fixed ſolemn Meditation, their hearts fly off from it, but this is their burden that it ſhould be ſo with them. Truth is, it is a very dangerous ſign of Hypocriſie when a mans zeal runs out in one channel of obedience only, and he hath not a reſpect to all Gods Commandments; as *Phyſicians* obſerve, the ſweating of one part of the body when all the reſt are cold, is *Symptomatical*, and argues an ill habit: But whileſt the ſoul heartily approves all the will of God, and ſincerely deſires to come up to it, and mourns for its backwardneſs and deadneſs to this or that duty, and this is not fixed, but occaſional under ſome preſent indiſpoſition, out of which the ſoul riſeth by the ſame degrees as ſanctification riſeth in him, and the Lord comes in with renewed ſtrength upon him; this I ſay may conſiſt and is very ordinarily found to be the caſe of upright-hearted ones.

### Rule 5.

*The glances of the eye at ſelf ends in duties, whileſt ſelf is not the weight that moves the wheels, the principal end and deſign we drive at, and whileſt thoſe glances are corrected and Mourned for ; do not conclude the heart to be unſound and Hypocritical in Religion* : For even among the moſt deeply ſanctified, few can keep their eye ſo ſteady and fixed with pure and unmixed reſpects to the glory of God, but that there will be ( Alas too frequently ) ſome by-ends Inſinuating and creeping into the heart. Theſe like the fowls ſeize upon the ſacrifice, let the ſoul take what pains it can to fray them away. It's well that our High-Prieſt bears the iniquities of our holy things for us: *Peter* had too much regard to the pleaſing of men, and did not walk with that upright foot towards the Gentile Chriſtians and the believing Jews in the matter of liberty as became him, *Gal.* 2. 13, 14. For which, as *Paul* ſaith, he ought to be blamed, and did blame him ; but yet ſuch a failing as that in the end of his duty did not condemn him. In publick performances there may be too much vanity, in works of charity too much oſtentation, theſe are all workings of Hypocriſie in us, and matters of Humiliation to us ; but whileſt they are diſallowed, corrected and mourned over, are conſiſtent with integrity.

### Rule 6.

*The doubts and fears that hang upon and perplex our ſpirits about the hypocriſie of our hearts, do not conclude that therefore we are what we fear our ſelves to be.* God will not condemn every one for an hypocrite that ſuſpects, yea, or charges himſelf with Hypocriſie. Holy *David* thought his heart was not right with God, after that great ſlip of his in the matter of *Uriah*, and therefore begs of God to renew a right ſpirit in him, *Pſal.* 51. 10, 11, 12. His integrity was indeed wounded, and he thought deſtroyed by that fall.

Holy Maſter *Bradford* ſo vehemently doubted the ſincerity of his heart, that he ſubſcribed ſome of his Letters ( as Maſter *Fox* tells us ) *John Bradford the Hypocrite, a very painted Sepulchre:* And yet in ſo ſaying he utterly miſjudged the ſtate and temper of his own ſoul.

## SECT. II.

WELL then, let not the upright be unjuſt to themſelves in cenſuring their own hearts: They are bad enough, but let us not make them worſe than they are, but thankfully own and acknowledge the leaſt degrees of grace and integrity in them: And poſſibly our uprightneſs might be ſooner diſcovered to us, if in a due compoſure of ſpirit, we would ſit down and attend the true anſwers of our own hearts to ſuch queſtions as theſe are.

### *Queſtion* 1.

Do I make the approbation of God or the applauſe of men the very end and main deſign of my Religious performances ; according to 1 *Theſ.* 2. 4. *Col.* 3. 23? Will the acceptation of my duties with men ſatisfie me, whether God accept my duties and perſon or not?

### *Queſt.* 2

Is it the reproach and ſhame that attends ſin at preſent, and the danger and miſery that will follow it hereafter, that reſtrains me from the Commiſſion of it ? Or is it the fear of God in my ſoul, and the hatred I bear to ſin as it is ſin ? according to *Pſal.* 19. 12. and *Pſal.* 119. 113.

### *Queſt.* 3.

Can I truly and heartily rejoyce to ſee Gods work carried on in the world, and his glory promoted by other hands, though I have no ſhare in the credit and honour of it, as *Paul* did? *Philip.* 1. 18.

### *Queſt.* 4.

Is there no duty in Religion ſo full of difficulty and ſelf-denyal, but I deſire to comply with it ? And is all the holy and good will of God acceptable to my ſoul, though I cannot riſe up with like readineſs to the performance of all duties ; according to that pattern, *Pſal.* 119. 6 ?

### *Queſt.* 5.

Am I ſincerely reſolved to Follow Chriſt and holyneſs at all ſeaſons, however the aſpects of the times may be upon Religion ? Or do I bear my ſelf ſo warily, and covertly as to ſhun all hazards for Religion : Having a ſecret reſerve in my heart to launch out no farther then I may return with ſafety ; contrary to the practice and reſolution of upright ſouls ? *Pſal.* 116. 3. *Pſal.* 44. 18, 19. *Rev.* 22. 11.

### *Queſt.* 6.

Do I make no Conſcience of committing ſecret Sins, or neglecting ſecret duties ? or am I conſcientious both in the one and other, according to the rules and patterns of integrity? *Mat.* 6. 5, 6. *Pſal.* 19. 12.

A few ſuch Queſtions ſolemnly propounded to our own hearts, in a calm and ſerious hour, would ſound them, and diſcover much of their ſincerity towards the Lord.

## SECT. III.

AND as upright hearts are too apt to apply to themſelves the threats and miſeries of Hypocrites, ſo Hypocrites on the contrary, are as apt to catch hold of the promiſes and priviledges pertaining to believers.

To detect therefore the ſoul-damning miſtakes of ſuch deceived ſouls, O that theſe following Rules might be ſtudied and faithfully applyed to their conviction, and recovery!

### Rule 1.

*It is not enough to clear a man from Hypocriſie, that* *he knows not himſelf to be an Hypocrite.* All Hypocrites are not deſigning Hypocrites; they deceive themſelves, as well as others: *Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, have we not Propheſied in thy Name?* &c. Mat. 7. 22. Hell will be a meer ſurprizal to multitudes of Profeſſors: A man may live and dye in a blind ungrounded confidence of his ſafe condition, and not fear his ruine, till he begin to feel it.

### Rule 2.

*Zeal and forwardneſs in the Cauſe of God, and for the Reformation of his Worſhip, will not clear a man from the danger of Hypocriſie. Jehu* was a zealous *reformer*, and yet but a painted *Sepulchre.* In the Year 1549. Reformation grew ſo much in reputation even among the *Nobles* and *Gentry* of *Germany*, that many of them cauſed theſe five letters, *V. D. M. I. Æ.* being the initial letters of theſe words, *Verbum Domini Manet In Æternum:* (i. e.) *The Word of the Lord abideth for ever*, to be wrought or embroidered, or ſet in plates, ſome upon their Cloaks, and others upon the ſleeves of their Garments; to ſhew to all the World, (ſaith my Author) that forſaking all *Popiſh* Traditions they would now cleave to the pure doctrine and diſcipline of the Eternal Word.

*John Wolfe, lect. memor. To.* 2. *ad An.* 1549.

And no doubt they would have been as good as their word, if what was *embroidered* on their *Cloaks*, had been engraven on their hearts; but *Come ſee my zeal*, marrs all.

### Rule 3.

*It is no ſufficient evidence of a mans own integrity, that he hates Hypocriſie in another:* For as one proud man may hate another, and he that's Covetous himſelf, will be apt to cenſure another for being ſo; (Luſts may be contrary to one another, as well as all of them contrary to Grace) ſo may an Hypocrite loath that in another, which yet he alloweth in himſelf: Nay, 'tis the policy of ſome to declaim againſt the Hypocriſie of others, thereby to hide their own. *Hypocrites* are none of the moſt modeſt cenſurers of others, *Pſal.* 35. 16. A ſalt jeſt ſeaſoned their meat.

### Rule 4.

*The meer performance of private duties, will not clear a man from Hypocriſie*; the influence of education, or ſupport of reputation, or the impulſe of a convinced Conſcience may induce a man to it; and yet all this while his heart may not be carried thither with hungry and thirſty deſires after God: It is not the matter of any duty that diſtinguiſhes the ſound, and unſound profeſſor; but the motives, deſigns, and ends of the ſoul in them.

### Rule 5.

*The vogue and Opinion you have got among Chriſtians, of your ſincerity, will not be ſufficient to clear you from the danger of Hypocriſie.* Chriſt tells the Angel of *Sardis*, Rev. 3. 1. *Thou haſt a name that thou liveſt, and art dead.* The fall of *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, could never have ſhaken the Faith of the Saints as it did, had they not had great credit in the Church, and been men of renown for piety among them.

### Rule 6.

*Your reſpects and love to them that are the ſincere and upright ſervants of God, will not clear you from the danger of being Hypocrites your ſelves:* For the bare loving of a Chriſtian is not *Characteriſtical* and evidential of a mans own Chriſtianity, except he love him, *qua talis*, as he is a Chriſtian, or as he belongs to Chriſt: And ſo his ſincerity becomes the attractive of thy affection. There be a thouſand by conſiderations and reſpects that may kindle a mans love to the Saints, beſides their integrity.

## SECT. IV.

WELL then, if thou wouldſt indeed ſee the unſoundneſs of thy own heart, propound ſuch heart ſounding Queſtions as theſe to thy ſelf.

### *Queſt.* 1.

Do I engage my heart to approach unto God in the courſe of my duties? or do I go in the round of duties, taking no heed to my heart in them? If ſo, compare this Symptom of thy Hypocriſie with that in 2 *King.* 10. 3. and that *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32.

### *Queſt.* 2.

Am I not ſway'd and moved by ſelf-intereſt and carnal reſpects in the ways of Religion, the accommodation of ſome worldly intereſt, or getting a name and Reputation of Godlineſs? If ſo, how apparently do the ſame Symptoms of Hypocriſie appear upon my ſoul, which did upon *Judas, Joh.* 12. 6. and 2 *Kings* 9. 13, 14.

### *Queſt.* 3.

Have I not ſome ſecret reſerves in my heart, notwithſtanding that face and appearance of zeal which I put on? Certainly if there be any ſin that I cannot part with, any ſuffering for Chriſt which I reſolve againſt in my heart: I am none of his *diſciple*, my heart is not right with God, the Searcher of hearts himſelf being Judge, *Luke* 14. 26, 27.

### *Queſt.* 4.

What Conſcience do I make of ſecret Sins? Do I mourn for a vain heart, wandering thoughts, ſpiritual deadneſs? And do I conſcientiouſly abſtain from the practice of ſecret Sins, whe there is no danger of diſcovery, no fear of forfeiting my reputation by it? Is it God's Eye, o man's that awes me from commiſſion of ſin? Certainly, if I allow my ſelf in ſecret Sins; I am no of the Number of God's upright People; whoſ Spirits are of a contrary temper to mine, *Pſal* 119. 113. and *Pſal.* 12. 12.

## SECT. V.

I Will ſhut up all with five or ſix concluding Counſels, ( which the Lord impreſs upon the heart of him that writes, and thoſe that ſhall read them ) to preſerve and antidote the ſoul againſt the dangerous inſinuation and Leven of Hypocriſie.

### Counſel 1.

*Intreat the Lord night and day for a renewed and right Spirit:* All the Helps and Directions in the World will not antidote and preſerve you from Hypocriſie, nothing will be found able to keep you right, till ſanctification have firſt ſet you right, *Ezek.* 36. 27. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes.*

A *Bowle* may keep by a ſtrait line, ſo long as the impreſſed force of the hand that delivered it remains ſtrong upon it; but as that wears off, ſo its motion fails; and its own *Bias* ſwayes and turns it: A fright of Conſcience, a pang of warm affection, or the influence of ſome great Example, or a good Education may influence an unrenewed ſoul; and puſh it on in the way of Religion for a ſeaſon; but the heart ſo influenced muſt and will return to its own natural courſe again. And I think there wants nothing but time, or a ſuitable Temptation to diſcover the true Temper of many a profeſſours ſpirit; pray therefore as that holy Man did, *Pſal.* 119. 80. *Let my heart be ſound in thy Statutes, that I be not aſhamed.*

### Counſel 2.

*Always ſuſpect and examine your Ends in what you do:* Sincerity and Hypocriſie lye much in your ends and deſigns: As they are, ſo are you. The intentions of the heart lye deep. A man may do the ſame action to an holy end, and his perſon and ſervice be accepted with God; which another doing for a corrupt end, it may be reckoned his ſin; and both his perſon and ſervice be abhorred by the Lord: We find two men riding in one Chariot, and both of them concerned in the ſame Expedition; *Jehu* the Son of *Nimſhi*, and *Jonadab* the Son of *Rechab*, 2 *Kings* 10. 15. 23. But though the work they engaged in was one and the ſame, yet the different ends they aimed at, made the ſame action an excellent duty in *Jonadab*, and an act of vile Hypocriſie in *Jehu*: *Idem quod duo faciunt, non eſt idem:* It was the ſaying of a good ſoul, commended for a good action; The work indeed is good, but I fear the Ends of it. Self-ends are creeping and inſinuating things into the beſt actions.

### Counſel 3.

*Scare your ſelves with the daily fears of the ſin that is in, and the miſery that will follow Hypocriſie:* Look upon it as the moſt odious ſin in the eyes of God, and men: To want holineſs is bad enough, but to ſimulate and pretend it when we have it not, is double impiety: To make Religion, the moſt glorious thing in the World, a meer ſtirrup to preferment, and a covert to wickedneſs; Oh how vile a thing is it! God made Chriſt a *Sacrifice* for ſin, and the Hypocrite will make him a *Cloak* for ſin.

And as to the puniſhments that follow it, they are ſuitable to the Nature of the Sin; for as Hypocriſie is out of meaſure ſinful, ſo the reward and puniſhment of it, will be out of meaſure dreadful. *Mat.* 24. 51. *He ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint him his portion with Hypocrites, there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.*

### Counſel 4.

*Be daily at work in the mortification of thoſe Luſts that breed Hypocriſie.* It's plain without much ſifting, that pride, vain glory, ſelf-love, and a worldly heart are the ſeeds out of which this curſed plant ſprings up in the ſouls of men. Dig but to the Root, and you ſhall certainly find theſe things there; and till the Lord help you to kill and mortifie theſe, Hypocriſie will ſpring up in all your duties to God, and in all your converſes with men.

### Counſel 5.

*Attend the native voice of your own conſciences in the day of ſickneſs, fear or trouble, and take ſpecial notice of its checks, or upbraidings; which like a ſtitch in your ſide will gird you at ſuch times:* Commonly in that lyes your greateſt danger: Beware of that evil which Conſcience brands and marks at ſuch times, whether it be your living in the practice of ſome ſecret ſin, or in the neglect of ſome known duty: Theſe frights of Conſcience mark out the corruption wherein your danger moſtly lyes.

### Counſel 6.

*Let us all that profeſs Religion be uniform and ſteady in the profeſſion and practice of it, without politick reſerves, and by ends.*

O take heed of this *Laodicean* neutrality and indifferency, which Chriſt hates: Be ſure your ground be good, and then be ſure you ſtand your ground. The Religion of Time-ſervers is but Hypocriſie: They have ſluices in their Conſciences which they can open or ſhut as occaſion requires: Every *Fox* will have at leaſt two holes to his Den, that if one be ſtopt, he may eſcape at the other. The Hypocrite poyſeth himſelf ſo evenly in a mediocrity, that as it was ſaid of *Baldwin*, Let *Anthony* win, let *Auguſtus* win, all is one: So let *Chriſt* win, or let *Antichriſt* win, he hopes to make every wind that can blow, ſerviceable to waft him to the port of his own Intereſt.

The Hypocrite hath always more of the *Moon* than of the *Sun*; litle light, many ſpots and frequent Changes: It's eaſier to him to *bow* to the Croſs, than to *bear* the Croſs; to ſin, than to ſuffer.

Our own Story tells us of a poor ſimple Woman that lived both in the Reigns of Q. *Mary*, and Q. *Elizabeth*; and would conſtantly ſay her prayers both in *Latine* and *Engliſh*, that ſhe might be ſure to pleaſe one ſide or other; and let God, ſaid ſhe, take which likes him beſt: What is noted as an act of ridiculous ſimplicity in her, the time ſerving Hypocrite accounts a point of deep policy in himſelf.

The times under *Diocleſian*, were Pagan; under *Conſtantine*, *Chriſtian*; under *Conſtantius*, *Arian*;

under *Julian*, *Apoſtate*; and under *Jovian*, *Chriſtian* again: And all this within the ſpace of ſeventy Years, the age of one man. O what ſhifting, and ſhuffling was there among the men of that generation! The changes of weather ſhew the unſoundneſs of mens bodies, and the changes of times, the unſoundneſs of their Souls.

Chriſtian, if ever thou wilt manifeſt and maintain thine integrity, be a man but of one deſign, and be ſure that be an honeſt and good deſign, to ſecure Heaven whatever becomes of Earth: To hold faſt integrity, whatever thou art forced to let go for its ſake.

Take heed of pious frands: Certainly it was the *Devil* that firſt married thoſe two words together, for they never did nor can agree betwixt themſelves, nor was ever ſuch a marriage made in Heaven.

Never ſtudy to model Religion and the exerciſes thereof in a conſiſtency with, or ſubſerviency to your fleſhly intereſts: If your Religion be but a mock Religion, your reward ſhall be but a mock Heaven, that is, a real Hell.

O the Vanity and Inutility of theſe Projects and deſigns! Men ſtrive to caſt themſelves into ſuch modes, and ſtint themſelves to ſuch meaſures of Religion, as they think will beſt promote, or ſecure their earthly intereſts: But it often falls out contrary to their expectation, their deep policies are ridiculous follies, they become the grief and ſhame of their friends, and the ſcorn and ſong of their Enemies. And often it fares with them, as with him that placed himſelf in the middle of the Table, where he could neither reach the diſh above him, nor that below him, *Eſuriunt medii*, &c, and (which is the very beſt of it) if earthly intereſt be accommodated by ſinful neutrality, and a *Laodicean* indifferency in Religion, yet no good man ſhould once feel a temptation to embrace it, except he think what is wanting in the ſweetneſs of his ſleep, may be fully recompenſed to him by the ſtatelineſs of his bed, and richer furniture of his Chamber; I mean that a fuller and higher condition in the World, can make him amends for the loſs of his inward peace, and the quiet repoſe of a good conſcience: Theſe by-ends and ſelf-intereſts, are the little paſſages through which Hypocriſie creeps in upon the Profeſſors of Religion.

O let this be your rejoycing, which was *Paul's*, *The Teſtimony of your Conſcience, that in all ſincerity and godly ſimplicity, not in fleſhly wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, you have had your Converſations in this World*, 2 Cor. 1. 12.

Let that be your daily Prayer and Cry to Heaven, which was *David's*, Pſal. 25. 21. *Let integrity and uprightneſs preſerve me, for I wait on thee.*

## Counſel 7.

*Keep your hearts day and night under the awe of Gods all-ſeeing Eye:* Remember he beholds all your ways, and ponders all your thoughts; how covertly ſoever Hypocriſie may be carryed for a time, all muſt and will out at laſt, *Luke* 12. 3. Secreſie is the main inducement to Hypocriſie, but it will fall out with the Hypocrite, as it did with *Ottocar* the King of *Bohemia*, who refuſed to do homage to *Rodolphus* the *Emperor*, till at laſt chaſtiſed with War, he was content to do him homage privately in a Tent: But the Tent was ſo contrived by the *Emperours* ſervants, that by drawing one Cord it was taken all away; and ſo *Ottocar* preſented on his knees doing homage in view of three Armies.

*Reader*, Awe thy Heart with God's Eye, know that he will bring *every ſecret thing into Judgment.* Thus did *Job*, and it preſerved him, *Job* 31. 1. 4. Thus did *David*, and it preſerved him, *Pſal.* 18. 21, 22, 23. Thus do thou alſo, and it will preſerve thee blameleſs and without guile to the day of Chriſt.

# A TOKEN for MOURNERS:

OR,

*The Advice of Chriſt* to a *Diſtreſſed Mother*, bewailing the Death of her *Dear* and *Only Son.* Wherein, The Boundaries of Sorrow are duly fixed, Exceſſes reſtrained, the Common Pleas anſwered, and divers Rules for the Support of God's Afflicted Ones preſcribed.

## *The* EPISTLE Dedicatory.

To his dearly beloved Brother and Siſter, Mr. *J. C.* and Mrs. *E. C.* the Author wiſheth Grace, Mercy and Peace.

Dear Friends,

T*HE double Tye of Nature and Grace, beſide the many endearing Paſſages that for ſo many Years have linked and glewed our Affections ſo intimately, cannot but beget a tender ſimpathy in me with you, under all your Troubles; and make me ſay of every affliction which befals you,* half s mine. *I find it is with our Affections, as with the ſtrings of Muſical Inſtruments exactly ſet at the ſame height, if one be* touched, *the other* trembles, *though it be at ſome diſtance.*

*Our* Affections *are one, and ſo in a great meaſure have been our* Afflictions *alſo. You cannot forget that in the Years lately paſt, the Almighty viſited my Tabernacle with the Rod, and in one Year, cut off from it the Root, and the Branch, the tender Mother, and the only Son. What the effects of thoſe* Strokes, *or rather of my own unmortified* Paſſions *were, I have* felt, *and you and others have* heard. *Surely* I was a Bullock unaccuſtomed to the Yoke. *Yea, I may ſay with them, Lam.* 3. 19, 20. Remembring mine affliction and my miſery, the wormwood and the gall, my ſoul hath them ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled in me.

*I dare not ſay that ever I felt my Heart diſcontentedly riſing and ſwelling againſt* God; *no, I could ſtill juſtifie him, when I moſt ſenſibly ſmarted by his Hand: If he had plunged me into a Sea of Sorrow, yet I could ſay in all that Sea of* Sorrow, *there is not a drop of* Injuſtice: *But it was the over-heating, and over-acting of my fond and unmortified Affections and Paſſions that made ſo ſad Impreſſions upon my Body, and caſt me under thoſe Diſtempers which ſoon imbitterred all my remaining Comforts to me.*

*It was my earneſt Deſire ſo ſoon as I had Strength and Opportunity for ſo great a Journey, to viſit you; that ſo (if the Lord had pleas'd) I might both refreſh, and be refreſhed by you, after all my ſad and diſconſolate Dayes. And you cannot imagine what Content and Pleaſure I projected in that Viſit! but it proved to us (as all other Comforts of the ſame kind ordinarily do) more in* Expectation, *than in* Fruition: *For how ſoon after our joyful Meeting and Embraces, did the Lord over-caſt and darken our Day, by ſending Death into your Tabernacle,* to take away the Deſire of your Eyes with a Stroke! *to crop off that ſweet and only Bud from which we promiſed our ſelves ſo much Comfort. But no more of that; I fear I am gone too far already. It is not my Deſign to exaſperate your Troubles, but to heal them; and for that purpoſe have I ſent you theſe Papers, which I hope may be of uſe both to you and many others in your Condition, ſince they are the After-Fruits of my own Troubles; Things that I commended not to you from another Hand, but which I have (in ſome meaſure) proved and taſted in my own Tryals.*

*But I will not hold you longer here. I have only a few things to deſire for and from you, and I have done.*

*The Things I deſire, are*

Firſt, *That you will not be too haſty to get off the Yoke which God hath put upon your Neck. Remember when your Child was in the Womb, neither of you deſired it ſhould be delivered thence, till God's appointed time was fully come; and now that you travail again with Sorrow for its death, O deſire not to be delivered from your Sorrows one moment before God's time for your deliverance be fully come alſo. Let Patience have its perfect Work; that Comfort which comes in God's way and ſeaſon, will ſtick by you, and do you good indeed.*

Secondly, *I deſire, that though you and your Affections had a ſad* Meeting, *yet you and they may have a comfortable* Parting. *If they effect that upon your Hearts which God ſent them for, I doubt not but you will give them a fair Teſtimony when they go off.*

*If they obtain God's Bleſſing upon them in their* Operation, *ſurely they will have your Bleſſing too at their* Valediction. *And what you entertained with* Fear, *you will diſmiſs with* Praiſe. *How* *ſweet is it to hear the afflicted Soul ſay, when God is looſing his Hands,* It's good for me that I have been Afflicted.

Thirdly, *I heartily wiſh, that theſe ſearching Afflictions may make the moſt ſatisfying Diſcoveries, that you may now ſee more of the evil of Sin, the vanity of the Creature, and the fulneſs of Chriſt, than ever you yet ſaw. Afflictions are Searchers, and put the Soul upon ſearching and trying its ways,* Lam. 3. 14. *When our Sin finds us out by Affliction, happy are we, if by the light of Affliction we find out Sin. Bleſſed is the Man whom God chaſteneth, and teacheth out of his Law,* Pſal. 94. 12. *There are unſeen Cauſes many times of our Troubles; you have an Advantage now to ſift out the Seeds and Principles from which they ſpring.*

Fourthly, *I wiſh that all the Love and Delight you beſtowed on your little One, may now be placed to your greater Advantage upon Jeſus Chriſt; and that the Stream of your Affection to him may be ſo much the ſtronger, as there are now fewer Chanels for it to be divided into. If God will not have any part of your Happineſs, to lie in Children, then let it wholly lie in himſelf. If the Jealouſie of the Lord hath removed that which drew away too much of your Heart from him, and hath ſpoken by this Rod, ſaying,* Stand aſide, Child, thou art in my way, and filleſt more room in thy Parents Hearts than belongs to thee. *O then deliver up all to him, and ſay, Lord, take the whole Heart intirely and undividedly to thy ſelf. Henceforth let there be no parting, ſharing or dividing of the Affections betwixt God and the Creature, let all the Streams meet and centre in thee only.*

Fifthly, *That you may be ſtrengthned with all might in the Inner-Man to all Patience, that the Peace of God may keep your Hearts and Minds. Labour to bring your Hearts to a meek ſubmiſſion to the Rod of your Father.* We had Fathers of the Fleſh who corrected us, and we gave them Reverence, ſhall we not much more be in ſubjection to the Father of Spirits and live? *Is it comely for Children to conteſt and ſtrive with their Father! or is it the way to be freed from the Yoke by ſtrugling under it! O that your Hearts might be in a like frame with his that ſaid, Lord, thou ſhalt* beat *and I will* bear. *It was a good Obſervation that one made.* Anima ſedendo & quieſcendo fit ſapiens. *The Soul grows wiſe by ſitting ſtill and quiet under the Rod. And the Apoſtle calls thoſe excellent Fruits which the Saints gather from their ſanctified Afflictions,* The peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs, *Heb.* 12. 11.

Laſtly, *My Heart's Deſire and Prayer to God for you is, that you may die daily to all viſible Enjoyments, and by theſe frequent Converſes with Death in your Family, you may be prepared for your own Change and Diſſolution when it ſhall come.*

*O, Friends! How many Graves have you and I ſeen opened for our dear Relations? How oft hath Death come up into your Windows, and ſummoned the Delight of your Eyes? It is but a little while and we ſhall go to them; we and they are diſtinguiſhed but by ſhort Intervals.*

Tranſivere patres, ſimul hinc tranſibimus omnes.

*Our dear Parents are gone, our lovely and deſirable Children are gone, our boſom Relations that were as our own Souls, are gone: And do not all theſe Warning-Knocks at our Doors acquaint us, that we muſt prepare to follow ſhortly after them!*

*O that by theſe Things our own Death might be both more* eaſie *and* familiar *to us, the oftner it viſits us, the better we ſhould be acquainted with it; and the more of our beloved Relations it removes before us, the leſs of either Snare or Intanglement remains for us when our Turn comes.*

*My dear Friends, my Fleſh, and my Blood, I beſeech you for Religions ſake, for your own ſake, and for my ſake, whoſe Comfort is, in great part, bound up in your Proſperity and Welfare, that you read frequently, ponder ſeriouſly, and apply believingly theſe Scripture Conſolations and Directions, which in ſome haſte, I have gathered for your Uſe; And the God of all Conſolation be with you.*

I am,

Your moſt endeared

Brother,

*John Flavel.*

# LUKE VII. xiii.

## *And when the Lord ſaw her, he had Compaſſion on her, and ſaid to her, Weep not.*

TO be above the Stroke of Paſſions is a *Condition* equal to *Angels*: To be in a *State* of Sorrow, without the Senſe of Sorrow, is a *Diſpoſition* beneath *Beaſts*; but duly to regulate our Sorrows, and bound our Paſſions under the Rod, is the Wiſdom, Duty, and Excellency of a *Chriſtian*. He that is without natural Affections, is deſervedly ranked among the worſt of *Heathens*; and he that is able rightly to manage them, deſerves to be numbred with the beſt of *Chriſtians*. Though when we are *Sanctified*, we put on the *Divine Nature*; yet till we are *Glorified*, we put not off the Infirmities of our *humane Nature*.

Whileſt we are within the reach of Troubles, we cannot be without the Danger, nor ought not to be without the Fear of Sin; and it is as hard for us to eſcape Sin, being in *Adverſity*, as *becalming* in *Proſperity*.

How apt we are to tranſgreſs the Bounds both of Reaſon and Religion under a ſharp Affliction, appears as in moſt Mens Experience, ſo in this Womans Example, to whoſe exceſſive Sorrow, Chriſt puts a ſtop in the Text: *He ſaw her, and had Compaſſion on her, and ſaid to her, Weep not.*

The Lamentations and Wailings of this diſtreſſed Mother, moved the tender Compaſſions of the Lord in beholding them, and ſtirred up more Pity in his Heart for her, than could be in her Heart for her Dear and Only Son.

In the Words we are to conſider, both the *Condition* of the Woman, and the *Counſel* of Chriſt, with reſpect unto it.

*Firſt*, The *Condition* of this Woman, which appears to be very Dolorous and Diſtreſſed; her Groans and Tears moved and melted the very Heart of Chriſt, to hear and behold them: *When he ſaw her, he had Compaſſion on her.*

How ſad an Hour it was with her when Chriſt met her, appears by what is ſo diſtinctly remarkt by the Evangeliſt, in *Ver.* 12. where it is ſaid, *Now when they came nigh to the Gate of the City, behold, there was a dead Man carried out, the only Son of his Mother, and ſhe was a Widow, and much People of the City was with her.*

In this one Verſe, divers Heart-piercing Circumſtances of this Affliction are noted.

First, It was the *death of a Son*. To bury a Child, any Child, muſt needs rend the Heart of a tender Parent; for what are Children but the Parent multiplied? A Child is a part of the Parent made up in another Skin. But to lay a Son in the Grave; A Son which continues the Name, and ſupports the Family; this was ever accounted a very great Affliction.

*...ulas μέ- ...γισος δεο- ...ισαι τεκ- ...ωr γυναι. ...Græc.Comic.*

Secondly, This Son was not carried from the *Cradle* to the *Coffin*, nor ſtript out of its *Swathing*, to be wrap'd in its *Winding*-Cloth: Had he died in Infancy, before he had engaged *Affection*, or raiſed *Expectation*, the Affliction had not been ſo pungent and cutting, as now it was; Death ſmote the Son in the flower and Prime of his time. He was *a Man* (ſaith the Evangeliſt) *ver.* 12. *a young Man* (as Chriſt calls him) *ver.* 14. He was now arrived * at that Age which made him capable of yielding his Mother all that Comfort which had been the Expectation and Hope of many Years, and the Reward and Fruit of many Cares and Labours: Yet then when the Endearments were greateſt, and her Hopes higheſt, even in the flower of his Age, he is cut off.

** In adoleſ- ...ia de- ...ſus fuit, ...plus do- ...dum ſuc- ...quia in ...ætatis ...fuit, & ...grandi ...re ac ...itudine ...ntum ...illam a- ...m per- ...us.* ...n. Cat. ...c.

Thus *Baſil* bewailed the Death of his Son:

> “Filius mihi erat adoleſcens, ſolus vitæ ſucceſſor, ſolatium ſenectæ, gloria generis, flos æqualium, fulcrum domus, ætatem gratioſiſſimam agebat: hic raptus periit, qui paulo ante jucundam vocem edebat, & jucundiſſimum ſpectaculum parentis oculis erat.

> *I once had a Son who was a young Man, my only Succeſſor, the Solace of my Age, the Glory of his Kind, the Prop of my Family, arrived to the endearing Age; then was he ſnatcht from me by Death, whoſe lovely Voice but a little before I heard, who lately was a pleaſant ſpectacle to his Parent.*

Reader, if this have been thine own Condition, as it hath been his that writes it, I need ſay no more to convince thee, that it was a ſorrowful State indeed Chriſt met this tender Mother in.

Thirdly, And which is yet more, he was not only a Son, but an Only Son: So you find in *Ver* 12. *He was the only Son of his Mother.* One in whom all her Hopes and Comforts of that kind were bound up. For,

*Omnis in Aſcanio ſtat chari cura Parentis.* Virg.

All her Affections were contracted into this one Object. If we have never ſo many Children, we know not which of them to ſpare. If they ſtand like Olive-Plants about our Table, it would grieve us to ſee the leaſt Twig amongſt them broken down. But ſurely the Death of *one out of many*, is much more tolerable, than of *all in one*.

*Mortem levius toleraret, ſi non unicus fuiſſet; ſi alter qui parentis dolorem leniret ſuperfuiſſet.* Ambroſ.

*Nihil charius unico filio. ſic dolor de morte ipſius intenſiſſimus extitit.* Carth. in loc.

Hence it's noted in Scripture as the greateſt of Earthly Sorrows, *Jer.* 6. 26. *O Daughter of my People, gird thee with Sackcloath, and wallow thy ſelf in Aſhes. Make thee Mourning as for an only Son, moſt bitter Lamentation.* Yea, ſo deep, and penetrating is this grief, that the Holy Ghoſt borrows it to expreſs the deepeſt ſpiritual troubles by it. Zech. 12. 10. *They ſhall mourn for him*, (namely Chriſt whom they pierced) *as one mourneth for an only Son.*

Fourthly, And yet to heighten the Affliction, it is ſuper-added, verſe 12. *And ſhe was a Widow.* So that the Staff of her age, on whom ſhe leaned, was broken: She had now none left to comfort or aſſiſt her in her helpleſs, comfortleſs State of Widowhood; which is a condition not only void of comfort, but expoſed to Oppreſſion and Contempt.

*Duplici nomine chariſſimus fuit, tum quod eſſet unigenitus, tum quod eſſet ſolatium, & quaſi baculus viduitatis ipſius.* Piſc. in loc.

Yea, and being a *Widow*, the whole burthen lay upon her alone; ſhe had not an Husband to comfort her, as *Elkana* did *Hanah* in 1 Sam. 1. 8. *Why weepeſt thou, and why is thy heart grieved? am not I more to thee than ten Sons?* This would have been a great relief; but her Husband was dead as well as her Son: both gone, and ſhe only ſurviving, to lament the loſs of thoſe comforts that once ſhe had. Her calamities came not ſingle, but one after another, and this reviving and aggravating the former. This was her caſe and condition when the Lord met her.

*Secondly*, Let us conſider the *Counſel* which Chriſt gives her, with reſpect to this her ſad and ſorowful caſe. *And when the Lord ſaw her, he had compaſſion on her, and ſaid unto her, Weep not.* Relieving and Supporting words; wherein we ſhall conſider,

The { Occaſion.
Motive.
Counſel it ſelf.

I. The *occaſion* of it, and that was his ſeeing of her. This Meeting at the Gate of the City, how Accidental and Occaſional ſoever it ſeems, yet without doubt it was providentially ſuited to the Work intended to be wrought: The Eye of his Omniſcience foreſaw her, and this Meeting was by him deſigned, as an Occaſion of that famous Miracle which he wrought upon the young Man. Chriſt hath a quick Eye to diſcern Poor Mourning and Diſconſolate Creatures: And though he be now in Heaven, and ſtands out of our ſight, ſo that we ſee him not; yet he ſees us; and his Eye (which is upon all our troubles) ſtill affects his heart, and moves his Bowels for us.

II. The *Motive* ſtirring him up to give this relieving and comfortable Counſel to her, was his own *Compaſſion*. She neither expected, nor deſired it from him; but ſo full of tender pity was the Lord towards her, that he prevents her with unexpected Conſolation: Her Heart was nothing ſo full of compaſſion for her Son, as Chriſt was for her: He bore our Infirmities, even *Natural* as well as *Moral* ones, in the days of his fleſh; and though he be now exalted to the higheſt Glory, yet ſtill he continues as merciful as ever, and as apt to be touched with the ſenſe of our Miſeries, *Heb.* 4. 15.

Laſtly, The *Counſel it ſelf, Weep not*, herein fullfilling the Office of a Comforter to them that Mourn, whereunto he was anointed, *Iſa.* 16. 1, 2, 3. Yet the words are not an abſolute prohibition of tears and ſorrow, he doth not condemn all Mourning as ſinful, or all expreſſions of grief for dead Relations as uncomely: no, Chriſt would not have his People ſtupid and inſenſate; he only prohibits the exceſſes and extravagancies of our ſorrows for the dead, that it ſhould not be ſuch a Mourning for the dead as is found among the Heathen, who ſorrow without *Meaſure*, becauſe without *Hope*, being ignorant of that grand relief by the Reſurrection which the Goſpel reveals.

The Reſurrection of her Son from the dead, is the ground upon which Chriſt builds her conſolation and relief. Well might he ſay, *Weep not*, when he intended quickly to remove the cauſe of her tears by reſtoring him again to life.

Now though there be ſomewhat in this caſe extraordinary and peculiar: for few or none that carry their dead children to the grave, may expect to receive them again from the dead immediately by a ſpecial Reſurrection, as ſhe did: I ſay this is not to be expected by any that now loſe their Relations; the occaſion and reaſons of ſuch Miraculous ſpecial Reſurrections being removed, by a ſufficient and full evidence and confirmation of Chriſt's divine Power and Godhead: Yet thoſe that now bury their Relations, if they be ſuch as die in Chriſt, have as good and ſufficient reaſon to moderate their paſſions, as this Mourner had, and do as truly come within the reach and compaſs of this Chriſt's comfortable and ſupporting Counſel, *Weep not*, as ſhe did; For do but conſider what of ſupport or comfort can a particular and preſent Reſurrection from the dead give us, more than that it is and as it is a *Specimen*, handſel or pledge of the General Reſurrection? It is not the returning of the Soul to its Body, to live an animal Life again in this World of Sin and Sorrow, and ſhortly after to undergo the agonies and pains of Death again, that is in it ſelf any ſuch priviledge as may afford much comfort to the Perſon raiſed, or his Relations: It is no Priveledge to the Perſon raiſed; for it returns him from Reſt to Trouble, from the Harbour back again into the Ocean. It is matter of trouble to many dying Saints, to hear of the likelihood of their returning again, when they are got ſo nigh to Heaven.

It was once the caſe of a Godly Miniſter of this Nation, who was much troubled at his return, and ſaid, I am like a Sheep driven out of the ſtorm almoſt to the fold, and then driven back into the ſtorm again: or a weary Traveller that is come near his home and then muſt go back to fetch ſomewhat he had forgotten: or an Apprentice, whoſe time is almoſt expired, and then muſt begin a New Term.

But to die, and then return again from the dead, hath leſs of Priviledge, than to return only from the brink of the grave; for the ſick hath not yet felt the agonies and laſt ſtruggles or pangs of Death, but ſuch have felt them once, and muſt feel them again; they muſt die *twice*, before they can be happy *once*: and beſides during the little time they ſpend on Earth betwixt the firſt and ſecond diſſolution, there is a perfect ἀμνησία, forgetfulneſs and inſenſibleneſs of all that which they ſaw or enjoyed in their Eſtate of ſeparation: It being neceſſary, both for them and others, that it ſhould be; for, for themſelves it's neceſſary, that they may be content to live, and endure the time of Separation from that bleſſed and ineffable State, quietly and patiently; and for others, that they may live by faith, and not by ſenſe, and build upon divine and not humane authority and report.

*Victuroſque dii celant, ut vivere durent.*

So that here you ſee, their agonies and pangs are doubled, and yet their Life not ſweetned by any ſenſe of their Happineſs which returns and remains with them, and therefore it can be no ſuch priviledge to them.

And for their Relations, though it be ſome comfort to receive them again from the dead; yet the conſideration, that they are return'd to them into the ſtormy Sea, to partake of new ſorrows and troubles, from which they were lately free; and in a ſhort time they muſt part with them again, and feel the double ſorrows of a parting pull, which others feel but once, ſurely ſuch a particular Reſurrection conſidered in it ſelf, is no ſuch ground of comfort as at firſt we might imagine it to be.

It remains then, that the ground of all ſolid Comfort and relief againſt the death of our Relations, lies in the general and laſt Reſurrection, and what is in a particular one, is: but as it were a *Specimen*, and evidence of the general: and there the Apoſtle places our relief, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 17. that we ſhall ſee and enjoy them again at the Lord's coming. And ſurely this is more, than if with this Mother (in the Text) we ſhould preſently receive them from the dead, as ſhe did her Son: And if we judge not ſo, it is becauſe our hearts are carnal, and meaſure things rather by time, and ſenſe, than by Faith and Eternity.

*In eo fu*
*ræ reſurre-*
*ctionis ill*
*ſtre habem*
*ſpecimen.*
Calv. in lo

Thus you ſee the Counſel, with its ground, which for the moſt part is common to other Chriſtian Mourners with her; the difference

ence being but inconſiderable, and of little advantage.

Here then you find many aggravations of Sorrow meeting together: A Son, an only Son, is carrying to the Grave; yet Chriſt commands the penſive Mother, not to Mourn.

Hence we note,

Doct. *That Chriſtians ought to moderate their ſorrows for their dead Relations, how many afflicting circumſtances and aggravations ſoever do meet together in their Death.*

It is as common with Men, yea, with good Men, to exceed in their Sorrows for dead Relations, as it is to exceed in their Love and delights to living Relations; and both of the one and other, we may ſay as they ſay of Waters, It's hard to confine them within their Bounds. It is therefore grave Advice which the Apoſtle delivers in this caſe, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29, 30. *But this I ſay, Brethren the time is ſhort; it remaineth that both they that have Wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and thoſe that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not.* As if he had ſaid, the floating World is near its Port: God hath contracted the Sails of Man's Life: It is but a point of time we have to live, and ſhortly it will not be a point to chooſe, whether we had Wives or not, Children or not: All theſe are time-eaten things, and before the expected fruit of theſe comforts be *ripe*, we our ſelves may be *rotten*. It is therefore an high point of Wiſdom, to look upon things which ſhortly will not be, as if already they were not, and to behave our ſelves in the loſs of theſe carnal enjoyments, as the natural Man behaves himſelf in the uſe of Spiritual Ordinances: He hears as if he heard not, and we ſhould weep as if we wept not; their Affections are a little moved ſometimes by Spiritual things, but they never lay them ſo to heart, as to be broken-hearted for the Sin they hear of, or deeply affected with the Glory revealed: We alſo ought to be ſenſible of the ſtroke of God upon our dear Relations: But yet ſtill we muſt weep, as if we wept not; that is, we muſt keep due bounds and moderation in our Sorrows, and not to be too deeply concerned for theſe dying, ſhort-liv'd things.

*Quæ ardenter diligimus habita, graviter ſuſpiramus, amiſſa.* Greg. mor.

καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος

To this purpoſe the Apoſtle exhorts, *Heb.* 12. 5. *My Son deſpiſe not the Chaſtening of the Lord; neither faint when thou art rebuked of him.* Theſe are two extreams, *deſpiſing* and *fainting*: When God is correcting, to ſay, I do not regard it, let God take all if he will; if my Eſtate muſt go, let it go; if my Children die, let them die; this is to *deſpiſe* the Lords chaſtening: and God cannot bear it, that we ſhould bear it thus lightly.

There is alſo another extream, and that is *Fainting*, If when Goods are taken away, the Heart be taken away, and when Children die, then the Spirit of the Parent dies alſo; this is *fainting* under the Rod. Thou lamenteſt (ſaith *Seneca*) thy deceaſed Friend, but I would not have thee grieve beyond what is meet: That thou ſhouldſt not grieve at all, I dare not require thee; Tears may be excuſed, if they do not exceed: Let thine Eyes therefore be neither wholly dry, nor yet let them overflow; *Weep* thou maiſt, but *Wail* thou muſt not.

Happy Man that ſtill keeps the Golden Bridle of Moderation upon his Paſſions and Affections, and ſtill keeps the poſſeſſion of himſelf, whatſoever he loſe the poſſeſſion of.

Now the Method in which I propoſe to proceed ſhall be,

1. To diſcover the Signs
2. To diſſwade from the Sin
3. To remove the Pleas
4. To propoſe the cure

} of immoderate Sorrow.

Firſt I ſhall give you the Signs of immoderate Sorrow, and ſhew you when it exceeds its bounds, and becomes ſinful, even a Sorrow to be ſorrowed for; and for clearneſs ſake, I will firſt allow what may be allowed to the Chriſtian Mourner, and then you will the better diſcern wherein the exceſs and ſinfulneſs of your Sorrow lies.

1. And firſt, How much ſoever we cenſure and condemn immoderate Sorrow, *yet the Afflicted muſt be allowed an awakened and tender ſenſe of the Lord's afflicting hand upon them.* It's no Vertue to *bear* what we do not *feel*: Yea, it is a moſt unbecoming temper, not to tremble when God is ſmiting.

The Lord ſaith to *Moſes*, in the caſe of *Miriam*, *Numb.* 12. 24. *If her Father had ſpit in her Face, ſhould ſhe not be aſhamed ſeven Days.* The Face is the Table and Seat of Beauty and Honour; but when it is Spit upon, it is made the Sink of Shame. Had her own Father ſpit upon her Face when ſhe had diſpleaſed him, would ſhe not have gone aſide as one aſhamed by ſuch a rebuke, and not have ſhewed her Face to him again in Seven Days? How much more ſhould ſhe take it to heart, and be ſenſible of this rebuke of mine, who have filled her Face with Leprous Spots, the ſigns of my diſpleaſure againſt her? Surely God will be aſhamed of thoſe, that are not aſhamed when he rebukes them.

It is not Magnanimity, but Stupidity to make light of God's Corrections, and for this the afflicted are ſmartly taxed, Jer. 5, 3. *I have ſmitten them, but they have not grieved*, When God ſmote *Job* in his Perſon, Children, and Eſtate, he aroſe and rent his Mantle, and put duſt upon his Head, to ſhew he was not ſenſeleſs and unaffected; and yet bleſſed the afflicting God, which as plainly ſhewed he was not Contumacious and Unſubmiſſive.

Secondly, *We muſt allow the Mourning afflicted Soul, a due and comely expreſſion of his Grief, and Sorrow, in his complaints both to God and Men.*

It's much more becoming a Chriſtian ingenuouſly to open his Troubles, than ſullenly to ſmother them. There is no Sin in complaining to God, but much Wickedneſs in complaining of him. Griefs are eaſed by Groans, and Heart preſſures relieved by utterance. This was *David's* courſe, and conſtant way, who was a Man of afflictions;

Pſal. 142, 2, 3. *I poured out my complaint before him, I ſhewed before him my trouble: when my ſpirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knoweſt my Path.*

To whom ſhould Children go, but to their Father to make their moan? Whence may they expect relief and comfort but from him? The 102 Pſalm is intituled, *A Pſalm for the Afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his Complaint before the Lord.*

And happy were it, if every afflicted Soul would chuſe this way to expreſs his Sorrows. Did we complain more to God, God would complain leſs of us, and quickly abate the matters of our Complaint. O you cannot think how moving, how melting, how prevailing it is with God, when his poor Burdened and Afflicted People, in a day of Diſtreſs and Deſpondency, when Deep calleth unto Deep, and one Wave drives on another, then for the oppreſſed Soul with humility, Filial Confidence and Faith, to turn it ſelf to the Lord, and thus beſpeak him,

‘Father, What ſhall I do? My Soul is greatly bowed down by Trouble, I am full to the Brim, my vain Heart hath looked for relief this Way and that way, but none comes, every Door of Comfort is ſhut up againſt me: Thou haſt multiplied my Sorrows, and renewed thy Witneſſes againſt me: Comfort is removed from my outward, and Peace from my inner Man, Sharp Afflictions without, and bitter Reflections within. O Lord, I am oppreſſed, undertake for me. Fathers of the Fleſh pity their diſtreſſed Children when they complain to them, and wilt not thou, O Lord, whoſe Compaſſions as far exceed Creature-Compaſſions, as the Sea exceeds a Drop: O my Father, pity me, ſupport me, deliver me.

Oh how acceptable is this to God! how advantagious to the Soul!

We may alſo make our Complaint to Men, So did *Job*, Chap. 19. 21. *Have pity, have pity on me, O ye my Friends; for the Hand of God hath touched me.* And it is a Mercy if we have any Friends that are Wiſe, Faithful, and Experienced. They are born for ſuch a time as this, *Prov.* 17. 17. But be they what they will, they cannot pity as God, relieve and ſuccour as he: And oftentimes we may ſay with *Job*, Chap. 21. 4. *As for me, is my complaint to Men? And if it were, Why ſhould not my ſpirit be troubled? q. d.* What great advantage can I get by theſe complaints? I may burden the Heart of my Friend, but how little doth that eaſe my own? Yet the very opening of the Heart to an experienced tender Chriſtian is ſome relief, and the engaging his Prayers is more. Thus far you moan ſafely: In all this there is no danger.

Thirdly, *The afflicted Perſon may (ordinarily) accuſe, judge and condemn himſelf, for being the cauſe and procurer of his own Troubles.* He may lawfully be diſcontented, and vexed with himſelf for his own Folly, when the iniquity of his Heels compaſſeth him about. And truly it is but ſeldome that any great affliction befals a gracious Perſon, but he ſaw the need of ſuch a Rod before he felt it.

Hath God ſmitten thy Child or Friend, and didſt thou not foreſee ſome ſharp trial coming? Did not thy fond, ſecure, carnal temper need ſuch a ſcourge to awaken, quicken and purge thee? Or if you did not foreſee it, it's now your duty to ſearch and examine your ſelves. So the Church in their affliction, reſolved, Lam. 3. 40. *Let us ſearch and try our ways.* When God is *ſmiting* we ſhould be a *ſearching*. Surely our Iniquities will enquire after us, if we will not enquire after them. Yea, in the day of affliction, a gracious Soul is inquiſitive about nothing more than the procuring and provoking cauſe of his Troubles, Job 10. 2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me; q. d.* Lord, what ſpecial corruption is it that this Rod is ſent to rebuke; What ſinful neglect doth it come to humble me for? O diſcover it now to me, and recover me now from it.

And having found the Root and cauſe of their Troubles, ingenuous Souls will ſhame themſelves for it, and give glory to God by an humble ſubmiſſion, and vindication of the equity of his proceedings, Job 7. 20. *I have ſinned, what ſhall I do unto thee, thou preſerver of Men?* He thinks it no ſhame freely to diſcover unto God, and deeply to abaſe himſelf before him, for his folly.

I remember a choice note that * Mr. *Brightman* hath in his Commentary upon the *Canticles.*

Holy Men (ſaith he) after their Hearts are renewed by Repentance, are not aſhamed to remember and confeſs their ſlips and ſhameful falls, to the Glory of God; for they account that Glory which ſuch confeſſions take from them is not loſt, while it goes to the Glory of God. If his Glory may riſe out of our Shame, how willing ſhould we be to take ſuch Shame to us? Holy *David* was not aſhamed to acknowledge, Pſal. 38. 5. *My Wounds ſtink and are corrupt becauſe of my Fooliſhneſs.* He is the wiſeſt Man that thus befools himſelf before God.

It is true, God may afflict from Prerogative, or for Trial; but we may always ſee cauſe enough in our ſelves, and it is ſafeſt to charge it upon our own folly.

Laſtly, *The afflicted Chriſtian may in an humble ſubmiſſive manner plead with God, and be earneſt for the removal of the affliction.*

When affliction preſſeth us above ſtrength, when it diſables us for duty, or when it gives advantage to Temptation, then we may ſay with *David, Remove thy ſtroke from me, I am conſumed by the blow of thine hand.* Pſal. 39. 10. Even our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the Day of his Troubles poured out his Soul with ſtrong Cries and many Tears, ſaying, *Father, if thou be willing, let this Cup paſs from me,* Luke 22. 42. Oppreſſed nature deſires eaſe; and even our renewed nature deſires freedom from thoſe clogs and temptations which hinder us in duty, or expoſe us to ſnares.

Thus far we may ſafely go.

But ſorrow then becomes ſinful and exceſſive when,

*Firſt,* “It cauſeth us to ſlight and deſpiſe all our other mercies and enjoyments, as ſmall things in compariſon of what we have loſt.

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* *Nec enim pudet ſanct viros poſtquam reno- vata Cord fuerint per reſipiſceniam, lapſus ſui & dede coris ad D Gloriam m miniſſe. N hil nobis, d cedit, quod cedit in ill us honore* Brightma in Cant. c 1. v. 4. p

It often falls out that the ſetting of one comfort clouds and benights all the reſt. Our Tears for our loſt enjoyment ſo blind our Eyes that we cannot ſee the many other mercies which yet remain: We take ſo much notice of what is gone, that we take little or no notice of what is left. But this is very ſinful; for it involves in it both *Ignorance*, *Ingratitude*, and great *Provocation*.

It's a Sin ſpringing from Ignorance. Did we know the deſert of our Sin, we would rather wonder to ſee one Mercy left, than that twenty are cut off. They that know they have forfeited every Mercy, ſhould be thankful that they enjoy any, and patient when they loſe any of their comfort.

Did we know *God*, even that Sovereign Lord at whoſe diſpoſe our Comforts come and go, who can the next moment blaſt all that remain, and turn you into Hell; afterwards you would prize the Mercies he yet indulges to you at an higher value. Did you underſtand the fickle vaniſhing nature of the Creature, what a flower, what a bubble it is; Oh how thankful would you be to find ſo many yet left in your poſſeſſion!

Did you know the caſe of Thouſands as good, yea better than you, whoſe whole Harveſt of Comfort in this World, is but an handful to the gleanings of the Comforts you ſtill enjoy, who in all their lives never were owners of ſuch comfortable enjoyments as you now overlook, ſurely you would not act as you do.

Beſide, what vile ingratitude is in this? What, are all your remaining Mercies worth nothing? You have buried a Child, a Friend: Well, but ſtill, you have a Husband, a Wife, other Children; or if not, you have comfortable accommodations for your ſelves, with health to enjoy them; or if not, yet have you the Ordinances of God, it may be an Intereſt in Chriſt, and in the Covenant, Pardon of Sin, and hopes of Glory. What! and yet ſink at this rate, as if all your mercies, comforts, and hopes, even in both Worlds were buried in one Grave. Muſt *Ichabod* be written upon your beſt Mercies, becauſe Mortality is written upon one? Fye, fye, What ſhameful Ingratitude is here?

And really, Friend, ſuch a carriage as this under the Rod is no ſmall provocation to the Lord to go on in Judgment, and make a full end of all that remains, ſo that affliction ſhall not riſe up the ſecond time.

What if God taking notice how little thou regardeſt the many undeſerved favours thou yet poſſeſſeſt, ſhould ſay, Well, if thou think'ſt them not worth the owning, neither do I think them worth the continuing? Go, Death, there's a Husband, a Wife, other Children yet left, ſmite them all. Go, ſickneſs, and remove the health of his Body yet left; go, loſſes, and impoveriſh his Eſtate yet left; go, reproach, and blaſt his Reputation which is yet ſweet, What would you think of this? And yet if you be out of Chriſt, you are in danger of a far ſadder ſtroke than any or all yet mentioned. What if God ſhould ſay, prizeſt thou not my Mercy? Haſt thou no value for my goodneſs, and forbearance towards thee? Is it nothing that I have ſpared thee thus long in thy Sins and Rebellions? Well then, I will ſtretch out my hand upon thy life, cut off that thread which hath kept thee ſo many Years from dropping into Hell.

O think then what you have done, by provoking the Lord through your vile ingratitude! It is a dangerous thing to provoke God, when he is already in a way of Judgment. And if you be his own People, and ſo out of the danger of this laſt and worſt ſtroke: yet know, you have beeter Mercies to loſe than any you have yet loſt. Should God cloud your Soul with doubts, let looſe Satan to buffet you, remove joy and peace from your inner Man, how ſoon would you be convinced, that the Funeral of your deareſt Friend is but a trifle to this?

Well then, whatever God takes, be ſtill thankful for what he leaves. It was the great Sin of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, that though God had delivered them from their cruel ſervitude in *Egypt*, miraculouſly fed them in the Deſert, and was leading them on to a Land flowing with Milk and Honey; yet as ſoon as any want did but begin to pinch them, preſently all theſe Mercies were forgotten and ſlighted, *Numb.* 14. 12. *Would to God* (ſay they) *we had died in Egypt.* And *Numb.* 11. 6. *There is nothing at all beſide this Manna.* Beware of this, O ye Mourning and Afflicted ones. You ſee both the Sin that is in it, and the danger that attends it?

Secondly, And no leſs Sinful are our Sorrows, "When they ſo wholly ingulph our "hearts, that we either mind not at all, or "are little or nothing ſenſible of the pub"lick evils and calamities which lye upon "the Church and People of God.

Some Chriſtians have ſuch publick Spirits, that the Churches Troubles ſwallow up their perſonal Trouble. *Melancthon* ſeemed to take little notice of the death of his Child, which he dearly loved, being almoſt overwhelmed with the Miſery lying on the Church.

And it was a good evidence of the graciouſneſs and publickneſs of *Eli's* Spirit, who ſitting in the Gate anxiouſly waiting for tydings from the Army, when the tydings came that *Iſrael* fled before the *Philiſtines*, that his two Sons *Hophni* and *Phineas* were dead, and that the Ark of God was taken, juſt at the mention of that word, *The Ark of God*, before he heard out the whole Narration, his mind quickly preſaging the iſſue, he ſunk down and died, 1 *Sam.* 4. 19, 20. O that was the ſinking, the killing word; had the Meſſenger ſtop'd at the death of his two Sons, like enough he had ſupported that burden, but the loſs of the Ark was more to him than Sons or Daughters.

*Cumque ille nominaſſet Arcam Dei*, q. d. *nondum integram, ſed inchoatam audiens narrationem, mente prævolans & exitum præſagiens ruebat.* Mercer. in Loc.

But how few ſuch publick ſpirits appear even among Profeſſors in this ſelfiſh generation? May we not with the Apoſtle complain, Phil. 2. 21. *All ſeek their own, and not the things that are of Chriſt?* Few Men have any great cares or deſigns lying beyond the bounds of their own private intereſts. And what we ſay of Cares, is as true of Sorrows: If a Child die, we are ready to die too, but publick Calamities pierce us not.

How few ſuffer either their domeſtick comforts to be ſwallowed up in the Churches Troubles, or their domeſtick Troubles to be ſwallowed up by the Churches Mercies! Now when it is thus with us, when we little regard what Mercies or Miſeries lie upon others, but are wholly intent upon our own afflictions, this is a Sinful Sorrow, and ought to be Sorrowed for.

*Thirdly*, Our Sorrows then become Sinful and exorbitant, “When they divert us from, “or diſtract us in our duties, ſo that our in-“tercourſe with Heaven is ſtopt and inter-“rupted by them.

How long can we ſit alone muſing upon a dead Creature? Here our thoughts eaſily flow, but how hard to fix them upon the living God! when our hearts ſhould be in Heaven with our Chriſt, they are in the Grave with our Dead. May not many afflicted Souls juſtly complain, that their Troubles had taken away their Chriſt from them, (I mean as to ſweet ſenſible Communion) and laid the dead Child in his Room?

Poor Creature, ceaſe to weep any longer for thy dead Relation, and weep rather for thy dead heart. Is this thy compliance with God's deſign in afflicting thee? What, to grow a greater ſtranger to him than before! or is this the way to thy cure and comfort in affliction, to refrain Prayer, and turn thy back upon God?

Or if thou dareſt not wholly neglect thy duty, yet thy affliction ſpoils the ſucceſs and comfort of it; thy heart is wandring, dead, diſtracted in Prayer and Meditation, ſo that thou haſt no relief or comfort from it.

Rouze up thy ſelf, Chriſtian conſider this is not Right. Surely the Rod works not kindly now. What, did thy love to God expire when thy Friend expired? Is thy Heart as cold in Duty, as his Body is in the Grave?

Hath natural death ſeized him, and ſpiritual deadneſs ſeized thee? Sure then thou hadſt more reaſon to lament thy dead Heart, than thy dead Friend. Divert the ſtream of thy Troubles ſpeedily, and labour to recover thy ſelf out of this Temper quickly; leſt ſad experience ſhortly tell thee, that what thou now Mourneſt for, is but a trifle to what thou ſhalt Mourn for hereafter. To loſe the Heavenly warmth and Spiritual livelineſs of thy affections, is undoubtedly a far more conſiderable loſs, than to loſe the Wife of thy Boſom, or the ſweeteſt Child that ever a tender Parent laid in the Grave.

Reader, If this be thy caſe, thou haſt reaſon to challenge the firſt Place among the Mourners. It is better for thee to bury ten Sons, than to remit one degree of Love or Delight in God. The end of God in ſmiting, was to win thy Heart nearer to him, by removing that which eſtranged it; how then doſt thou croſs the very deſign of God in this diſpenſation? Muſt God then loſe his delight in thy Fellowſhip, becauſe thou haſt loſt thine in the Creature? Surely when thy Troubles thus accompany thee to thy Cloſet, they are ſinful and extravagent Troubles.

***Fourthly***, Then you may alſo conclude your Sorrows to be Exceſſive and Sinful, ***When they ſo overload and oppreſs your Bodies, as to endanger your Lives, or render them uſeleſs and unfit for ſervice.***

*Worldly Sorrow works Death*, 2 Cor. 7. 10. That is, Sorrow after the manner of Worldly Men, Sorrow in a meer carnal natural way, which is not relieved by any Spiritual Reaſonings and Conſiderations; This falls ſo heavy ſometimes upon the Body, that it ſinks under the Weight, and is caſt into ſuch diſeaſes as are never more wrought off, or healed in this World. *Heavineſs in the Heart of a Man makes it ſtoop*, ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 12. 25. The ſtouteſt Body muſt ſtoop under heart-preſſure.

*Triſtitia mundi eſt triſtitia ſe cundum mundum, quæ ex am re mundi naſcitur. Eſti. in loc*

It is with the Mind of Man (ſaith one) as with the Stone *Tyrhenus*: As long as it's whole it ſwimmeth, but once broken it ſinks preſently. Grief is a Moth which getting into the Mind, will in ſhort time, make the Body, be it never ſo ſtrong and well wrought a piece, like an old ſeary Garment.

*Philoſophers* and *Phyſicians* generally reckon Sorrow among the chief cauſes of ſhortning Life. *Chriſt* was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Griefs, and this ſome think, was the reaſon that he appeared as a Man of Fifty, when he was little more than Thirty Years old *Job.* 8. 57. But his Sorrows were of another kind.*

Many a Man's Soul is to his Body, as a ſharp Knife to a thin Sheath, which eaſily cuts it through, and what do we by poring and pondering upon our Troubles, but whet the Knife that it may cut the deeper and quicker? Of all the Creatures that ever God made (Devils only excepted) Man is the moſt able and apt to be his own Tormentor.

How unmercifully do we load them in times of Affliction? How do we not only waſte their Strength by Sorrow, but deny relief and neceſſary Refreſhment? They muſt carry the load, but be allowed no Refreſhment: If they can eat the Bread of Affliction and drink Tears, they may feed at full; but no pleaſant Bread, no quiet ſleep is permitted them. Surely you would not burden a Beaſt as you do your own Bodies; you would pity and relieve a brute Beaſt groaning and ſinking under an heavy Burden, but you will not pity nor relieve your own Bodies.

* *Hæc tib ſcribo qui tam imm dice flevi (quod mi me velim inter exe pla ſim rum quo dolor vici hodie ta- men ſact meum d no.* Senec. E 63. p. m 637.

Some Men's Souls have given ſuch deep Wounds to their Bodies, that they are never like to enjoy many eaſie or comfortable days more whilſt they dwell in them.

Now this is very ſinful and diſpleaſing to God; for if he have ſuch a tender Care for our Bodies, that he would not have us ſwallowed up of over much Grief, no though it be for Sin, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. But even to that Sorrow ſets bounds. How much leſs with outward Sorrow for Temporal loſs? May not your ſtock of natural ſtrength be imployed to better purpoſes think you than theſe? Time may come, that you may earneſtly wiſh you had that Health and Strength again to ſpend for God, which you now ſo laviſhly waſte, and prodigally caſt away upon your Troubles to no purpoſe, or advantage.

It was therefore an high point of Wiſdom in *David*, and recorded no doubt for our Imitation, who, when the Child was dead, ceaſed to Mourn, but aroſe, waſhed himſelf, and eat Bread, 2 *Sam.* 12. 20.

Fifthly, *When Affliction ſowers the Spirit with diſcontent, and makes it inwardly grudge againſt the Hand of God, then our Trouble is full of Sin, and we ought to be humbled for it before the Lord.*

Whatever God doth with us or ours, ſtill we ſhould maintain good thoughts of him. A gracious Heart cleaves nearer and nearer to God in Affliction, and can juſtifie God in his ſevereſt ſtrokes, acknowledging them to be all Juſt and Holy. Pſal. 119. 75. *I know alſo that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in Faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me.* And hereby the Soul may comfortably evidence to it ſelf its own upon uprightneſs, and ſincere Love to God. Yea, it hath been of ſingular uſe to ſome Souls, to take right meaſures of their love to God in ſuch Trials: To have lovely and well-pleaſed Thoughts of God, even when he ſmites us in our neareſt and deareſt comforts, argues plainly that we love him for himſelf, and not for his gifts only. And that his intereſt in the Heart is deeper than any Creature-Intereſt is. And ſuch is the comfort that hath reſulted to ſome from ſuch diſcoveries of their own Hearts by cloſe ſmarting afflictions; that they would not part with it, to have their comforts, (whoſe removal occaſioned them,) given back in lieu of it.

But to ſwell with ſecret diſcontent, and have hard Thoughts of God, as if he had done us wrong, or dealt more ſeverely with us than any. O this is a vile temper, curſed fruit ſpringing from an evil Root; a very carnal, ignorant, proud Heart; or at leaſt from a very diſtempered, if renewed Heart. So it was with *Jonah* when God ſmote his Gourd, *Yea,* (ſaith he) *I do well to be angry even unto Death,* Jonah 4. 9. Poor Man, he was highly diſtemper'd at this time, and out of frame; this was not his true temper or ordinary frame, but a ſurprize; the effect of a Paroxyſme of Temptation, in which his Paſſions had been over-heated.

Few dare to vent it in ſuch Language. But how many have their Hearts imbittered by diſcontent, and ſecret riſings againſt the Lord? Which if ever the Lord open their Eyes to ſee, will coſt them more trouble than ever that of Affliction did, which gave the occaſion of it.

I deny not, but the beſt heart may be tempted to think and ſpeak frowardly concerning theſe Works of the Lord; that envious adverſary the Devil will blow the Coals, and labour to blow up our Spirits at ſuch time into high diſcontents; The Temptation was ſtrong even upon *David* himſelf, to take up hard Thoughts of God, and to conclude, *Verily I have cleanſed my Heart in vain*; *q. d.* How little priviledge from the worſt of evils hath a Man by his Godlineſs? But he ſoon ſuppreſt ſuch motions. *If I ſhould ſay thus, I ſhould offend againſt the Generation of thy Children*: Meaning that he ſhould condemn the whole race of Godly Men through the whole World; for who is there among them all, but is, or hath, or may be afflicted as ſeverely as my ſelf?

Surely, it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born Chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more, *Job.* 34. 31. Whatever God doth with you, ſpeak well, and think well of him, and his Works.

Sixthly, *Our Sorrows exceed due bounds, when we continually excite and provoke them by willing irritations.*

Grief, like a Lyon loves to play with us before it deſtroy us. And ſtrange it is that we ſhould find ſome kind of Pleaſure in rouzing our Sorrows. It's * *Seneca*'s obſervation, and experimentally true, that even Sorrow it ſelf hath a certain kind of delight attending it.

The *Jews* that were with *Mary* in the Houſe to comfort her, *When they ſaw that ſhe went out haſtily, followed her, ſaying, She goeth to the Grave to weep there.* Joh. 11. 32. As they do (ſaith † *Calvin*) that ſeek to provoke their troubles by going to the Grave, or often looking upon the dead Body.

Thus we delight to look upon the Reliques of our deceaſed Friends, and often to mention their actions and ſayings, not ſo much for any matter of holy and weighty inſtruction or imitation; for that would warrant and commend the Action; but rather to rub the Wound, and fetch freſh Blood from it, by piercing our ſelves with ſome little, trivial, yet wounding circumſtances. I have known many that will ſit and talk of the Features, Actions, and Sayings of their Children, for Hours together, and weep at the rehearſal of them, and that for many Months after they are gone; So keeping the Wound continually open, and excruciating their own Hearts without any benefit at all by them. A lock of Hair, or ſome ſuch trifles muſt be kept for this purpoſe to renew their Sorrow daily by looking on it. On this account, *Jacob* would not have his Son called *Benoni*, leſt it ſhould renew his Sorrow, but *Benjamin.*

I am far from commending a brutiſh oblivion of our dear Relations, and condemn it as much I do this Childiſh and unprofitable remembrance. Oh Friends, we have other things to do under the Rod than theſe. Were it not better to be ſearching our Hearts and Houſes, when God's Rod is upon us, and ſtudying how to anſwer the end of it, by mortifying thoſe corruptions which provoke it? Surely the Rod works not kindly till it come to this.

*Seventhly.* Laſtly, Our Sorrows may then be pronounced ſinful, when they deafen our Ears to all the wholeſome and ſeaſonable Words of Counſel and Comfort offered us for our relief and ſupport.

Jer. 31. 15. *A voice was heard in* Ramah, *Lamentation and bitter Weeping*; Rachel *weeping for her Children, would not be comforted for her Children, becauſe they were not.* She will admit no comfort, her diſeaſe is curable by no other means but the reſtoration of her Children; give her them again and ſhe will be quiet, elſe you ſpeak into Air, ſhe regards not whatever you ſay.

Thus *Iſrael* in the cruel Bondage in *Egypt*, *Moſes* brings them the glad tydings of deliverance; *But they hearkened not to him, becauſe*

* *Ineſt quiddam dulce triſtitiæ, cum occurrant ſermones eorum jucundi, converſatio hilaris, officioſa pietas: Tunc oculi velut in gaudio relaxantur.* Sen. Ep. 806.

† *Ex eorum more qui luctus ſui irritamenta quærunt.* Calvin.

*of the anguiſh of Spirit, and their cruel Bondage,* Exod. 6. 9.

Thus obſtinately fixed are many in their trouble, that no Words of advice or comfort find any place with them: Yea, I have known ſome exceeding quick and ingenious, even above the rate of their common parts and abilities in inventing ſhifts, and framing objections to turn off Comfort from themſelves; as if they had been hired to plead againſt their own Intereſt: And if they be driven from thoſe Pleas, yet they are ſetled in their Troubles too faſt to be moved, ſay what you will they mind it not; or at moſt it abides not upon them. Let proper, ſeaſonable advice or comfort be tendered, they refuſe it, your Counſel is good, but they have no heart to it now. Thus Pſal. 77. 10. *My Soul* (ſaith he) *refuſed to be comforted.*

To want comfort in time of Affliction is an aggravation of our Affliction; but to refuſe it, when offered us, wants not Sin. Time may come, when we would be glad to receive comfort, or hear a word of ſupport, and ſhall be denied it.

O, 'tis a Mercy to the afflicted to have *Barnabas* with them, an Interpreter, one among a Thouſand; and it will be the great Sin and Folly of the Afflicted to ſpill thoſe excellent Cordials, prepared and offered to them, like Water upon the Ground, out of a froward, or dead Spirit, under trouble. Say not with them, Lam. 3. 18, 19. *My hope it is periſhed from the Lord, remembring mine Affliction and my Miſery, the Wormwood and the Gall.* It's a thouſand pities the Wormwood and Gall of Affliction ſhould ſo diſguſt a Chriſtian, as that he ſhould not at any time be able to reliſh the ſweetneſs that is in Chriſt, and in the Promiſes. And thus I have diſpatched the firſt part of my deſign, in ſhewing you wherein the Sin of Mourners doth not lie, and in what it doth.

*Secondly*, Having cleared this, and ſhewn you wherein the Sin and Danger lies; my way is prepared to the Second thing propoſed, namely, to diſſwade Mourners from theſe Sinful exceſſes of Sorrows, and keep the golden Bridle of moderation upon their Paſſions in times of Affliction. And O that my Words may be as ſucceſsful upon thoſe Penſive Souls that ſhall read them, as *Abigal*'s were to *David*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 32. Who, when he perceived how proper and ſeaſonable they were, ſaid, *Bleſſed be the Lord God of* Iſrael, *who ſent thee this Day to meet me, and Bleſſed be thy Advice.*

I am ſenſible how hard a task it is, I here undertake; to charm down, and allay mutinous, raging, and tumultuous Paſſions; to give a check to the torrent of Paſſion, is ordinarily but to provoke it, and make it rage and ſwell the more.

The Work is the Lord's, wholly depends upon his Power and Bleſſing. He that ſaith to the Sea, when the Waver thereof roar, Be ſtill; can alſo quiet and compoſe the ſtormy and tumultuous Sea that rages in the Breaſts of the Afflicted, and caſts up nothing but the *froth* of vain and uſeleſs complaints of our Miſery, or the *dirt* of ſinful and wicked complaints of the dealings of the Lord with us.

The Rod of Affliction goes round, and viſits all ſort of Perſons without difference: It is upon the Tabernacle of the Juſt and of the Unjuſt, the Righteous and the Wicked, both are mourning under the Rod.

The Godly are not ſo to be minded, as that the other be wholly neglected, they have as ſtrong and tender, though not as regular affections to their Relations, and muſt not be wholly ſuffered to ſink under their unrelieved Burthens.

Here therefore I muſt have reſpect to two ſorts of Perſons, whom I find in tears upon the ſame account; I mean the loſs of their dear Relations, the Regenerate and the Unregenerate, I am a Debtor to both, and ſhall endeavour their ſupport and aſſiſtance; for even the Unregenerate call for our help and pity, and muſt not be neglected and wholly ſlighted in their afflictions. We muſt pity them that cannot pity themſelves. The Law of God commands us to help a Beaſt, if fallen under its Burden; How much more a Man ſinking under a load of Sorrows.

*Nil miſeri-us miſero non miſerante ſe-ipſum.*

I confeſs Uſes of Comfort to the Unregenerate are not (ordinarily) in uſe among us, and it may ſeem ſtrange whence any thing of ſupport ſhould be drawn for them, that have no ſpecial Intereſt in Chriſt, or Promiſes.

I confeſs alſo, I find my ſelf under great diſadvantages for this work, I cannot offer them thoſe reviving Cordials that are contained in Chriſt and the Covenant, for God's afflicted People; but yet ſuch is the Goodneſs of God even to his Enemies, that they are not left wholly without ſupports, or means to allay their Sorrow.

If this therefore be thy caſe, who readeſt theſe lines; afflicted and unſanctified, mourning bitterly for thy dead Friends, and more cauſe to mourn for thy dead Soul, Chriſtleſs and Graceleſs, as well as Childleſs or Friendleſs: No Comfort in Hand, nor yet in hope, full of Trouble, and no vent by Prayer or Faith to eaſe the Heart.

Poor Creature, thy caſe is ſad, but yet do not wholly ſink, and ſuffer thy ſelf to be ſwallowed up of Grief: Thou haſt laid thy dear one in the Grave, yet throw not thy ſelf head-long into the Grave after him; that will not be the way to remedy thy Miſery: But ſit down a while and ponder theſe three things:

*Firſt*, *That of all Perſons in the World, thou haſt moſt reaſon to be tender over thy Life and Health, and careful to preſerve it; for if thy troubles deſtroy thee, thou art eternally loſt, undone for ever. Worldly ſorrow* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *works Death.* And if it works thy Death, it works thy Damnation alſo; for Hell follows that Pale Horſe, *Rev.* 6. 8. If a Believer dies, there's no danger of Hell to him, the Second Death hath no power over him; but woe to thee if it overtake thee in thy Sin; beware therefore what thou doſt againſt thy Health and Life. Do not put the Candle of Sorrow too near that Thread by which thou hangeſt over the Mouth of Hell.

O it is far better to be Childleſs, or Friendleſs on Earth, than hopeleſs, and remedileſs in Hell.

Secondly, Own and admire the Bounty

and goodneſs of God manifeſted to thee in this Affliction; that when Death came into thy Family to ſmite and carry off one, it had not fallen to thy Lot to be the perſon; thy Husband, Wife, or Child is taken, and thou art left; Had thy name been in the Commiſſion, thou hadſt been now paſt hope.

O the ſparing Mercy of God! the wonderful long-ſuffering of God towards thee; Poſſibly that Poor Creature that is gone, never provoked God as thou haſt done; thy Poor Child never abuſed Mercies, neglected Calls, treaſured up the thouſandth part of that guilt thou haſt done: So that thou mighteſt well imagine it ſhould rather have cut thee down, that hadſt ſo provoked God, than thy poor little one,

But oh the admirable Patience of God! Oh the riches of his long-ſuffering! Thou art only warned, not ſmitten by it: Is there nothing in this worth thankful acknowledgment? Is it not better to be in black for another on Earth, than in the blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever? Is it not eaſier to go to the Grave with thy Dead Friend, and weep there; than to go to Hell among the damned, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth?

Thirdly, This Affliction for which thou mourneſt, may be the greateſt Mercy to thee that ever yet befel thee in this World. God hath now made thy Heart ſoft by trouble, ſhewed thee the Vanity of this World; and what a poor Trifle it is which thou mad'ſt thy Happineſs: There is now a dark Cloud ſpread over all thy Worldly Comforts. Now, O now! if the Lord would but ſtrike in with this affliction, and by it open thine eyes to ſee thy deplorable ſtate, and take off thy heart for ever from the vain World which thou now ſeeſt hath nothing in it; and cauſe thee to chuſe Chriſt the only abiding good, for thy portion. If now thy affliction may but bring thy Sin to remembrance, and thy dead Friend may but bring thee to a ſenſe of thy dead Soul, which is as cold to God and ſpiritual things, as his Body is to thee; and more loathſome in his Eyes than that Corps is, or ſhortly will be to the Eyes of Men: Then this day is certainly a day of the greateſt Mercy that ever yet thou ſaweſt. O happy Death, that ſhall prove Life to thy Soul.

Why this is ſometimes the way of the Lord with Men, *Job.* 36. 8, 9. *If they be bound in Fetters, and holden in cords of Affliction, then he ſheweth them their work, and their tranſgreſſion, that they have exceeded: He openeth alſo their Ear to Diſcipline, and commandeth them that they return from Iniquity.*

O conſider, poor penſive Creature, that which ſtole away the Heart from God is now gone: That which eat up thy time and thoughts, that there was no room for God, Soul or Eternity in them, is gone; All the vain Expectations that thou raiſedſt up to thy ſelf, from that poor Creature which now lies in the Duſt, are in one day periſhed. O what an advantage haſt thou now for Heaven, beyond whatever thou yet hadſt! If God will but bleſs this Rod, thou wilt have cauſe to keep many a Thankſgiving-Day for this Day.

I pray let theſe three things be pondered by you; I can beſtow no more Comforts upon you, your Condition bars the beſt Comforts from you; they belong to the People of God, and you have yet nothing to do with them.

I ſhall therefore turn from you to them, and preſent ſome choicer Comforts to them to whom they properly belong, which may be of great uſe to you in reading; if it be but to convince you of the Bleſſed Priviledge and State of the People of God in the greateſt Plunges of Troubles in this World, and what advantages their Intereſt in Chriſt gives them for Peace and Settlement, beyond that State you are in.

And here I do with much more freedom and hope of ſucceſs, apply my ſelf to the Work of counſelling and comforting the afflicted. You are the fearers of the Lord and tremble at his Word: The leaſt Sin is more formidable to you than the greateſt Affliction. Doubleſs you would rather chuſe to bury all your Children than provoke and grieve your Heavenly Father. Your Relations are dear, but Chriſt is dearer to you by far.

Well then, let me perſwade you to retire a while into your Cloſets, redeem a little time from your unprofitable Sorrows, eaſe and empty your Hearts before the Lord, and beg his Bleſſing upon the relieving, quieting, and Heart-compoſing Conſiderations that follow; ſome of which are more general and common, ſome more particular and ſpecial, but all of them ſuch, as through the Bleſſing of God may be very uſeful at this time to your Souls.

1. Conſid. *Conſider in this day of Sorrow, who is the framer and Author of this Rod by which you now ſmart; is not the Lord? And if the Lord hath done it, it becomes you meekly to ſubmit.* Pſal. 46. 10. *Be ſtill and know that I am God.*

Man and Man ſtand upon even ground; if your Fellow-Creature do any thing that diſpleaſes you, you may not only enquire, *Who did it*, but *Why he did it*? You may demand his grounds and reaſons for what he hath done; but you may not do ſo here: It is expected that this one thing, *The Lord hath done it*, ſhould, without any farther Diſputes, or Conteſts, ſilence and quiet you, whatever it be that he hath done, Job. 33. 13. *Why doſt thou ſtrive againſt him? for he giveth not an account of any of his Matters.* The Supream Being muſt needs be an unaccountable and uncontroulable Being.

It's a ſhame for a Child to ſtrive with his Father; a ſhame for a Servant to contend with his Maſter: but for a Creature to quarrel and ſtrive with the God that made him, O how ſhameful is it? Surely it is highly reaſonable that you be ſubject to that Will whence you proceeded, and that he who formed you and yours, ſhould diſpoſe of both as ſeemeth him good. It is ſaid, 2 Sam. 3. 36. *That whatſoever the King did, pleaſed all the People*: And ſhall any thing the Lord doth diſpleaſe you? He can do no wrong. If we pluck a Roſe in the bud as we walk in our Gardens, who ſhall blame us for it, it is our own, and we may crop it off when we pleaſe: Is not this the caſe? Thy ſweet

Bud which was cropt off before it was fully blown, was cropt off by him that owned it, yea, by him him that formed it. If his dominion be abſolute, ſure his diſpoſal ſhould be acceptable.

It was ſo to good *Eli*, 1 Sam. 3. 18. *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* And it was ſo to *David*, Pſal. 39. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth; becauſe thou didſt it.* O let it be for ever remembred, *That he whoſe name alone is Jehovah, is the moſt high over all the Earth*, Pſal. 83. 18.

The glorious Sovereignty of God is illuſtriouſly diſplayed in Two Things, his *Decrees* and his *Providences*. With reſpect to the firſt he ſaith *Rom.* 9. 15. *I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy.* Here is no ground of diſputing with him; for ſo it is ſaid, *ver.* 20. *Who art thou, O Man, that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus?* Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay.

And as to his *Providences*, wherein his Soveraignty is alſo manifeſted. It's ſaid *Zech.* 2. 14. *Be ſilent, O all Fleſh, before the Lord, for he is raiſed up out of his Habitation.* It's ſpoken of his Providential working in the changes of Kingdoms, and deſolations that attend them.

Now ſeeing the Caſe ſtands thus, that the Lord hath done it, it is his Pleaſure to have it ſo; and if it had not been his Will, it could never have been as it is: He that gave thee, (rather lent thee) thy Relation, hath taken him. O how quiet ſhould this Conſideration leave thee! If your *Landlord* who hath many Years ſuffered you to dwell in his Houſe, do at laſt warn you out of it, though he tell you not why; you will not contend with him, or ſay he hath done you wrong: Much leſs if he tell you it will be more for his profit and Accommodation to take it into his own Hand, than let it to you any longer.

Doubtleſs Reaſon will tell you, you ought quietly to pack up and quit it. It's yonr great Landlord from whom you hold (at pleaſure) your own, and your Relations Lives, that hath now *warned* you out from one of them, it being more for his glory (it may be) to take it in his own Hand by Death; and muſt you diſpute the caſe with him?

Come, Chriſtian, this no way becomes thee, but rather *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.* Look off from a dead Creature, lift up thine Eyes to the Sovereign, Wiſe, and Holy Pleaſure that ordered this Affliction: Conſider who he is, and who thou art; yea, purſue this Conſideration till thou canſt ſay, I am filled with the Will of God.

2. Conſid. *Ponder well the quality of the comfort you are deprived of, and remember, that when you had it, it ſtood but in the rank and order of common and inferiour Comforts.*

Children and all other Relations are but common Bleſſings, which God indifferently beſtows upon his Friends and Enemies, and by the having or loſing of them, no Man knows either Love or Hatred. It is ſaid of the Wicked, *Pſal.* 77. 14. That they are full of Children, yea, and of Children that do ſurvive them too; for, *They leave their Subſtance to their Babes.* Full of Sin, yet full of Children, and theſe Children live to inherit their Parents Sins and Eſtates together.

It is the miſtaking of the quality and nature of our Enjoyments, that ſo plunges us into trouble when we loſe them. We think there is ſo neceſſary a connexion betwixt theſe Creatures and our Happineſs, that we are utterly undone when they fail us.

But this is our Miſtake; there is no ſuch neceſſary connexion or dependance, we may be happy without theſe things. It is not Father, Mother, Wife, or Child, in which our chief Good and Felicity lies, we have higher, better, and more enduring things than theſe, all theſe may periſh, and yet our Soul ſecure and ſafe, yea and our Comfort in the way, as well as end, may be ſafe enough though theſe be gone. God hath better things to comfort his People with than theſe, and worſe Rods to afflict you with than the removal of theſe: Had God let your Children live and flouriſh, and given you eaſe and reſt in your Tabernacle, but in the mean time inflicted Spiritual Judgments upon your Souls, How much more ſad had your Caſe been?

But as long as our beſt Mercies are all ſafe, the things that have Salvation in them remain, and only the things that have Vanity in them are removed: You are not prejudiced, or much hindred as to the attainment of your laſt end by the loſs of theſe things.

Alas, it was not Chriſt's intent to purchaſe for you a ſenſual Content in the enjoyment of theſe Earthly Comforts, but to redeem you from all Iniquity; Purge your Corruptions, Sanctifie your Natures, wean your Hearts from this vain World; and ſo to diſpoſe and order your preſent Condition, that finding no reſt and content here, you might the more ardently pant and ſigh after the Reſt which remains for the People of God. And are you not in as probable a way to attain this end now as you were before? Do you think you are not as likely by theſe Methods of Providence to be weaned from the World, as by more pleaſant and proſperous ones: Every wiſe Man reckons that ſtation and condition to be beſt for him, which moſt promotes and ſecures his laſt End and great Deſign.

Well then, reckon you are as well without theſe things as with them; yea, and better too, if they were but Clogs and Snares upon your Affections, you have really loſt nothing, if the things wherein your eternal Happineſs conſiſteth be yet ſafe. Many of God's deareſt Children have been denied ſuch Comforts as theſe, and many have been deprived of them, and yet never the farther from Chriſt and Heaven for that.

3. Conſider. *Always remember that how ſoon and unexpected ſoever your parting with your Relations was, yet your Leaſe was expired before you loſt them, and you enjoyed them every Moment of the time that God intended them for you.*

Before this Relation, whoſe loſs you lament,

ment, was born, the time of your Enjoyment and Separation was unalterably fixed and limited in Heaven, by the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh: And although it was a Secret to you, whilſt your Friend was with you: Yet now it is a plain and evident thing, that this was the time of Separation before appointed; and that the life of our Friend could by no means be protracted or abbreviated, but muſt keep you company juſt ſo far, and then part with you.

This poſition wants no full and clear Scripture Authority for its foundation, how pregnant and full is that Text, *Job.* 24. 5, 6. *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his Months are with thee: Thou haſt appointed him his bounds which he cannot paſs.*

The time of our Life, as well as the place of our Habitation, was prefixed before we were born.

It will greatly conduce to your Settlement and Peace to be well eſtabliſhed in this truth: That the appointed time was fully come, when you and your dear Relation parted; for it will prevent and ſave a great deal of trouble which comes from our after Reflexions.

O, if this had been done or that omitted, had it not been for ſuch Miſcarriages and Over ſights, my dear Husband, Wife, or Child, had been alive at this day! no, no, the Lord's time was fully come, and all things concurred and fell in together to bring about the Pleaſure his Will; let that ſatisfie you; had the ableſt Phyſicians in the World been there, or had they that were there, preſcribed another Courſe, as, it is now, ſo it would have have been when they had done all. Only it muſt be precautioned, that the decree of God no way excuſes any voluntary ſinful neglects or miſcarriages. God over-rules theſe things to ſerve his own Ends, but no way approves them; but it greatly relieves, againſt all our involuntary and unavoidable over-ſights, and miſtakes about the uſe of means or the timing of them; for it could not be otherwiſe than now it is.

*Object.* But many things are alledged againſt this Poſition, and that with much ſeeming countenance from ſuch Scriptures as theſe Pſal. 54. 25. *Blood-thirſty Men ſhall not live out half their Days.* Eccleſ. 7. 18. *Why ſhouldeſt thou die before thy time.* Pſal. 102. 24. *O my God, take me not away in the midſt of my days.* Iſa. 28. 10. *I am deprived of the reſidue of my Years.* And Prov. 10. 27. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth Days, but the Years of the wicked ſhall be ſhortned.* It is demanded, what tolerable Senſe we can give theſe Scriptures, whilſt we inſert an unalterable fixation of the term of Death.

*Sol.* The ſenſe of all theſe Scriptures will be cleared up to full ſatisfaction by diſtinguiſhing death and the terms of it.

Firſt we muſt diſtinguiſh Death into
Natural
and
Violent.

The wicked and blood-thirſty Man ſhall not live out half his days; (*i.e.*) half ſo long as he might live according to the courſe of Nature, or the Vigour and Soundneſs of his natural Conſtitution: For his Wickedneſs either drowns Nature in an exceſs of Riot and Luxury, or expoſes him to the hand of Juſtice, which cuts him off for his Wickedneſs before he hath accompliſhed half his days.

Again we muſt diſtinguiſh of the term or limit for death, which is either,

General
or
Special.

The general limit is now ſeventy or eighty Years, Pſal. 90. 10. *The days of our years are threeſcore Years and ten, and if by reaſon of ſtrength they be fourſcore Years, yet is their Strength Labour and Sorrow.* To this ſhort limit the Life of Man is generally reduced ſince the Flood; and though there be ſome few exceptions, yet the general rule is not thereby deſtroyed.

The ſpecial limit is that proportion of time, which God by his own Counſel and Will hath allotted to every individual perſon: and it is only known to us by the event: This we affirm to be a fixed and unmovable term, with it all things ſhall fall in, and obſerve the Will of God in our diſſolution at that time. But becauſe the general limit is known, and this ſpecial limit is a Secret hid in God's own Breaſt; Therefore Man reckons by the former account, and may be ſaid when he dies at thirty or forty years old to be cut off in the midſt of his days; for it is ſo, reckoning by the general account: Though he be not cut off till the end of his days; reckoning by the ſpecial limit.

Thus he that is wicked dies before his time; (*i. e.*) the time he might attain to in an ordinary way: But not before the time God hath appointed. And ſo in all other objected Scripture.

It is not proper at all in a Subject of this nature to digreſs into a Controverſie. Alas, the poor Mourner, overwhelmed with Grief, hath no Pleaſure in that; it is not proper for him at this time; and therefore I ſhall for the preſent, wave the controverſie, and wind up this conſideration with an humble and ſerious motion to the afflicted; that they will wiſely conſider the matter. The Lord's time was come. Your Relations lived with you every moment that God intended them for you, before you had them.

O Parents! mind this I beſeech you; the time of your Child's continuance in the Womb, was fixed to a minute by the Lord; and when the parturient fullneſs of that time was come, Were you not willing it ſhould be delivered thence into the World? The tender Mother would not have it abide one Minute longer in the Womb, how well ſoever ſhe loved it; And is there not the ſame reaſon we ſhould be willing when God's appointed time is come to have it delivered by death out of this ſtate, which in reſpect

ſpect of the Life of Heaven, is but as the Life of a Child in the Womb, to its Life in the open World.

And let none ſay the death of Children is a præmature death. God hath ways to ripen them for Heaven, whom he intends to gather thither betimes, which we know not: In reſpect of fitneſs they die in a full age, though they be cut off in the bud of their time.

He that appointed the Seaſons of the Year, appointed the Seaſons of our Comfort in our Relations: And as thoſe ſeaſons cannot be altered, no more can theſe. All the courſe of Providence is guided by an unalterable decree; what falls out caſually to our apprehenſion, yet falls out neceſſarily in reſpect of God's Appointment.

O therefore be quieted in it, this muſt needs be as it is.

4. Conſid. *Hath God ſmitten your Darling, and taken away the delight of your Eyes with this ſtroke? Bear this Stroke with Patience and quiet Submiſſion: For how know you but your Trouble might have been greater from the life, than it is from the death of your Children?*

Sad Experience made a Holy Man once to ſay, It's better to weep for ten dead Children, than for one living Child: A living Child may prove a continual drooping, yea, a continual dying to the Parents Heart. What a ſad Word was that of *David* to *Abaſhai*, 2 Sam. 16. 11. *Behold*, ſaith he, *my Son which came out of my Bowels ſeeketh my Life.* I remember *Seneca* in his Conſolatory Epiſtle to his Friend *Marullus*, brings in his Friend thus aggravating the death of his Child.

O, ſaith *Marullus*, *Had my Child lived with me, to how great Modeſty, Gravity and Prudence might my diſcipline have formed and moulded him?* But, ſaith Seneca, (*which is more to be feared*) *he might have been as others moſtly are; for look* (ſaith he) *what Children come even out of the Worthieſt Families; ſuch who exerciſe both their own and others luſts; in all whoſe Life there is not a day without the mark of ſome notorious Wickedneſs upon it.*

**Seneca's Epiſt. p. 84.**

I know your tender love to your Children will ſcarce admit ſuch Jealouſies of them, they are for the preſent ſweet, lovely, innocent Companions; and you doubt not but by your care of their Education, and Prayer for them, they might have been the Joy of your Hearts.

Why, doubtleſs *Eſau*, when he was little and in his tender Age, promiſed as much Comfort to his Parents as *Jacob* did; and I queſtion not but *Iſaac* and *Rebecca* (a gracious Pair) ſpent as many Prayers, and beſtowed as many Holy Counſels upon him as they did upon his Brother: But when the Child grew up to riper Years, then he became a ſharp affliction to his Parents; for it is ſaid Gen. 26. 34. *That when* Eſau *was forty years old, he took to Wife* Judith *the Daughter of* Berith *the* Hittite, *which was a grief of Mind to* Iſaac *and* Rebecca. The word in the Original, comes from a Root that ſignifies to imbitter: This Child imbittered the Minds of his Parents by his Rebellion againſt them, and deſpiſing their Counſels.

רוח מרה *erant amaritudo animi.*

And I cannot doubt but *Abraham* diſciplin'd his Family as ſtrictly as any of you, never Man received a higher Encomium from God upon that account, Gen. 18. 19. *I know him, that he will command his Children and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord.* Nor can I think but he beſtowed as many and as frequent Prayers for his Children, and particularly for his *Iſhmael*, as any of you: We find one, and that a very pathetical one recorded, Gen 17. 18. O! *that Iſhmael might live before thee*: And yet you know how he proved, a Son that yielded him no more comfort, than *Eſau* did to *Jacob* and *Rebecca*.

O how much more common is it for Parents to ſee the vices and evils of their Children, than their vertues and graces? And where one Parent lives to rejoice in beholding the Grace of God ſhining forth in the Life of his Child, there are twenty, it may be an hundred, that live to behold, to their vexation and grief, the workings of Corruptions in them.

It is a note of *Plutarch* in his Morals, *Nicocles* (ſaith he) lived not to ſee the noble Victory obtained by *Themiſtocles*, his Son. Nor *Melitades* to ſee the Battle his Son *Cimon* won in the Field. Nor *Zantippus* to hear his Son *Perciles* Preach, and make Orations. *Ariſton* never heard his Son *Plato*'s Lectures and Diſputatious. But Men (ſaith he) commonly live to ſee their Children fall a Gaming, Revelling, Drinking, and Whoring; multitudes live to ſee ſuch things to their Sorrow. And if thou be a gracious Soul, O what a cut would this be to thy very Heart! to ſee thoſe (as *David* ſpake of his *Abſalom*) that came out of thy bowels to be ſinning againſt God, that God whom thou loveſt, and whoſe Honour is dearer to thee than thy very Life!

*Plut Mo*
p. 222.

But admit they ſhould prove civil and hopeful Children, yet mighteſt thou not live to ſee more miſery come upon them than thou couldeſt endure to ſee? O think what a ſad and doleful ſight was that to *Zedekiah*, Jer. 50. 10. *The King of Babylon brought his Children and ſlew them before his Eyes.* Horrid Spectacle! and that leads to the

5. Conſid. *How know you but by this ſtroke which you ſo lament, God hath taken them away from the Evil to come?*

It is God's uſual way when ſome extraordinary calamities are coming upon the world, to hide ſome of his weak and tender ones out of the way by Death, *Iſa.* 57. 1, 2. He leaves ſome and removes others, but taketh care for the ſecurity of all. He provided a grave for *Methuſalah* before the flood. The Grave is an hiding place to ſome, and God ſees it better for them to be under Ground, than above Ground in ſuch evil days.

Juſt as a careful and tender Father, who hath a Son abroad at School, hearing the Plague is broken out in, or near the place, ſends his Horſe preſently to fetch home his Son, before the danger and difficulty be greater. Death is our Father's Pale Horſe, which he ſends to fetch home his tender Children, and carry them out of harms way.

Surely when National Calamities are drawing on, it is far better for our Friends to be in the Grave in Peace, than expoſed to the Miſeries and diſtreſſes that are here, which is the meaning of *Jer* 22. 10. *Weep not for the Dead, neither bemoan him; but weep for him that goeth away, for he ſhall return no more, nor ſee his Native Country.*

And is there not a dreadful ſound of Troubles now in our Ears? Do not the Clouds gather blackneſs? Surely all things round about us ſeem to be preparing and diſpoſing themſelves for Affliction. The days may be nigh in which you ſhall ſay, *Bleſſed is the Womb that never bare, and the Paps that never gave ſuck.*

It was in the day wherein the Faith and Patience of the Saints were exerciſed, that *John* heard a Voice from Heaven, ſaying to him, *Write, Bleſſed are the Dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.*

Thy Friend by an act of Favour is diſbanded by Death, whilſt thou thy ſelf art left to endure a great fight of Affliction. And now if troubles come, thy cares and fears will be ſo much the leſs, and thy own death ſo much the eaſier to thee; when ſo much of thee is in Heaven already. In this caſe, the Lord by a Merciful Diſpenſation is providing both for their ſafety, and thy own eaſier paſſage to them.

In removing thy Friends before hand, he ſeems to ſay to thee as he did to *Peter*, John 14. 7. *What I do thou knoweſt not now, but hereafter thou ſhalt know it.* The Eye of Providence hath a Proſpect far beyond thine; it would be in probability an harder Task for thee to leave them behind, than to follow them.

A Tree that is deeply rooted in the Earth, requires many ſtroaks to fell it, but when its Roots are looſened before-hand, then an eaſie ſtroke lays it down upon the Earth.

6. Conſider. *A parting time muſt needs come. And why is not this as good as another?* You knew before-hand your Child or Friend was Mortal, and that the Thread that linked you together, muſt be cut. If any one (ſaith *Baſil*) had asked you, when your Child was born, what is that which is born? what would you have anſwered? Would you not have ſaid it is a Man? And if a Man; then a Mortal vaniſhing thing. And why then are you ſurprized with wonder to ſee a dying thing dead?

*quo ani-*
*excipe*
*ſſaria,*
*m multi*
*luctum*
*m lugent?*
Ep. 99.

He (ſaith *Seneca*) who complains that one is dead, complains that he was a Man. All Men are under the ſame condition, to whoſe ſhare it falls to be born, to him it remains to die.

cca's
ſt. 8c4.

We are indeed diſtinguiſhed by the Intervals, but equalized in the iſſue: *it is appointed to all Men once to die*, Heb. 9. 27. There is a Statute-Law of Heaven in the caſe.

Poſſibly you think this is the worſt time for parting that could be; had you enjoyed it longer, you could have parted eaſier, but how are you deceived in that? The longer you had enjoyed it, the loather ſtill you would have been to leave it: The deeper it would have rooted it ſelf in your affection.

Had God given you ſuch a Priviledge as was once granted to the *Engliſh Parliament*; that the Union betwixt you and your Friend ſhould not be diſſolved, till you your ſelf were willing it ſhould be diſſolved; When, think you, would you have been willing it ſhould be diſſolved?

It's well for us and ours, that our times are in God's Hand, and not in our own. And how immature ſoever it ſeemed to be when it was cut down; yet it *came to the Grave in a full Age, as a ſhock of Corn in its Seaſon*, Job. 5. 26. *They that are in Chriſt*, and in the Covenant, never die unſeaſonably whenſoever they die (ſaith one upon the Text) *They die in a good old Age, Yea, though they die in the Spring and Flower of Youth, they die in a good old Age*; i. e. *They are ripe for Death whenever they die. Whenever the Godly die, it's Harveſt-time with him: Though in a natural Capacity he be cut down while he is green, and cropt in the bud or bloſſom; yet in his Spiritual Capacity he never dies before he is ripe; God can ripen his ſpeedily, he can let out ſuch warm rays and beams of his Spirit upon them, as ſhall ſoon maturate the ſeeds of Grace into a preparedneſs for Glory.*

Car. in Loc.

It was doubtleſs the moſt fit and ſeaſonable time for them that ever they could die in, and as it is a fit time for them, ſo for you alſo. Had it lived longer, it might either have engaged you more, and ſo your parting would have been harder; or elſe have puzzled and ſtumbled you more by diſcovering its natural Corruption: And then what a ſtinging aggravation of your Sorrow would that have been?

Surely the Lord of time is the beſt Judge of time; and in nothing do we more diſcover our folly, and raſhneſs, than in preſuming to fix the times either of our comforts or troubles: As to our comforts, we never think they can come too ſoon; we would have them preſently, whether the Seaſon be fit or not, as *Numb.* 12. 13. *Heal her now, Lord.* O let it be done ſpeedily; we are in poſt-haſt for our Comforts; and for our Afflictions, we never think they come late enough; not at this time, Lord, rather at any other time than now.

But it is good to leave the timing both of the one and the other to him, whoſe works are all beautiful in their Seaſons, and never doth any thing in an improper time.

7. Conſider. *Call to mind in this day of trouble, the Covenant you have with God, and what you ſolemnly promiſed him in the Day you took him for your God.*

It will be very ſeaſonable and uſeful for thee, Chriſtian, at this time to reflect upon theſe tranſactions, and the frame of thy Heart in thoſe days, when an heavier load of Sorrow preſt thy Heart, than thou now feeleſt.

In thoſe your ſpiritual diſtreſſes, when the Burden of Sin lay heavy, the curſe of the Law, the fear of Hell, the dread of Death and Eternity beſet thee on every ſide; and ſhut thee up to Chriſt, the only door of Hope: Ah what good news wouldeſt thou then have accounted it, to eſcape that danger with the loſs of all earthly Comforts!

Was not this thy cry in thoſe days? 'Lord, 'give me Chriſt, and deny me whatever 'elſe thou pleaſeſt. Pardon my Sin, ſave ‘my Soul, and in order to both, unite me with Chriſt, and I will never repine or open my Mouth. Do what thou wilt with me; let me be Friendleſs, let me be Childleſs, let me be Poor, let me be any thing rather than a Chriſtleſs, Graceleſs, Hopeleſs Soul.

And when the Lord hearkened to thy cry, and ſhewed thee mercy, when he drew thee off from the world into thy cloſet, and there treated with thee in ſecret, when he was working up thy Heart to the terms of his Covenant, and made thee willing to accept Chriſt upon his own terms: O then how heartily didſt thou ſubmit to his yoke as moſt reaſonable and eaſie, as at that time it ſeemed to thee?

Call to mind theſe days, the ſecret places where Chriſt and you made the bargain. Have not theſe words, or words to this ſenſe, been whiſpered by thee into his ear with a dropping Eye, and melting Heart?

‘Lord Jeſus, here am I a Poor Guilty Sinner, deeply laden with Sin, fear and trouble upon one hand, and there is a juſt God, a ſevere Law, and everlaſting burnings on the other hand; but bleſſed be God, O bleſſed be God for Jeſus the Mediator, who interpoſeth betwixt me and it. Thou art the only door of hope at which I can eſcape, thy blood the only means of my Pardon and Salvation. Thou haſt ſaid, *Come unto me all ye that Labour, and are heavy Laden.* Thou haſt promiſed that he that cometh to thee ſhall in no wiſe be caſt out.

‘Bleſſed Jeſus, thy poor Creature cometh to thee upon theſe encouragements: I come, O but it is with many ſtaggerings, with many doubts and fears of the Iſſue; yet I am willing to come and make a Covenant with thee this day.

‘I take thee this day to be my Lord, and ſubmit heartily to all thy diſpoſals: Do what thou wilt with me or with mine: let me be Rich or Poor, any thing or nothing in this World. I am willing to be as thou wouldſt have me. And I do likewiſe give my ſelf to thee this day to be thine; all I am, all I have ſhall be thine; thine to ſerve thee, and thine to be diſpoſed at thy Pleaſure. Thou ſhalt henceforth be my higheſt Lord, my chiefeſt Good, my laſt End.

Now, Chriſtian, make good to Chriſt what thou ſo ſolemlny promiſedſt him. *He*, I ſay, he hath diſpoſed of this thy dear Relation as pleaſed him; and is thereby trying thy uprightneſs in the Covenant which thou mad'ſt with him: Now where is the ſatisfaction and content thou promiſedſt to take in all his diſpoſals? Where is that Covenanted ſubmiſſion to his Will? didſt thou accept this affliction that is come upon thee?

Didſt thou tell him, Lord, I will be content thou ſhalt when thou pleaſeſt take any thing I have, ſave only this Husband, this Wife or this dear Child; I reſerve this out of the bargain: I ſhall never indure that thou ſhouldſt kill this comfort? If ſo, thou didſt in all this but prove thy ſelf an hypocrite: If thou waſt ſincere in thy covenant, as Chriſt had no reſerves on his part, ſo thou hadſt none on thine.

It was all without any exception thou then deſignedſt to him, and now wilt thou go back from thy Word, as one that had out-promiſed himſelf, and repents the bargain? Or at leaſt as one that hath forgotten theſe ſolemn tranſactions in the days of thy diſtreſs? Wherein hath Chriſt failed in one tittle that he promiſed thee? Charge him if thou canſt with the leaſt unfaithfulneſs: He hath been faithful to a title on his part; O be thou ſo upon thine; this day it's put to the proof, remember what thou haſt promiſed him.

8. Conſider. *But if thy Covenant with God will not quiet thee, yet methinks God's Covenant with thee might be preſumed to do it.*

Is thy Family which was lately hopeful and flouriſhing, a peaceful Tabernacle, now broken up and ſcattered? Thy Poſterity, from which thou raiſedſt up to thy ſelf great expectations of comfort in old age, cut off? So that thou art now like neither to have a name or memorial left thee in the Earth.

Doſt thou ſit alone and mourn to think whitherto thy hopes and comforts are now come?

Doſt read over thoſe Words of *Job*, Chap. 29. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. and comment upon them with many tears, *O that I were as in Months paſt, as in the day when God preſerved me! when his candle ſhined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkneſs! As I was in the days of my youth, when the ſecret of God was upon my Tabernacle, when the Almighty was yet with me, when my Children were about me.*

Yet let the Covenant God hath made with thee, comfort thee in this thy deſolate condition.

You know what domeſtick troubles holy *David* met with in a ſad ſucceſſion, not only from the death of Children; but which was much worſe, from the wicked lives of his Children. There was Inceſt, Murder, and Rebellion in his Family; a far ſorer trial than death in their Infancy could have been: And yet ſee how ſweetly he relieves himſelf from the Covenant of Grace, in 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. *Although my houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant, ordered in all things and ſure; for this is all my Salvation, and my deſire, although he make it not to grow.*

I know this place principally refers to Chriſt, who was to ſpring out of *David*'s Family according to God's Covenant made with him in that behalf: And yet I doubt not but it hath another, though leſs principal aſpect upon his own Family; over all the afflictions and troubles whereof the *Covenant* of God with him, did abundantly comfort him.

And as it comforted him, although his Houſe did not increaſe, and thoſe that were left were not ſuch as he deſired: So it may abundantly comfort you alſo, whatever troubles or deaths be upon your Families, who have an Intereſt in the Covenant. For,

*Firſt*, If you be God's Covenant People, though he may *afflict*, yet he will never *forget* you, *Pſal.* 3. 5. He is ever mindful *of his Covenant.* You are as much upon his Heart in your deepeſt afflictions, as in the greateſt flouriſh of your Proſperity.

You find it hard to forget your Child, though it be now turned to an heap of corruption, and loathſom rottenneſs; O how doth your mind run upon it night and day! your thoughts tire not upon that object: Why, ſurely it's much more eaſie for you to forget your dear Child whilſt living and moſt endearing, (much more when dead and undeſireable) than it is for your God to forget you, Iſa 49. 15. *Can a Woman forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion upon the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee.*

*Can a Woman*, the more affectionate Sex, *forget her Sucking Child*; her own Child, and not a nurſing Child: Her own Child, whilſt it hangs on the Breaſt, and together with the Milk from the Breaſt, draws love from its Mothers Heart: Can ſuch a thing as this be in Nature? Poſſibly it may; for Creature-Love is fickle and variable: But *I will not forget thee*; it's an Everlaſting Covenant.

*Secondly.* As he will never forget you in your Troubles; ſo he will order all your Troubles for your good; it's a *well-ordered Covenant*, or a Covenant orderly diſpoſed: So that every thing ſhall work together for your good.

The Covenant ſo orders all your Trials, ranks and diſpoſes your various Troubles ſo, as that they ſhall in their orders and places ſweetly co-operate, and join their united influences to make you happy.

Poſſibly you cannot ſee how the preſent Affliction ſhould be for your good, you are ready to ſay with *Jacob*, Gen. 42. 36. *Joſeph is not, and Simeon is not; and ye will take Benjamin away; all theſe things are againſt me.* But could you once ſee how ſweetly and orderly all theſe Afflictions work under the Bleſſing and Influence of the Covenant to your Eternal Good; you would not only be quiet, but thankful for that which now ſo much afflicts and troubles you.

*Thirdly*, This Covenant is not only well ordered in all things, but *ſure*, the Mercies contained in it are called *the ſure Mercies of David*, Iſa. 55. 3. Now how ſweet, how ſeaſonable a ſupport doth this Conſideration give to God's afflicted under the Rod! You lately made your ſelves *ſure* of that Creature-Comfort which hath forſaken you. It may be you ſaid of your Child which is now gone, as *Lamech* ſaid of his Son *Noah*, Gen. 5. 29. *This ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our Hands.* Meaning that his Son ſhould not only comfort them by aſſiſting them in the work of their Hands, but for enjoying the fruit of their toil and pains for him.

Probably ſuch Thoughts you have had, and raiſed up to your ſelves great Expectations of Comfort in your old age from it; but now you ſee you built upon the Sand; and where were you now, if you had not a firmer bottom to build upon? But bleſſed be God, the Covenant-Mercies are more ſure and ſolid: God, Chriſt, and Heaven, never ſtart or fade as theſe things do.

The ſweeteſt Creature-Enjoyments you ever had or have in this World, cannot ſay to you as your God doth, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee.* You muſt part with your dear Husbands, how well ſoever you love them; you muſt bid adieu to the Wife of your Boſom, how nearly ſoever your affections be linked, and Heart delighted in her. Your Children and you muſt be ſeparated, though they be to you as your own Soul.

But though theſe vaniſh away, bleſſed be God there is ſomething that abides. *Though all Fleſh be as Graſs, and the Goodlineſs of it as the Flower of the Graſs, though the Graſs withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth, becauſe the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; yet the Word of our God ſhall ſtand for ever.* Iſa. 40. 6, 7, 8. There is ſo much of Support contained in this one Conſideration, that could but your Faith fix here, to realize and apply it, I might lay down my Pen at this Period, and ſay, the Work is done, there needs no more.

9. Conſid. *The hope of the Reſurrection ſhould powerfully reſtrain all exceſſes of Sorrow in thoſe that do profeſs it.*

Let them only mourn without *meaſure*, who mourn without *Hope*. The Husbandman doth not mourn when he caſts bis Seed-corn into the Earth, becauſe he ſows in hope; commits it to the ground with an expectation to receive it again with improvement. Why thus ſtands the caſe here, and juſt ſo the Apoſtle ſtates it, 1 Theſ. 4. 13, 14. *But I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not even as others that have no hope; for if we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.*

Q. D. Look not upon the Dead as a loſt Generation: Think not that Death hath anihilated and utterly deſtroyed them. O no, they are not dead, but only aſleep, and if they ſleep, they ſhall awake again. You don't uſe to make out-cries and lamentations for your Children and Friends when you find them aſleep upon their Beds. Why, Death is but a longer ſleep, out of which they ſhall as ſurely awake as ever they did in the Morning in this World.

I have often wondred at that golden Sentence in *Seneca*, *My Thoughts of the Dead* (ſaith he) *are not as others are; I have fair and pleaſant Apprehenſions of them, for I enjoyed them as one that reckoned I muſt part with them; and I part with them as one that makes account to have them.*

*Habui enim illos tanquam amiſſurus, amiſi tanquam habe.* Seneca Ep. 63.

He ſpeaks, no doubt, of that enjoyment of them, which his pleaſant Contemplations of their Vertuous Actions could give him; for he was wholly unacquainted with the comfortable and Heart ſupporting Doctrine of the Reſurrection. Had he known the Advantages which reſult thence, at what a rate may we think he would have ſpoken of the Dead and of their State? But this you profeſs to believe, and yet ſink at a ſtrange rate. O ſuffer not *Gentiliſm* to outvie *Chriſtianity*: Let not *Pagans* challenge the greateſt *Believers*, to out-do them in a quiet and cheerful Behaviour under Afflictions.

I beſeech thee, Reader, if thy deceaſed

Friend have left thee any ſolid ground of hope that he died intereſted in Chriſt, and the Covenant; that thou wilt diſtinctly ponder theſe admirable ſupports which the Doctrine of the Reſurrection affords.

*Firſt.* That the ſame Body which was ſo pleaſant a Spectacle to thee ſhall be reſtored again; yea, the ſame *numerically*, as well as the ſame *ſpecifically*: So that it ſhall not only be *what* it was, but the *who* it was. *Theſe Eyes ſhall behold him, and not another,* Job 19. 27, *&c.* The very ſame Body you laid, or are now about to lay in the Grave, ſhall be reſtored again: Thou ſhalt find thy own Husband, Wife, or Child, or Friend again: I ſay the ſelf-ſame, and not another.

*Secondly,* And farther, this is ſupporting, that as you ſhall ſee the ſame Perſon that was ſo dear to you: So you ſhall know them to be the ſame that were once endeared to you on Earth in ſo near a tye of Relation.

Indeed you ſhall know them no more in any carnal Relation, Death diſſolved that Bond: But you ſhall know them to be ſuch as once were your dear Relations in this World, and be able to ſingle them out among that great Multitude, and ſay, This was my Father, Mother, Husband, Wife, or Child. This was the Perſon for whom I wept and made Supplication, who was an Inſtrument of good to me, or to whoſe Salvation God then made me inſtrumental.

For we may allow in that State, all that knowledge which is *cumulative* and *perfective*, whatſoever may enlarge and heighten our Felicity and Satisfaction, as this muſt needs be allowed to do. *Luther*'s Judgment in this Point being asked by his Friends at Supper the Evening before he died, replied thus, *What* (ſaid he) *befell Adam*? He never ſaw *Eve*, but was in a deep Sleep when God formed her; yet when he awaked and ſaw her, he asked not what ſhe was, nor whence ſhe came? but ſaith ſhe was Fleſh of his Fleſh, and Bone of his Bone. Now how knew he that? He being full of the Holy Ghoſt, and endued with the knowledge of God, ſpake thus. After the ſame manner we alſo ſhall be in the other Life renewed by Chriſt, and ſhall know our Parents, our Wives and Children.

Melchion Adam *in vita* Luth.

And this among other things was that with which *Auguſtine* comforted the Lady *Italica* after the death of her dear Husband, telling her that ſhe ſhould know him in the World to come among the glorified Saints. Yea, and a greater than either of theſe, I mean *Paul*, comforted himſelf that the *Theſſalonians* whom he had converted to Chriſt ſhould be *His Joy and Crown of rejoicing in the Preſence of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his coming*, 1 Theſ. 2. 19, 20. which muſt needs imply his diſtinct knowledge of them in that Day, which muſt be many hundred Years after Death hath ſeparated them from each other. Whether this knowledge ſhall be by the glorified Eyes diſcerning any lineaments or property of Individuation remaining upon the glorified Bodies of our Relations? Or whether it ſhall be by immediate Revelation as *Adam* knew his Wife; or as *Peter, James,* and *John,* knew *Moſes,* and *Elias* in the Mount, as it is difficult to determine, ſo it is needleſs to puzzle our ſelves about it.

Aug. Ep. 6.

It is the concurrent Judgment of ſound Divines, and it wants not Countenance from Scripture and Reaſon, that ſuch a knowledge of them ſhall be in Heaven: and then the ſadneſs of this parting, will be abundantly recompenced by the joy of that meeting. Eſpecially conſidering,

*Thirdly*, that at our next meeting, they ſhall be unſpeakably more deſirable, ſweet, and excellent than ever they were in this World. They had a deſireableneſs in them here, but they were not altogether lovely, and in every reſpect deſirable; they had their Infirmities both natural and moral; but all theſe are removed in Heaven, and for ever done away. No natural infirmities hang about glorified Bodies; or ſinful ones upon perfected Spirits of the Juſt. O what lovely Creatures will they appear to you then, when that which is ſown now in diſhonour ſhall be raiſed in honour! 1 *Cor.* 15. And then to Crown all,

*Fourthly*, You ſhall have an Everlaſting Enjoyment of them in Heaven, never to part again. The Children of the Reſurrection can die no more. *Luke* 20. 36. You ſhall kiſs their pale Lips, and cold Cheeks no more; you ſhall never fear another parting pull, but be together with the Lord for Ever. 1 *Theſ.* 4. 14. And this the Apoſtle thought an effectual Cordial in this caſe, when he exhorted the *Theſſalonians* to *comfort one another with theſe Words.*

10. Conſid. *The preſent Felicity into which all that die in Chriſt are preſently admitted, ſhould abundantly comfort Chriſtians over the death of ſuch as either carried a lively hope out of the World with them, or have left good grounds of ſuch an hope behind them.*

Some there are that carried a liveley hope to Heaven with them, who could evidence to themſelves and Friends their Intereſt in Chriſt and in the Covenant. Yea, though they had died in ſilence, yet their converſations would ſpeak for them, and the tenour of their Lives leave no ground of doubting touching their Death: Others dying in their Infancy and Youth, though they carried not ſuch an actual hope with them, yet they have left good grounds of hope behind them.

Parents, now ponder theſe grounds; you have prayed for them, you have many times wreſtled with the Lord on their behalf; you have taken hold of God's Covenant for them, as well as for your ſelves, and dedicated them to the Lord; and they have not by any actions of theirs deſtroyed thoſe grounds of hope, but that you may with much probability conclude they are with God.

Why, if the caſe be ſo, what abundant reaſon have you to be quiet and well ſatisfied with what God hath done? Can they be better than where they are? Had you better Proviſions and Entertainments for them here, than their Heavenly Father hath above?

There is no Chriſtian Parent in the World but would rejoice to ſee his Child out-ſtrip and get before him in Grace, that he may be more eminent in Parts and Service than ever he was: And what reaſon can be given why we ſhould not as much rejoice to ſee our Children get before us in Glory as in Grace? They are gotten to Heaven a few Years before you, and is that matter of Mourning? Would not your Child (if he were not ignorant of you) ſay as Chriſt did to his Friends a little before his death, when he ſaw them caſt down at the thoughts of parting, *Joh.* 14. 28. *If ye loved me ye would rejoice, becauſe I go unto the Father. q. d.* Do you value your own ſenſible comfort from my Bodily Preſence with you, before my Glory and advancement in Heaven? Is this the Love to me? Or is it not rather ſelf-love?

‘So would your departed Friend ſay to
‘you: You have profeſſed much Love all
‘along to me, my Happineſs ſeemed to be
‘very dear to you? How comes it to paſs
‘then that you mourn ſo exceedingly now?
‘This is rather the effect of a fond and
‘fleſhly, than of Rational and Spiritual Love:
‘If you lov'd me with a pure Spiritual Love,
‘ye would rejoice that I am gone to my Fa-
‘ther. It's infinitely better for me to be
‘here, than with you on Earth, under Sin
‘and Sorrow. Weep not for me, but for your
‘ſelves.

Alas, though you want your Friend's Company, he wants not yours: Your care was to provide for this Child, but Jeſus Chriſt hath provided infinitely better for it than you could; you intended an Eſtate, but he a Kingdom for it: You thought upon ſuch or ſuch a Match, but Chriſt hath forbid all others, and married your Child to himſelf. Would you imagine a higher Preferment for the Fruit of your Bodies?

A King from Heaven hath ſent for your Friend, and do you grudge at the Journey? O think, and think again, what an honour it is to you, that Chriſt hath taken them out of your Boſom, and laid them in his own: ſtript them out of thoſe Garments you provided, and cloathed them in White Robes waſhed in the Blood of the Lamb. Let not your Hearts be troubled, rather rejoice exceedingly that God made you Inſtruments to repleniſh Heaven, and bring forth an Heir for the Kingdom of God.

Your Child is now glorifying God in an higher way than you can; and what though you have loſt its Bodily Preſence for a time? yet, I hope, you don't reckon that to be your loſs, which turns to God's greater Glory.

When *Jacob* heard his *Joſeph* was Lord of *Egypt*, he rather wiſht himſelf with *Joſeph*, than his *Joſeph* with him in wants and ſtreights: So ſhould it be with you. You are yet rolling and toſſing upon a tempeſtuous Sea, but your Friend is gone into the quiet Harbour; deſire rather to be there, than that he were at Sea again with you.

11. Conſid. *Conſider how vain a thing all your Troubles and ſelf-vexation is: It no way betters your caſe, nor eaſes your Burthen.*

As a Bullock by wreſtling and ſweating in the Furrow, makes his Yoke to be more heavy, and galls his Neck, and ſpends his Strength the ſooner, and no ways helps himſelf by that. Why thus ſtands the caſe with thee, if thou be as a Bullock unaccuſtomed to the Yoke: What Chriſt ſaith of *caring*, we may ſay of *grieving*, (Mat. 6. 27. *Which of you by taking thought can add one Cubit to his Stature?*

Cares may break our ſleep, yea, break our Hearts: But they cannot add to our ſtature either in a natural, or in a civil Notion: So your Sorrowing may ſooner break your Hearts, than the Yoke God hath laid on you.

Alas, what is all this, but as the fluttering of a Bird in the Net, which inſtead of freeing, doth but the more entangle it ſelf? It was therefore a wiſe Reſolve of *David* in this very caſe, when the Will of God was ſignified in the Death of his Child, 2 Sam. 12. 23. *But now he is dead, wherefore ſhould I faſt? Can I bring him back again? I ſhall go to him, but he ſhall not return to me.*

Can I bring him back again? No, I can no more alter the purpoſe and work of God, than I can change the Seaſous of the Year, or alter the Courſe of Sun, Moon and Stars, or diſturb the order of the Day and Night; which are all unalterably eſtabliſhed by a firm Conſtitution and Ordinance of Heaven.

As theſe Seaſons cannot be changed by Man, ſo neither can this courſe and way of his Providences be changed, Job. 23. 13. *He is of one Mind, and who can turn him? And what his Soul deſireth, even that he doth.* Indeed while his Pleaſure and Purpoſe are unknown to us, there is room for Faſting and Prayer to prevent the thing we fear: But when the purpoſe of God is manifeſted in the Iſſue, and the ſtroke is given, then it is the vaineſt thing in the World to fret and vex our ſelves, as *David*'s Servants thought he would do, as ſoon as he ſhould hear the Child was dead, but he was wiſer than ſo, his Tears and Cries to God before, had the nature and uſe of means to prevent the Affliction; but when it was come, and could not be prevented, then they were of no uſe, to no purpoſe in the World; *Wherefore ſhould I faſt*; *q. d.* To what end, uſe or purpoſe will it be now?

Well then caſt not away your Strength and Spirits to no advantage, reſerve them for future Exerciſes and Tryals. Time may come that you may need all the ſtrength you have, and much more to ſupport greater Burthens than this.

12. Conſid. *The Lord is able to reſtore all your loſt Comforts in Relations, double to you, if you meekly ſubmit to him, and patiently wait upon him under the Rod.*

When *Eſau* had loſt his Bleſſing, he ſaid, *Haſt thou but one Bleſſing, my Father?* Gen. 27. 38. But your Father hath more Bleſſings for you than one; his Name is *The Father of Mercies*, 2 Cor. 13. He can beget and create as many Mercies for you as he pleaſeth; Relations, and the Comforts of them are at his Command.

It is but a few Months or Years paſt, and theſe Comforts whoſe Loſs you now lament were not in being; nor did you know whence they ſhould ariſe to you, yet the Lord gave the word, and commanded them for you: and if he pleaſe he can make the death of theſe but like a Scythe to the Meadow that is mown down, or a Razor to the Head that is ſhaved bare; which though it lay you under the preſent trouble and reproach of Barrenneſs, yet doth but make way for a double Increaſe, a ſecond Spring with advantage.

So that as it was with the Captive Church in reſpect of her ſpecial Children in the day of her Captivity and Reproach, the Lord made up all with Advantage to her, even to her own Aſtoniſhment, Iſa. 42. 20. *The Children which thou ſhalt have after thou haſt loſt the other, ſhall ſay again in thy Years the place is too ſtreight for me, give place to me that I may dwell.*

Thus may he deal with you, as to your natural Children and Relations: So that what the Man of God ſaid to *Amaziah*, 1 *Chron* 25. 9. may be applied to the caſe in hand, *Amaziah ſaid to the Man of God, but what ſhall we do for the hundred Talents? And the Man of God anſwered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.*

O ſay not, what I ſhall do for Friends and Relations? Death hath robbed me of all Comfort in them. Why, the Lord is able to give you much more. But then as ever you expect to ſee your future Bleſſings multiplied, look to it, and be careful that you neither diſhonour God, nor grieve him, by your unſubmiſſive and impatient Carriage under the preſent Rod.

God took away all *Job*'s Children, and that at one ſtroke, and the ſtroke immediate and extraordinary: And that when they were grown up, and planted (at leaſt ſome of them) in diſtinct Families; yea, whilſt they were endearing each other by the mutual Expreſſions of Affection. This muſt be yielded to be an extraordinary Tryal; yet he meekly receives, and patiently bears it from the Hand of the Lord.

You have heard of the Patience of *Job*, (ſaith the Apoſtle, *Jam.* 5. 11.) *and ſeen the End of the Lord.* Not only the gracious end or intention of the Lord in all his Afflictions, but the happy End and Iſſue the Lord gave to all his Afflictions, of which you have the account, Job. 42. 10. *The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.* The number of his Children was not double to what he had, as all his other Comforts were: But though the Lord only reſtored the ſame number to him again that he took away, yet it's like the Comfort he had in theſe latter Children was double to what he had in the former. There's nothing loſt by waiting patiently, and ſubmitting willingly to the Lord's diſpoſe.

It is as eaſie with the Lord to revive, as it is to remove your Comforts in Relations. There is a ſweet Expreſſion to this purpoſe in Pſal. 81. 28. *For thou Lord wilt light my Candle, the Lord my God will enlighten my Darkneſs.*

Every comfortable Enjoyment, whether it be in Relations, Eſtate, Health, or Friends, is a Candle lighted by Providence for our Comfort in this World, and they are but Candles, which will not always laſt, and thoſe that laſt longeſt will be conſumed and waſted at laſt; but oftentimes it falls out with them as with Candles, they are blown out before they are half conſumed; yea, almoſt as ſoon as lighted up, and then we are in darkneſs for the preſent.

It's a dark Hour with us when theſe Comforts are put out: But *David*'s Faith did, and ours may comfort us with this, That he that blew out the candle, can light up another. *Thou Lord ſhall light my Candle, the Lord my God ſhall enlighten my Darkneſs*, that is, the Lord will renew my Comforts, alter the preſent ſad Eſtate I am in, and chaſe away that trouble and darkneſs which at preſent lies upon me. Only beware of offending him at whoſe beck your Lights and Comforts come and go. *Michael* diſpleaſed the Lord and therefore had no Child unto the day of her Death. 2 *Sam.* 6. 23.

*Hannah* waited humbly upon the Lord for the Bleſſing of Children, and the Lord remembred her, he enlightned her Condition with that Comfort when ſhe was as a Lamp deſpiſed. There is no Comfort you have loſt, but God can reſtore it, yea, double it in kind, if he ſee it convenient for you. And if not then,

13. Conſid. *Conſider, Though he ſhould deny you any more Comforts of that kind, yet he hath far better to beſtow upon you, ſuch as theſe deſerve not to be named with.*

You have an excellent Scripture to this purpoſe in Iſa. 56. 4, 5. *For thus ſaith the Lord unto the Eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths; and chuſe the things that pleaſe me, and take hold of my Covenant; even to them will I give in my Houſes, and within my Walls a place and a name better than of Sons and of Daughters: I will give them an Everlaſting Name that ſhall not be cut off.*

Mens Names are ſaid to be continued in their Iſſue, in their Male Iſſue eſpecially, and conſequently to fail in ſuch as wanted Iſſue, *Numb.* 17. 4. And a numerous Iſſue is deemed no ſmall Honour, *Pſal.* 127. 4, 5. God therefore promiſed here to ſupply and make good the want of Iſſue, and of whatſoever either Honour here, or Memorial hereafter might from it have accrued to them, but beſtowing upon them matter of far greater honour, and more durable; a Name better or before the Name of Sons or Daughters.

Vide gliſh Annotation i Loc.

It's a greater honour to be the Child of God, than to have the greateſt Honour or Comfort that ever Children afforded their Parents in this World.

Poor Heart, thou art now dejected by this Affliction that lies upon thee, as if all Joy and Comfort were now cut off from thee in this World.

A Cloud dwells upon all other Comforts, this Affliction hath ſo imbittered thy Soul, that thou taſteſt no more in any other earthly Comforts, than in the White of an Egg. O that thou didſt but conſider the Conſolations that are with God for ſuch as anſwer his ends in Affliction, and patiently wait on him for their Comfort! He hath

Comforts for you far tranſcending the Joy of Children.

This ſome have found when their Children have been cut off from them, and that in ſo eminent a Degree; that they have little valued their Comfort in Children in compariſon with this Comfort.

I will therefore ſet down a pregnant Inſtance of the point in hand, as I find it recorded by the grave and worthy Author of that Excellent Book Entituled, *The fulfilling of the Scripture.*

Fulfilling of the Scripture, pag. 91.

'Another notable Inſtance of Grace, with a very remarkable Paſſage in his Condition, I ſhall here mention. One *Patrick Mackewrath*, who lived in the Weſt Parts of *Scotland*, whoſe heart, in a remarkable way, the Lord touched, and after his Converſion (as he ſhewed to many Chriſtian Friends) was in ſuch a frame ſo affected with a new World, wherein he was entred, the Diſcoveries of God, and of a life to come; that for ſome Months together he did ſeldom ſleep, but was ſtill taken up in wondring. His life was very remarkable for tenderneſs, and near Converſe with God in his walk; and which was worthy to be noticed, one day after a ſharp Trial, having his only Son ſuddenly taken away by Death, he retired alone for ſeveral hours, and when he came forth did look ſo chearfully, that to thoſe who asked him the reaſon thereof, and wondred at the ſame in ſuch a time; he told them, *He had got that in his retirement with the Lord, that to have it afterwards renewed, he would be content to loſe a Son every day.*

Oh what a ſweet exchange had he made! Surely he had Gold for Braſs, a Pearl for a Pebble; a Treaſure for a Trifle; for ſo great, yea, and far greater is the diſproportion betwixt the ſweet light of God's Countenance, and the faint dim light of the beſt Creature-enjoyment.

Would it pleaſe the Lord to make this Sun ariſe and ſhine upon you; now when the Stars that ſhined with a dim and borrowed light are gone down, you would ſee ſuch gain by the exchange, as would quickly make you caſt in your Votes with him we now mentioned, and ſay, Lord, let every day be ſuch as this funeral day, let all my hours be as this, ſo that I may ſee and taſte what I now do. How gladly would I part with the deareſt and neareſt Creature-comfort I own in this World.

The gracious and tender Lord hath his divine Cordials reſerved on purpoſe for ſuch ſad Hours: theſe are ſometimes given before ſome ſharp trial, to prepare for it, and ſometimes after, to ſupport under it.

I have often heard it from the Mouth, and found it in the *Diary* of a ſweet Chriſtian now with God, That a little before the Lord removed her dear Husband by death, there was ſuch an abundant out-let of the love of God unto her Soul, for ſeveral Days and Nights following; that when the Lord took away her Husband by Death, though he were a gracious and ſweet tempered, and by her moſt tenderly beloved Husband; ſhe was ſcarce ſenſible of the Stroke, but carried quite above all Earthly things, their comforts and their troubles; So that ſhe had almoſt loſt the thoughts of her dear Husband in God. And had not the Lord taken this courſe with her, ſhe concluded that blow had not been poſſible to be born by her, ſhe muſt have ſunk without ſuch a preparative.

A Husband, a Wife, a Child, are great, very great things, as they ſtand by other Creatures, but ſurely they will ſeem little things, and next to nothing, when the Lord ſhall ſet himſelf by them before the ſoul.

And how know you, but God hath bid theſe Earthly Comforts ſtand aſide this day, to make way for Heavenly ones; It may be God is coming to communicate himſelf more ſweetly, more ſenſibly than ever to your Souls; and theſe are the Providences which muſt caſt up and prepare the way of the Lord. Poſſibly God's meaning in their Death is but this; Child, ſtand aſide, thou art in my way, and filleſt my place in thy Parents Heart.

14. Conſid. *Be careful you exceed not in your grief for the loſs of earthly things, conſidering that Satan takes the advantage of all extreams.*

You cannot touch any extream, but you will be touched by that Enemy; whoſe greateſt advantages lye in aſſaulting you here.

Satan is called *the Ruler of the darkneſs of this World*, Eph. 6. 12. (*i.e.*) his Kingdom is ſupported by darkneſs. Now there is a twofold darkneſs, which gives Satan great advantage: the darkneſs of the *mind*, *viz.* Ignorance, and the darkneſs of the *condition*, *viz.* Trouble and Affliction. Of the former the Apoſtle ſpeaks chiefly in that Text: but the latter alſo is by him often improved, to carry on his deſigns upon us. When it's a dark hour of trouble with us, then is his fitteſt ſeaſon to tempt.

That cowardly Spirit falls upon the People of God when they are down and low in Spirit as well as State. Satan would never have deſired that the hand of God ſhould have been ſtretched out upon *Job*'s Perſon, Eſtate, and Children; but that he promiſed himſelf a notable advantage therein to poyſon his Spirit with vile thoughts of God. *Do this* (ſaith he) *and he wil curſe thee to thy Face.*

What the *Pſalmiſt* obſerves of *Natural*, is as true of *Metaphorical* Darkneſs, Pſal. 104. 20. *Thou makeſt darkneſs, and it is night, wherein all the beaſts of the foreſt do creep forth, the young Lions roar after their prey.*

When it is dark night with Men, it's noonday with Satan; (*i. e.*) our ſuffering time is his buſieſt working time, many a diſmal ſuggeſtion he then plants and grafts upon our affliction, which are much more dangerous to us than the affliction it ſelf.

Sometimes he injects *deſponding* thoughts into the afflicted Soul, *Then ſaid I, I am cut off from before thine eyes*, Pſal. 31. 22. and Lam. 3. 18, 19. *My hope is periſhed from the Lord, remembring my affliction and my miſery, the wormwood and the gall.*

Sometimes he ſuggeſts *hard* thoughts of God, Ruth, 1. 20. *The Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me.* Yea, that he hath dealt more ſeverely with us than any other, Lam. 1. 11. *See and behold if there be any ſorrow like unto my Sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith* *the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce Anger.*

And ſometimes murmuring and repining thoughts againſt the Lord; the Soul is diſpleaſed at the hand of God upon it. *Jonah* was angry at the hand of God, and ſaid, *I do well to be angry even unto death,* Jonah 4. 9. What diſmal thoughts are theſe? And how much more afflictive to a gracious Soul than the loſs of any outward Enjoyment in this World?

And ſometimes very *Irreligious* and *Atheiſtical* thoughts, as if there were no priviledge to be had by Religion, and all our pains, zeal and care about Duty were little better than loſt labour, Pſal. 73. 13, 14. *Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in Innocency: for all the day long I have been plagued; and chaſtened every morning.*

By theſe things Satan gets no ſmall advantage upon the afflicted Chriſtian; for albeit theſe thoughts are his burthen, and God will not impute them to the condemnation of his People; yet they rob the Soul of peace, and hinder it from Duty, and make it act uncomely under affliction, to the ſtumbling and hardening of others in their Sin; beware therefore leſt by your exceſſes of Sorrow ye give place to the Devil: we are not Ignorant of his devices.

16. Conſid. *Give no way to exceſſive ſorrows upon the account of affliction, if ye have any regard to the Honour of God and Religion, which will hereby be expoſed to reproach.*

If you ſlight your own Honnour, don't ſlight the Honour of God and Religion too. Take heed how you carry it in a day of Trouble, many eyes are upon you. It is a true obſervation that a late worthy Author hath made upon this caſe: *What will the Atheiſt, and what will the prophane ſcoffer ſay when they ſhall ſee this? So ſottiſh and malicious they are, that if they do but ſee you in affliction, they are ſtraitway ſcornfully demanding, Where is your God?*

M. M. his Appendix to *Solomon's* preſcription. *p.* 122.

*But what will they ſay, if they ſhould hear you your ſelves unbelievingly cry out; Where is our God? Will they not be ready to cry; This is the Religion they make ſuch boaſt of, which you ſee how little it does for them in a day of extremity: they talk of promiſes, rich and precious promiſes; But where are they now? Or to what purpoſe do they ſerve? They ſaid they had a treaſure in heaven; What ails them to mourn ſo then if their Riches be there?*

O beware what you do before the World; they have eyes to ſee what you can do, as well as ears to hear what you can ſay. And as long as your carriage under troubles is ſo much like their own, they will never think your Principles are better than theirs. Carnal Worldlings will be drawn to think that whatever fine talk you might have about God, and Heaven, your Hearts were moſt upon the ſame things that theirs were, ſince your grief for their removal is as great as theirs.

They know by experience what a ſtay it is to the Heart to have an able, faithful Friend to depend upon, or to have hopes of a great Eſtate ſhortly to fall to them; and they'l never be perſwaded you have any ſuch ground of comfort, if they ſee you as much caſt down as they, that pretend to no ſuch matter.

By this means the Precepts of Chriſt to conſtancy and contentment in all Eſtates, will come to be lookt upon (like thoſe of the *Stoicks*) only as *magnifica verba*, brave Words, but ſuch as are impoſſible to be practiced; and the whole of the Goſpel will be taken for an airy notion, ſince they that profeſs greateſt regard to it, are no more helpt thereby.

O what a ſhame is it that Religion ſhould in this caſe make no more difference betwixt Man and Man? Wherefore ſhew to the World (whatever their common cenſures are) that it is not ſo much your care to differ from them in ſome opinions, and a little ſtrictneſs, as in humility, meekneſs, contempt of the World, and Heavenly-mindedneſs; and now let theſe Graces diſplay themſelves by your chearful, patient deportment under all your grievances.

Wherefore hath God planted thoſe excellent graces in your Souls, but that he might be glorified, and you benefited by the exerciſes of them in tribulation? Should theſe be ſuppreſt and hid, and nothing but the Pride, Paſſion, and Unmortified earthlineſs of your Hearts ſet on work and diſcovered in time of trouble, what a ſlur, what a wound will you give to the glorious name which is called upon by you? And then if your Hearts be truly gracious, that will pierce you deeper than ever your affliction which occaſioned it, did.

I beſeech you therefore be tender of the Name of God, if you will not be ſo of your own peace and comfort.

6. Conſid. *Be quiet and hold your peace; you little know how many mercies lie in the womb of this affliction.*

Great are the benefits of a ſharp rouzing affliction to the People of God at ſome times, and all might have them at all times, were they more careful to improve them. Holy *David* thankfully acknowledgeth, Pſal. 119. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*

And ſurely there's as much good in them for you, as for him; if the Lord ſanctifie them to ſuch ends and uſes as his were ſanctified unto.

Such a ſmarting Rod as this came not before there was need enough of it, and poſſibly you ſaw the need of ſome awakening Providence your ſelves; but if not, the Lord did; he took not up the Rod to ſmite you, till his faithfulneſs, and tender love to your Souls called upon him to correct you.

You now ſit penſive under the Rod, ſadly lamenting and deploring the loſs of ſome earthly comfort, your Heart is ſurcharged with ſorrow, your Eyes run down upon every mention and remembrance of your dear Friend, Why, if there were no more, this alone may diſcover the need you had of this Rod; for doth not all this ſorrow at parting, plainly ſpeak how much your Heart was ſet upon, how faſt your heart was glewed to this earthly comfort?

Now you ſee that your affections were ſunk many degrees deeper into the Creature than you are aware of; and what ſhould God do in this caſe by you? Should he ſuffer you to cleave to the Creature more and more? Should he permit it to purloin and exhauſt your love and delight, and ſteal away your Heart from himſelf? This he could not do and love you. The more impatient you are under this affliction, the more need you had of it.

And what if by this ſtroke the Lord will awaken your drowzy Soul, and recover you out of that pleaſant, but dangerous ſpiritual-ſlumber you were fallen into, whileſt you had pillowed your head upon this pleaſant, ſenſible creature enjoyment? Is not this really better for you, than if he ſhould ſay, Sleep on: He is joyned to Idols, let him alone, he is departing from me the fountain, to a broken Ciſtern, let him go.

Yea, What if by this ſtroke upon one of the pleaſanteſt things you had in this World, God will diſcover to you, more ſenſibly and effectually than ever, the vanity both of that and all earthly comforts, ſo as that you ſhall from henceforth never let forth your heart, your hope, your love, and delight to any of them, as you did before? You could talk before of the creatures vanity; but I queſtion whether ever you had ſo clear and convincing a ſight of its vanity as you have this day: And is not this a conſiderable mercy in your Eyes.

Now, if ever, God is weaning you from all fond opinions and vain expectations from this World; by this your *Judgment* of the creatures is *rectified*, and your *affections* to all other enjoyments on Earth *moderated*: And is this nothing? O doubtleſs it is a greater mercy to you, than to have your Friend alive again.

And what if by this Rod your wandring, gadding heart ſhall be whipped home to God? your Neglected Duties revived, your decayed communion with God reſtored, a ſpiritual Heavenly frame of heart recovered? What will you ſay then?

Surely you will bleſs that merciful hand which removed the obſtructions; and adore the divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, that by ſuch a device as this recovered you to himſelf. Now you can pray more conſtantly, more ſpiritually, more affectionately than before. Oh bleſſed Rod which buds and bloſſoms with ſuch fruits as theſe! Let this be written among your beſt mercies; for you ſhall have cauſe to adore and bleſs God eternally for this beneficial affliction.

17. Conſid. *Suffer not your ſelves to be tranſported by Impatience, and ſwallowed up of Grief, becauſe God hath exerciſed you under a ſmart Rod; for as ſmarting as it is, it's comparatively a gentle ſtroke to what others as good as your ſelves have felt.*

Your dear Relation is dead; be it ſo, here is but a ſingle death before you, but others have ſeen many deaths contrived into one upon their Relations, to which yours is nothing.

*Zedekiah* ſaw his Children murdered before his eyes; and then had thoſe Eyes (alas too late) put out. The worthy Author of that excellent book forementioned, tells us of a choice and godly Gentlewoman in the North of *Ireland*, who when the Rebellion brake out there, fled with three Children, one of them upon the breaſt; they had not gone far before they were ſtripped naked by the *Iriſh*, who to their admiration ſpared their lives (it's like, concluding that cold and hunger would kill them) afterwards going on at the foot of a River which runs to *Locheach*, others met them, and would have caſt them into the River; but this Godly Woman, not diſmayed, asked a little liberty to pray, and as ſhe lay naked on the frozen ground, got reſolution not to go on her own Feet, to ſo unjuſt a death, upon which having called her, and ſhe refuſing, was dragged by the heels along that rugged way to be caſt in with her little ones and company.

But ſhe then turned, and on her knees ſays, you ſhould, I am ſure, be Chriſtians, and Men I ſee you are; in taking away our miſerable lives you do us a pleaſure: But know, that as we never wronged you, nor yours, you muſt remember to die alſo your ſelves, and one day give an acconnt of this cruelty to the Judge of Heaven and Earth: Hereupon they reſolved not to murder them with their own hands, but turned them all naked upon a ſmall Iſland in the River without any Proviſion, there to periſh.

The next day the two Boys having crept aſide, found the hide of a Beaſt which had been killed, at the Root of a Tree; which the Mother caſt over them lying upon the Snow. The next day a little Boat goes by, unto whom ſhe calls for God's ſake to take them out, but they being *Iriſh*, refuſed; ſhe deſired a little Bread, but they ſaid they had none; then ſhe begs a Coal of Fire, which ſhe obtained; and thus with ſome fallen Chips, made a little Fire, and the Children taking a piece of the Hide, laid it on the Coals, and began to gnaw the Leather; but without an extraordinary divine ſupport, what could this do?

Thus they lived Ten days without any viſible means of help, having no Bread, but Ice and Snow, nor drink except Water. The two Boys being near ſtarved, ſhe preſſed them to go out of her ſight, not able to ſee their death: yet God delivered them as miraculouſly at laſt, as he had ſupported them all that while.

But, judge whether a natural death, in an ordinary way, be comparable to ſuch a trial as this; And yet thus the Lord did by this choice and eminently gracious Woman.

And Mr. *Wall* in his *None-but-Chriſt* relates as ſad a Paſſage of a Poor Family in *Germany*, who were driven to that extremity in the Famine, that at laſt the Parents made a motion one to the other to ſell one of the Children for Bread to ſuſtain themſelves and the reſt; but when they came to conſider which Child it ſhould be, their Hearts ſo relented and yerned upon every one, that they reſolved rather all to die together. Yea, we read in Lam. 4. 10. *The hands of the pitiful women have ſodden their own Children.*

But what ſpeak I of theſe extremities? How many Parents, yea, ſome Godly ones too, have lived to ſee their Children dying in prophaneſs, and ſome by the hand of Juſtice, lamenting their Rebellions with a Rope about their Necks.

Ah, Reader, little doſt thou know, what ſtings there are in the Afflictions of others! Surely you have no reaſon to think the Lord hath dealt more bitterly with you than any. It's a gentle ſtroke, a merciful Diſpenſation, if you compare it with what others have felt.

18. Conſid. *If God be your God, you have really loſt nothing by the removal of any Creature-Comfort.*

God is the Fountain of all true Comfort: Creatures, the very beſt and ſweeteſt, are but Ciſterns to receive and convey to us what Comfort God is pleaſed to communicate to them; and if the Ciſtern be broken, or the Pipe cut off, ſo that no more comfort can be conveyed to us that way, he hath other ways and mediums to do it by, which we think not of; and if he pleaſe he can convey his Comforts to his People without any of them; and if he do it more immediately, we ſhall be no loſers by that; for no comforts in the World are ſo delectable and raviſhingly ſweet, as thoſe that flow immediately from the Fountain.

And it is the ſenſuality of our Hearts that cauſes us to affect them ſo inordinately, and grieve for the loſs of them ſo immoderately, as if we had not enough in God without theſe Creature-ſupplements.

Is the fulneſs of the Fountain yours? And yet do you caſt down your ſelves, becauſe the broken Ciſtern is removed. The beſt Creatures are no better, *Jer.* 2. 13. Ciſterns have nothing but what they receive, and broken ones, cannot hold what is put into them. Why then do you mourn as if your Life were bound up in the Creature? You have as free an acceſs to the Fountain, as you had before. It is the advice of an *Heathen*, (and let them take the Comfort of it) to repair by a new earthly Comfort, what we have loſt in the former.

*Thou haſt carried forth him whom thou lovedſt* (ſaith Seneca) *ſeek one whom thou maiſt love in his ſtead: It's better to repair, than bemoan thy loſs.*

*Quem amabas, extuliſti, quare quem ames: ſatius eſt amicum reparare quam flere.* Seneca's Epiſt. *pag.* 637.

But if God never repair your loſs, in things of the ſame kind, you know he can abundantly repair it in himſelf.

Ah Chriſtitn! Is not one Kiſs of his Mouth, one glimpſe of his Countenance, one Seal of his Spirit, a more ſweet and ſubſtantial Comfort than the ſweeteſt Relation in this World can afford you! If the Stream fail, repair to the Fountain, there's enough ſtill, God is where he was, and what he was, tho' the Creature be not.

19. Conſider. *Though you may want a little Comfort in your Life, yet ſurely it may be recompenſed to you by a more eaſie Death.*

The removal of your Friends before you, may turn to your great Advantage, when your Hour is come that you muſt follow them. Oh how have many good Souls been clogged and enſnared in their dying Hour, by the Loves, Cares, and Fears they have had about thoſe they muſt leave behind them in a Sinful Evil World!

Your Love to them might have proved a Snare to you, and cauſed you to hang back as loth to go hence; for theſe are the things that make Men loth to die. And thus it might have been with you, except God had removed them before hand, or ſhould give you in that day ſuch ſights of Heaven, and taſtes of Divine Love, as ſhould maſter and mortifie all your Earthly Affections to theſe things.

I knew a gracious Perſon, now in Heaven, who for many Weeks in her laſt Sickneſs complained, that ſhe found it hard to part with a dear Relation, and that there was nothing proved a greater clog to her Soul than this; 'Tis much more eaſier to think of going to our Friends, who are in Heaven before us, than of parting with them, and leaving our deſirable and dear ones behind us.

And who knows what cares and diſtracting thoughts you may then be peſtered and diſtracted with upon their account? What ſhall become of theſe when I am gone! I am now to leave them, God knows to what Want, Miſeries, Temptations, and Afflictions, in the midſt of a deceitful, defiling, dangerous World.

I know it's our Duty to leave our Fatherleſs Children, and Friendleſs Relations with God; to truſt them with him that gave them to us: And ſome have been enabled cheerfully to do ſo when they were parting from them. *Luther* could ſay, *Lord, thou haſt given me a Wife and Children, I have little to leave them; nouriſh, teach, and keep them; O thou Father of the Fatherleſs, and Judge of the Widow.* But every Chriſtian hath not a *Luther*'s Faith: Some find it an hard thing to diſ-entangle their Affections at ſuch a time: But now, if God have ſent all yours before you, you have ſo much the leſs to do. Death may be eaſier to you than others.

Melchio Adam i *vita* Lutheri.

20. Conſid. *But if nothing that hath been yet ſaid will ſtick with you; then laſtly, remember, that you are near that ſtate and place which admits no Sorrows nor ſad Reflections upon any ſuch accounts as theſe.*

Yet a little while, and you ſhall not miſs them, you ſhall not need them, but you ſhall live as the Angels of God. We now live partly by Faith, partly by Senſe, partly upon God, and partly upon the Creature. Our ſtate is mixed, therefore our Comforts are ſo too: But when God ſhall be all in all, and we ſhall be as the Angels of God in the way and manner of our living; How much will the caſe be altered with us then, from what it is now!

Angels neither Marry, nor are given in Marriage; neither ſhall the Children of the Reſurrection; when the days of our Sinning are ended, the days of our Mourning ſhall be ſo too. No Graves were opened till Sin entered, and no more ſhall be opened when Sin is excluded.

Our glorified Relations ſhall live with us for Ever, they ſhall complain no more, die no more; yea, this is the happineſs of that ſtate to which you are paſſing on, that your Souls being in the neareſt conjunction with God, the Fountain of Joy, you ſhall have no concernment out of him. You ſhall not be put upon theſe exerciſes of Patience; nor ſubjected to ſuch Sorrows as now you feel, any more. It is but a little while and the end of all theſe things will come. Oh therefore bear up as Perſons that expect ſuch a day of Jubilee at hand.

And thus I have finiſhed the ſecond general Head of this Diſcourſe, which is a diſſwaſive from the Sin of immoderate Sorrow.

2. I now proceed to the third thing propoſed, namely to remove the Pleas and excuſes for this immoderate Grief. It's natural to Men, yea to good Men to juſtifie their Exceſſes, or at leaſt to extenuate them, by pleading for their Paſſions, as if they wanted not cauſe and reaſon enough to excuſe them. If theſe be fully anſwered, and the Soul once convinced, and left without Apology for its Sin, it is then in a fair way for its Cure, which is the laſt thing deſigned in this Treatiſe.

My preſent buſineſs therefore is to ſatisfie thoſe Objections, and anſwer thoſe Reaſons which are commonly pleaded in this caſe, to juſtifie our exceſſive Grief for loſt Relations. And though I ſhall carry it in that line of Relation to which the Text directs, yet it's equally applicable to all others.

1. *Plea.*

You preſs me by many great Conſiderations to Meekneſs, and quiet Submiſſion under this heavy ſtroke of God: But you little know what ſtings my Soul feels now in it.

This Child was a Child of many Prayers, it was a *Samuel* begg'd of the Lord, and I concluded when I had it, that it brought with it the returns and anſwers of many Prayers. But now I ſee it was nothing leſs: God had no regard to my Prayer about it; nor was it given me in that ſpecial way of Mercy, as I imagined it to be. My Child is not only dead, but my Prayers in the ſame day ſhut out and denied.

1. *Anſwer.*

That you prayed for your Children before you had them was your Duty, and if you prayed not for them ſubmiſſively, referring it to the Pleaſure of God to give or deny them, to continue or remove them, as ſhould ſeem good to him; that was your Sin; you ought not to limit the Holy One of *Iſrael*, nor preſcribe to him, or capitulate with him, for what term you ſhall enjoy your outward Comforts. If you did ſo, it was your Evil, and God hath juſtly rebuked it by this ſtroke: If you did pray conditionally, and ſubmiſſively, referring both the Mercy asked, and continuance of it to the Will of God as you ought to do; then there is nothing in the death of your Child, that croſſes the true Scope and Intent of your Prayer.

2. *Anſwer.*

Your Prayers may be anſwered, though the thing prayed for be with-held, yea, or though it ſhould be given for a little while and ſnatcht away from you again. There are four ways of God's anſwering Prayers: By giving the thing prayed for preſently, *Dan.* 9. 23. or by ſuſpending the Anſwer for a time, and giving it afterwards: *Luke* 18. 7. or by with-holding that Mercy which you ask, from you, and giving you a much better Mercy in the room of it, *Deut.* 3. 24. compared with *Deut.* 34. 4,5. or laſtly, by giving you patience to bear the loſs or want of it, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9.

Now if the Lord have taken away your Child or Friend, and in lieu thereof given you a meek, quiet, ſubmiſſive Heart to his Will, you need not ſay he hath ſhut out your cry.

2. *Plea.*

But I have loſt a lovely, obliging and moſt endearing Child, one that was Beautiful and Sweet; it is a ſtony Heart that would not diſſolve into tears for the loſs of one ſo deſireable, ſo engaging as this was. Ah it's no common loſs!

1. *Anſwer.*

The more lovely and engaging your Relation was, the more excellent will your patience and contentment with the Will of God in its death be; the more lovelineſs, the more ſelf denial; and the more ſelf-denial, the more grace. Had it been a thouſand times more endearingly ſweet than it was, it was not too good to deny for God. If therefore obedience to the Will of God do indeed maſter natural affections; and that you look upon Patience and Contentment as much more beautiful than the ſweeteſt and moſt deſirable Enjoyment on Earth, it may turn to you for a teſtimony of the truth and ſtrength of Grace; that you can like *Abraham*, part with a Child whom you ſo dearly love, in obedience to the Will of your God whom you love infinitely more.

2. *Anſwer.*

The lovelineſs and beauty of our Children and Relations, though it muſt be acknowledged a good gift from the hand of God; yet it is but a common gift, and oftentimes becomes a ſnare, and is in its own nature but a tranſitory vaniſhing thing, and therefore no ſuch great aggravation of the loſs as is pretended.

I ſay it's but a common Gift; *Eliab*, *Adonijah*, and *Abſolom*, had as lovely a Preſence as any in their Generation. Yea, it's not only common to the wicked, with the Godly, but to bruit Animals as well as Men, and to moſt that excel in it, it becomes a Temptation; the Souls of ſome had been more beautiful and lovely, if their Bodies had been leſs ſo. Beſides, it's but a flower which flouriſhes in its Month, and then fades. This therefore ſhould not be reflected on as ſo great a circumſtance to aggravate your Trouble.

3 *Anſwer.*

But if your Relations ſleep in Jeſus, he will appear ten thouſand times more lovely in the Morning of the Reſurrection than ever he was in this World. What is the exacteſt, pureſt Beauty of Mortals, to the incomparable Beauty of the Saints in the Reſurrection: *Then ſhall the Righteous ſhine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father*, Mat. 13. 43. In this hope you part with them, therefore act ſuitably to your Hopes.

3. *Plea.*

O but my Child was nipt off by death in the very bud, I did but ſee, and love, and part: Had I enjoyed it longer, and had time to ſuck out the ſweetneſs of ſuch an enjoyment, I could have born it eaſier, but its Months or Years with me are ſo few, that they only ſerved to raiſe an expectation which was quickly, and therefore the more ſadly diſappointed.

1. *Anſwer.*

*Vide* Mr. *Baxter*'s Epiſtle to the Life of Mr. *John Janeway.*

Did your Friend die young, or was the bond of any other Relation diſſolved almoſt as ſoon as made? Let not this ſeem ſo intolerable a load to you; for if you have ground to hope they died in Chriſt, then they lived long in this World. It's truly ſaid, he hath ſailed long enough that hath won the Harbour; and he hath fought long enough that hath obtained the Victory; he hath run long enough that hath toucht the Goal, and he hath lived long enough on Earth, that hath won Heaven, be his days here never ſo few.

2. *Anſwer.*

The ſooner your Relation died, the leſs Sin hath been committed, and the leſs ſorrow felt: What can you ſee in this World but Sin or Sorrow? A quick paſſage through it to Glory, is a ſpecial priviledge. Surely the World is not ſo deſireable a place, that Chriſtians ſhould deſire an hours time longer in it for themſelves or theirs, than ſerves to fit them for a better.

3. *Anſwer.*

And whereas you imagine the parting would have been eaſier, if the enjoyment had been longer, it is a fond and groundleſs Suſpicion. The longer you had enjoyed them, the ſtronger would the Endearments have been. A young and tender Plant may be eaſily drawn up by a ſingle Hand, but when it hath ſpread and fixed its Roots many Years in the Earth, it will require many a ſtrong blow and hard tug to root it up. Affections, like thoſe under-ground Roots, are fixed and ſtrengthened by nothing more than conſuetude, and long poſſeſſion; it's much eaſier parting now, than it would be hereafter, whatever you think. However, this ſhould ſatisfie you, that God's time is the beſt time.

4. *Plea.*

O but I have loſt all in one, it is my only one, I have none left in its room to repair the breach, and make up the loſs; If God had given me other Children to take comfort in, the loſs had not been ſo great; but to loſe all at one ſtroke, is inſupportable.

1. *Anſwer.*

*Non amittuntur, ſed præmittuntur.*

Religion allows not to Chriſtians a Liberty of expreſſing the death of their dear Relations by ſo hard a Word as the loſs of them is. They are not loſt but ſent before you. And it is a ſhameful thing for a Chriſtian to be reproved for ſuch an uncomely Expreſſion by an Heathen. It is enough to make us bluſh to read what an Heathen ſaid in this caſe. *Never ſay thou haſt loſt any thing* (ſaith Epictetus) *but that it is returned. Is thy Son dead? He is only reſtored. Is thy Inheritance taken from thee? It is alſo returned.* And a while after he adds, εἰ τȣ͂το θεοῖς φίλον, τȣ͂το γινέσθω, (*i. e.*) Let every thing be as the Gods will have it.

Epict. Enchiri. Chap. 15.

2. *Anſwer.*

It is no fit Expreſſion to ſay you have loſt all in one, except that one be Chriſt; and he being once yours, can never be loſt. Doubtleſs your meaning is, you have loſt all your Comfort of that kind; and what though you have? are there not multitudes of Comforts yet remaining of a higher kind, and more precious and durable nature? If you have no more of that ſort, yet ſo long as you have better, what cauſe have you to rejoice!

3. *Anſwer.*

You too much imitate the way of the World in this complaint; they know not how to repair the loſs of one Comfort, but by another of the ſame nature, which muſt be put in its room to fill up the vacancy: But have you no other way to ſupply your loſs; have you not a God to fill the place of any Creature that leaves you? Surely this would better become a Man whoſe Portion is in this Life, than one that profeſſes God is his all in all.

5. *Plea.*

O but my only one is not only taken away, but there remains no expectation or probability of any more: I muſt now look upon my ſelf as a dry Tree, never to take comfort in Children any more, which is a cutting Thought.

1. *Anſwer.*

Suppoſe what you ſay, that you have no hope nor expectation of another Child remaining to you; yet if you have a hope of better things than Children; you have no reaſon to be caſt down: bleſs God for higher and better hopes than theſe, in *Iſa.* 59. 4, 5. The Lord comforts them that had no expectations of Sons or Daughters; with this, *That he will give unto them in his Houſe, and within his Walls a place, and a name better than of Sons or Daughters; even an everlaſting name that ſhall not be cut off.* There are better mercies, and higher hopes than theſe; though your hopes of Children, or from Children ſhould be cut off; yet if your eternal hopes be ſecure, and ſuch as ſhall not make you aſhamed, you ſhould not be ſo caſt down.

2. *Anſwer.*

If God will not have your Comforts to lye any more in Children, then reſolve to place them in himſelf, and you ſhall never find cauſe to complain of loſs by ſuch an exchange. You will find that in God which is not to be had in the Creature; one hours communion with him ſhall give you that which the happieſt Parent never yet had from his Children, you will exchange Braſs for Gold, periſhing Vanity, for ſolid and abiding Excellency.

6. *Plea.*

But the ſuddenneſs of the ſtroke is amazing, God gave little or no warning to prepare for this Trial: Death executed its commiſſion as ſoon as it opened it. My dear Husband, Wife, or Child, was ſnatcht unexpectedly out of my Arms by a ſurprizing ſtroke; and this makes my ſtroke heavier than my complaint.

1. *Anſwer.*

That the death of your Relation was ſo

ſudden and ſurprizing, was much your own fault, who ought to have lived in the daily ſenſe of his vanity, and expectation of your ſeparation from it; you knew it to be a dying comfort in its beſt Eſtate; and it is no ſuch wonderful thing to ſee that dead, which we knew before to be dying: Beſides, you heard the changes ringing round about you in other Families; you frequently ſaw other Parents, Husbands, and Wives carrying forth their dead; And what were all theſe but warnings given you to prepare for the like tryals?

Surely then it was your own ſecurity and regardleſsneſs that made this affliction ſo ſurprizing to you, and who is to be blamed for that, you know.

2. *Anſwer.*

There is much difference betwixt the ſudden death of Infants, and that of grown perſons: The latter may have much work to do, many ſins actually to repent of, and many evidences of their intereſt in Chriſt to examine and clear, in order to their more comfortable death; and ſo ſudden death may be deprecated by them.

But the caſe of Infants, who exerciſe not their reaſon, is far different, they have no ſuch work to do; but are purely paſſive; all that is done in order to their ſalvation, is done by God immediately upon them, ſo it comes all to one, whether their death be more quick or more ſlow.

3. *Anſwer.*

You complain of the ſuddenneſs of the ſtroke, but another will be ready to ſay, had my Friend died in that manner, my affliction had been nothing to what now it is; I have ſeen many deaths contrived into one: I ſaw the gradual approaches of it upon my dear Relation, who felt every tread of death as it came on toward him, who often cryed with *Job*, Chap. 3. 20. *Wherefore is light given to him that is in Miſery, and life to the bitter in Soul? Which long for Death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hidden Treaſures: which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the Grave.*

That which you reckon the ſting of your Affliction; others would have reckoned a favour and priviledge. How many tender Parents, and other Relations, who loved their Friends as dearly as your ſelves, have been forced to their Knees upon no other errand but this, to beg the Lord to haſten the ſeparation, and put an end to that Sorrow, which to them was much greater than the Sorrow for the dead.

7. *Plea.*

You preſs me to moderation of Sorrows, and I know I ought to ſhew it; but don't know how the caſe ſtands with me, there's a ſting in this Affliction, that none feels but my ſelf; and how intollerable is it now! I neglected proper means in ſeaſon to preſerve Life, or miſcarried in the uſe of means. I now ſee ſuch a neglect or ſuch a miſtake about the means, as I cannot but judge greatly to contribute to that ſad loſs which I now (too late) lament.

O my negligence, O my raſhneſs and inconſiderateneſs! How doth my Conſcience now ſmite me for my Folly! And by this aggravate my burthen beyond what is uſually felt by others. Had I ſeaſonably applied my ſelf to the uſe of proper means, and kept ſtrictly to ſuch Courſes and Counſels as thoſe that are able and skillful might have preſcribed, I might now have had a living Husband, Wife or Child: Whereas I am now not only bereaved, but am apt to think I have bereaved my ſelf of them. Surely there is no Sorrow like unto my Sorrow.

1. *Anſwer.*

Though it be an evil to neglect and ſlight the means ordained by God for recovery of health, yet it's no leſs Evil to aſcribe too much to them, or rely too much on them. The beſt means in the World are weak and ineffectual without God's Aſſiſtance and Concurrence, and they never have that his Aſſiſtance or Concurrence, when his time is come; and that it was fully come in your Friend's caſe, is manifeſted now by the Event. So that if your Friend had had the moſt excellent helps the World affords, they would have availed nothing. This conſideration takes place only in your caſe, who ſee what the Will of God is by the Iſſue, and may not be pleaded by any whilſt it remains dubious and uncertain, as it generally doth in time of Sickneſs.

2. *Anſwer.*

Do you not unjuſtly charge and fault your ſelves for that which is not really your fault or neglect? How far are you chargeable in this caſe will beſt appear by comparing the circumſtances you are now in, with thoſe you were in when your Relation was only arreſted by Sickneſs; and it was dubious to you what was your duty and beſt courſe to take.

Poſſibly you had obſerved ſo many to periſh in *Phyſicians* Hands, and ſo many to recover without them, that you judged it ſafer for your Friend to be without thoſe means, than to be hazarded by them.

Or if divers Methods and courſes were preſcribed and perſwaded to, and you now ſee your Error in preferring that which was moſt improper, and neglecting what was more ſafe and probable; yet as long as it did not ſo appear to your underſtanding at that time, but you followed the beſt light you had to guide you at that time, it were moſt unjuſt to charge the fault upon your ſelves, for chooſing that courſe that then ſeemed beſt to you, whether it were ſo in it ſelf or not.

To be angry with your ſelves for doing or omitting what was then done, or omitted according to your beſt diſcretion and judgment, becauſe you now ſee it by the light of the Event far otherwiſe than you did before, it is to be troubled that you are but Men, or that you are not as God, who only can foreſee iſſues, and events; and that you acted as all Rational Creatures are bound to do, according the beſt light they have, at the time and Seaſon of action.

3. *Anſwer.*

To conclude, times of great Affliction are ordinarily times of great temptation, and it's uſual with Satan then to charge us with more Sins than we are really guilty of, and alſo make thoſe things ſeem to be Sins, which upon impartial examination will not be found to be ſo.

Indeed, had your neglect or miſcarriage been knowing or voluntary, or had you really preferred a little Money (being able to give it) before the life of your Relation, and did deliberately chuſe to hazard this, rather than part with that, no doubt then but there had been much evil of Sin mixed with your affliction; And your Conſcience may juſtly ſmite you for it, as your Sin. But in the other caſe which is more common, and I preſume yours; it's a falſe charge, and you ought not to abet the deſign of Satan in it.

Judge by the Sorrow you now feel for your Friend, in what degree he was dear to you, and what you could now willingly give to ranſome his Life, if it could be done with Money. Judge, I ſay, by this how groundleſs the charge is that Satan now draws up againſt you; and you are but too ready to yield to the truth of it.

8. *Plea.*

But my troubles are upon a higher ſcore and account. My Child or Friend is paſſed into Eternity, and I know not how it is with his Soul. Were I ſure my Relation were with Chriſt, I ſhould be quiet; but my fears of the contrary are overwhelming; O it's terrible to think of the damnation of one ſo dear to me.

1. *Anſwer.*

Admit what the objection ſuppoſes, that you have real grounds to fear the eternal condition of your dear Relation, yet it's utterly unbeſeeming you, even in ſuch a caſe as this, to diſpute with, or repine againſt the Lord.

I do confeſs it's a ſore and heavy Trial, and that there is no cauſe more ſad and ſinking to the Spirit of a gracious Perſon. Their death is but a trifle to this; but yet, if you be ſuch as fear the Lord, methinks his indiſputable Sovereignty over them, and his diſtinguiſhing Love and Mercy to you, ſhould at leaſt ſilence you in this matter.

*Firſt*, His indiſputable Sovereignty over them, Rom. 9. 22. *Who art thou, O Man, who diſputeſt with God?* He ſpeaks in the matters of eternal Election and Reprobation. What if the Lord will not be gracious to thoſe that are ſo dear to us? Is there any wrong done to them or us thereby? *Aaron*'s two Sons were cut off in the act of Sin by the Lord's immediate Hand, and yet he held his Peace, *Levit.* 10. 3. God told *Abraham* plainly that the Covenant ſhould not be eſtabliſhed with *Iſhmael*, for whom he ſo earneſtly prayed, *O let Iſhmael live before thee*! And he knew that there was no Salvation out of the Covenant, and yet he ſits down ſilent under the Word of the Lord.

*Secondly*, But if this do not quiet you, yet, methinks, his diſtinguiſhing Love and Mercy to you ſhould do it. O what do you owe to God, that root and branch hath not been caſt together into the Fire! That the Lord hath given you good hope through grace, that it ſhall be well with you for Ever. Let this ſtop your Mouth, and quiet your Spirit: Though you ſhould have grounds for this Fear.

2. *Anſwer.*

But pray examine the grounds of your Fear, whether it may not proceed from the ſtrength of your Affections to the eternal welfare of your Friend, or from the ſubtilty of Satan deſigning hereby to overwhelm and ſwallow you up in ſuppoſed, as well as from juſt grounds and cauſes? In two caſes it's very probable your fear may proceed only from your own affection or Satan's Temptation.

*Firſt*, If your Relation died young, before it did any thing to deſtroy your hopes. Or,

*Secondly*, If grown, and in ſome good degree hopeful; only he did not in Life, or at death manifeſt and give evidence of Grace, with that clearneſs as you deſired.

As to the caſe of Infants in general, it's none of our concern to judge their condition; and as for thoſe that ſprang from Covenanted Parents, it becomes us to exerciſe Charity towards them, The Scripture ſpeaks very favourably of them.

And as for the more adult, who have eſcaped the pollutions of the World, and made Conſcience of Sin and Duty, albeit they never manifeſted what you could deſire they had; yet in them as in young *Abijah*, *may be found ſome good thing towards the Lord*, which you never took notice of. Reverence of your Authority, Baſhfulneſs, and Shamefacedneſs, Reſervedneſs of Diſpoſition, and many other things may hide thoſe ſmall and weak beginnings of Grace that are in Children, from the obſervations of the Parents. God might ſee that in them that you never ſaw; he deſpiſeth not the day of ſmall things.

However it be, it's now out of your Watch, your concernment rather is to improve the Affliction to your own good, than judge and determine their condition, which belongs not to you, but God.

9. *Plea.*

O but I have ſinned in this Relation, and now God hath puniſhed my Sin in diſſolving it. O ſaith one, my Heart was ſet too much upon it, I even Idolized it, that was my Sin; and ſaith another, I wanted due affections, and did not love my Relation, at leaſt not ſo Spiritually as I ought, that was my Sin. Now God is viſiting me for all the neglects and defects that have been in me towards my Relation.

1. *Anſwer.*

There is no Man ſo throughly Sanctified, as not to fail and come ſhort in many things pertaining to his Relative Duties. And to ſpeak as the thing is, the corruptions of the holieſt Perſons are as much diſcovered in this, as in any other thing whatſoever; and it's a very common thing for Conſcience, not only to charge theſe failures upon us, but to aggravate them to the utmoſt when God hath made the ſeparation. So that this is no more than what is uſual and very common with Perſons in your caſe.

2. *Anſwer.*

Admit that which the Objection ſuppoſes, that God had afflicted you for your Sin, and removed that Comfort from you, which you Idolized and too much doted on; yet there is no reaſon you ſhould be ſo caſt down under your Affliction; for all this may be, and probably is the Fruit of his love to, and care of your Soul, *Rev.* 3. 19. He tells the afflicted for their Comfort, *Whom I love I rebuke and chaſten.* How much better is it to have an Idolized Enjoyment taken from you in Mercy, than if God ſhould ſay concerning you as he did of *Ephraim*, Hoſ. 4. 17. *He is joined to Idols, let him alone*?

O it's better for you that your Father now reckons with you for your Follies with the Rod in his Hand, than to ſay as he doth to ſome, Let them go on, I will not hinder them in, or rebuke them for their ſinful Courſes; but will reckon with them for all together in Hell at laſt.

3. *Anſwer.*

And as to what you now charge upon your ſelf, that the neglect of duty did ſpring from the want of Love to your Relation: Your Sorrow at parting may evidence that your Relation was rooted deep in your Affection: But if your Love was not ſo ſpiritual and pure, to love and enjoy them in God; that was undoubtedly your Sin, and is the Sin of moſt Chriſtians; for which both you, and all others ought to be humbled.

10. *Plea.*

God hath bleſſed me with an Eſtate, and outward comforts in the World, which I reckoned to have left to my Poſterity: And now I have none to leave it with, nor have I any comfort to think of it; the purpoſes of my Heart are broken off, and the comfort of all my other Enjoyments blaſted by this ſtroke in an Hour. How are the pains and cares of many Years periſhed.

1. *Anſwer.*

How many are there in the World, yea of our own acquaintance, whom God hath either denied, or deprived both of the comforts of Children and of Eſtates too? If he have left you thoſe outward Comforts, you ought to acknowledge his goodneſs therein, and not to ſlight theſe becauſe he hath deprived you of the other.

2. *Anſwer.*

Though your Children be gone, yet God hath many Children left in the World, whoſe Bowels you may refreſh with what he hath beſtowed upon you; and your Charity to them will doubtleſs turn to a more comfortable account, than if you had left a large Eſtate to your own Poſterity.

Surely we are not ſent into this World to heap up our great Eſtates for our Children; and if you have been too eager in this deſign, you may now read God's juſt Rebuke of your Folly. Bleſs God you have yet an opportunity to ſerve him eminently by your Charity: And if God deny you other Executors, let your own hands be your Executors to diſtribute to the neceſſity of the Saints; that the Bleſſings of them that are ready to periſh may come upon you.

11. *Plea.*

O but the Remembrance of its witty Words and pretty actions is wounding.

1. *Anſwer.*

Let it rather lift up your Heart to God in Praiſe, that gave you ſo deſirable a Child, than fill your Heart with diſcontent at his hand in removing it. How many Parents are there in the World whoſe Children God hath deprived of Reaſon and underſtanding, ſo that they only differ from the Beaſts in external ſhape and figure? And how many ſhew betimes ſo perverſe a temper, that little Comfort can be expected from them?

2. *Anſwer.*

Theſe are but ſmall Circumſtances and trivial things in themſelves; but by theſe little things, Satan manages a great deſign againſt your Souls to deject or exaſperate it: And ſurely this is not your buſineſs at this time; you have greater things than the words and actions of Children to mind; to ſearch out God's End in the Affliction: To mortifie the Corruption it is ſent to rebuke, to quiet your Heart in the Will of God: This is your Work.

12. *Plea.*

Laſtly, It is objected, O but God hides his Face from me in my Affliction: It is dark within as well as without, and this makes my caſe more deplorable, greatly afflicted and ſadly deſerted.

1. *Anſwer.*

Though you want at preſent ſenſible Comfort, yet you have reaſon to be thankful for gracious ſupports. Though the Light of God's Countenance ſhine not upon you; yet you find the everlaſting Arms are underneath you; the Care of God worketh for you, when the Conſolations of God are withdrawn from you.

2. *Anſwer.*

To have God hide his Face in the time of trouble is no new, or unuſual thing. God's deareſt Saints; yea his own Son hath experienced it; who in the deeps of inward and outward trouble, when wave called unto wave, felt not thoſe ſweet ſenſible Influences of Comfort from God, which had always fill'd his Soul formerly. If Chriſt cry in extremity, *My God, My God, why haſt thou forſaken me*? Then ſure we need not wonder as if ſome ſtrange thing had happened to us.

3. *Anſwer.*

May not your unſubmiſſive carriage under the Rod provoke God to hide his Face from you? Pray conſider it well, nothing is more probable than this, to be the cauſe of God's withdrawment from you. Could you in meekneſs and quietneſs receive that Cup your Father hath given you to drink? Accept the puniſhment of your Iniquities; Say good is the Word of the Lord, it is the Lord, let him do what he will. You would ſoon find the caſe altered with you; but the comforting Spirit finds no delight or reſt in a turbulent and tumultuous Breaſt.

And thus I have ſatisfied the moſt conſiderable Pleas urged in juſtification of our Exceſſes.

4. I come now to the laſt thing propoſed, namely, the means of curing and preventing theſe Sinful Exceſſes of Sorrow for the death of our dear Relations.

And although much hath been ſaid already to diſſwade from this Evil, and I have enlarged already much beyond my firſt Intention;

tion; yet I ſhall caſt in ſome farther help and Aſſiſtance towards the Healing of this Diſtemper, by preſcribing the following Rules.

### 1. Rule.

*If you would not mourn exceſſively for the loſs of Creature-Comforts, then beware that you ſet not your delight and love exceſſively, or inordinately upon them whilſt you enjoy them.*

Strong *Affections* make ſtrong *Afflictions*, the higher the Tide, the lower the Ebb. According to the meaſure of our Delight in the enjoyment, is our grief in the loſs of theſe things. The Apoſtle knits theſe two Graces, Temperance and Patience together in the Precept. 2 *Pet.* 1. 16. And it's very obſervable how Intemperance and Impatience are inſeparably linked in Experience, yea, the experience of the beſt Men. You read Gen. 37. 3. *How Iſrael loved Joſeph more than all his Children, becauſe he was the Son of his old Age; and made him a Coat of many Colours.*

This was the darling, *Jacob's* Heart was exceedingly ſet upon him, his very Life was bound up in the Life of the Lad. Now when the ſuppoſed death of his Child was brought to him, how did he carry it? See ver. 34. 35. *And Jacob rent his Cloaths, and put Sackcloth upon his Loins; and mourned for his Son many Days: And all his Sons and all his Daughters roſe up to comfort him, but he refuſed to be comforted? And he ſaid, For I will go down into the Grave to my Son mourning. Thus his Father wept for him.*

Here, as in a Glaſs, are the effects of exceſſive Love to a Child repreſented. Here you may ſee what work immoderate love will make, even in a Sanctified Heart.

O therefore let your moderation be known to all Men, in your Delights and Sorrows about Earthly things; for ordinarily the proportion of the one is anſwerable to the other.

### 2. Rule.

*If you would not be overwhelmed with Grief for the Loſs of your Relations, be exact and careful in diſcharging your Duties to them while you have them.*

The teſtimony of your Conſcience that you have laboured in all things to diſcharge the duties you owed to your Relations, whilſt they were with you, will prove an excellent allay to your Sorrows for them when they are no longer yours. 'Tis not ſo much the ſingle Affliction as the Guilt charged upon us in times of Affliction, that makes our load ſo heavy.

O what a terrible thing is it to look upon our dead Friend, whilſt Conſcience is accuſing and upbraiding us for our duties neglected, and ſuch or ſuch Sins committed? O you little think how dreadful a Spectacle this will make the dead Body of thy Friend to thee.

Conſcience if not quite ſtupid, or dead, will ſpeak at ſuch a time. O therefore, as ever you would provide for a comfortable parting at Death, or meet again at Judgment; be exact, punctual, and circumſpect in all your Relative Duties.

### 3. Rule.

*If you would not be overwhelmed by trouble for the loſs of dear Relations, then turn to God under your trouble, and pour out your Sorrows by Prayer into his Boſom.*

This will eaſe and allay your Troubles: Bleſſed be God for the Ordinance of Prayer; How much are all the Saints beholden to it at all times, but eſpecially in Heart-ſinking and diſtreſſful times. It's ſome relief, when in diſtreſs, we can pour out our trouble into the Boſom of a Wife, or faithful Friend; how much more when we leave our complaint before the gracious, wiſe, and faithful God? I told you before of that Holy Man, who having loſt his dear and only Son, got to his Cloſet; there poured out his Soul freely to the Lord, and when he came down to his Friends that were waiting below to comfort him, and fearing how he would bear that ſtroke; he came from his duty with a chearful Countenance, telling him he would be content to bury a Son (if it were poſſible) every day, provided he might enjoy ſuch comfort as his Soul had found in that private Hour.

Go thy way Chriſtian, to thy God, get thee to thy Knees in the cloudy and dark day: Retire from all Creatures, that thou maiſt have thy full Liberty with thy God, and there pour out thy Heart before him, in free, full and broken-hearted Confeſſions of Sin: Judge thy ſelf worthy of Hell as well as of this trouble: Juſtifie God in all his ſmarteſt ſtrokes; beg him in this diſtreſs to put under thee everlaſting arms, intreat one ſmile, one gracious look to enlighten thy darkneſs and chear thy drooping Spirit. Say with the Prophet, *Jer.* 17. 17, *Be not thou a terror to me; thou art my hope in the day of evil.* And try what relief ſuch a courſe will afford thee. Surely if thy heart be ſincere in this courſe, thou ſhalt be able to ſay with that Holy Man, Pſal. 94. 29. *In the Multitude of my thoughts which I had within me, thy Comforts have delighted my Soul.*

### 4. Rule.

*If you would bear the loſs of your dear Relations with moderation, eye God in the whole proceſs of the affliction more, and ſecundary cauſes and circumſtances of the matter leſs.*

*I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth; becauſe thou didſt it.* Pſal. 39. 9. Conſider the hand of the Lord in the whole matter: And that,

*Firſt*, As a Soveraign Hand, which hath right to diſpoſe of thee and all thy comforts without thy leave or conſent, *Job* 33. 13.

*Secondly*, As a Father's Hand correcting thee in Love and Faithfullneſs, Prov. 3. 11. *Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, as a Father the Son in whom he delighteth.* O if once you could but ſee Affliction as a Rod in a Father's Hand, proceeding from his Love, and intended for your eternal good; How quiet would you then be!

And ſurely if it draw your Heart nearer to God, and mortifie it more to this vain World, it is a Rod in the hand of ſpecial Love: If it end in your Love to God, doubt not but it comes from God's Love to you.

*Thirdly*, As a Juſt and Righteous Hand: Haſt not thou procured this to thy ſelf by thy own Folly? Yea, the Lord is juſt in all that is come upon thee: Whatever he hath done, yet he hath done thee no wrong.

*Fourthly*, Laſtly, As a moderate and merciful Hand that hath puniſhed thee leſs than thine Iniquities deſerve: He hath caſt thee into Affliction, he might juſtly have caſt thee into Hell. It's of the Lord's Mercy that thou art not conſumed. Why doth the living Man complain?

### 5. Rule.

*If you would bear your affliction with moderation, compare it with the Affliction of other Men, and that will greatly quiet your Spirits.*

You have no cauſe to ſay God hath dealt bitterly with you, and that there is no Sorrow like your Sorrow: Look round about you, and impartially conſider the condition that others are in: And they nothing inferior to you in any reſpect. You had one dead Child, *Aaron* had two at a ſtroke, *Job* all at one ſtroke, and both theſe by an immediate ſtroke from the hand of God. Some Godly Parents have lived to ſee their Children die in their Sin by the Hand of Juſtice: Others have ſeen them live to the diſhonour of God and breaking of their own Spirits: And would have eſteemed it a Mercy if they had died from the Womb, and given up the Ghoſt when they came out of the Belly, as *Job* ſpeaks.

In what Miſery have ſome Parents ſeen their Children lie? God holding them as ſo many terrible ſpectacles of Miſery before their Eyes; ſo that they have begged the Lord with importunity, to let looſe his Hands and cut them off. Death being in their eſteem, nothing to thoſe continual Agonies in which they have ſeen them lye ſweltering from day to day. Oh you little know what a bitter cup others have had given them to drink! Surely if you compare, you muſt ſay, the Lord hath dealt gently and graciouſly with me.

### 6. Rule.

*Carefully ſhun and avoid whatſoever may renew your Sorrow, or provoke you to impatience.*

Increaſe not your Sorrow by the Sight of, or diſcourſes about ſad objects, and labour to avoid them as occaſions preſented by the Enemy of your Souls, to draw forth the corruptions of your Heart.

I told you before, why *Jacob* would not have the Child of which *Rachel* died, called after the name his Wife had given, *Benoni*, the Son of my Sorrow, leſt it ſhould prove a daily occaſion of renewing his trouble for the loſs of his dear Wife; but he called his name *Benjamin*.

Your Impatience is like Tinder, or Gunpowder, ſo long as you can prevent the ſparks from falling on it, there is no great danger: But you that carry ſuch dangerous prepared matter in your own Hearts, cannot be too careful to prevent them. Do by murmuring, as you do by blaſphemous Thoughts, think quite another way, and give no occaſion.

### 7. Rule.

*In the day of your Mourning for the Death of your Friends, ſeriouſly conſider your own death as approaching, and that you and your dead Friend are diſtinguiſhed by a ſmall interval and point of time.*

2 Sam. 11: 13. *I ſhall go to him.* Surely the Thoughts of your own Death as approaching alſo, will greatly allay your Sorrows for the dead that are gone before you.

We are apt to fancy a long life in the World, and then the loſs of thoſe Comforts which we promiſed our ſelves ſo much of the ſweetneſs and comforts of our Lives from, ſeems an intollerable thing.

But would you reallize your own deaths more, you would not be ſo deeply concerned for their death as you are. Could you but look into your own Graves more ſeriouſly, you would be able to look into your Friend's Grave more compoſedly.

And thus I have finiſhed what I deſigned from this Scripture. The Father of Mercies and God of all Comforts, whoſe ſole Prerogative it is to comfort them that are caſt down, write all his Truths upon your Hearts, that they may abide there, and reduce your diſordered Affection to that frame which beſt ſuits the Will of God, and the profeſſion you make of ſubjection and reſignation thereunto.

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# PREPARATION for SUFFERINGS,

OR

## The Beſt Work in the worſt Times.

Wherein the *Neceſſity*, *Excellency*, and *Means* of our readineſs for Sufferings are evinced and preſcribed; our call to Suffering cleared, and the great unreadineſs of many Profeſſors bewailed.

## The EPISTLE to the READER.

I*T was the Obſervation of the Learned* Gerſon *(when the World was not ſo old by many Years as now it is) that* Mundus ſeneſcens patitur Phantaſias: *The Aged World, like aged Perſons, dotes and grows whimſical in its old Age; the truth of which Obſervation is confirmed by no one thing more, than the fond and groundleſs Dreams and Phantaſms of Tranquility and continuing Proſperity, wherewith the multitude pleaſe themſelves, even whilſt the* Sins *of the Times are ſo great, and the* Signs *of the times ſo ſad and lowring as they are.*

*It is not the deſign of this* Manual *to ſcare and affright any Man with imaginary Dangers, much leſs to ſow Jealouſies, and foment the diſcontents of the times: It being a juſt Matter of Lamentation, that all the Tokens of God's Anger produce with many of us no better Fruit, but bold Cenſures and loud Clamours, inſtead of Humiliation for our own Sins, and due preparation to take up our own Croſs, and follow Chriſt in a ſuffering Path, which is the only mark and aim of this Tract.*

*We read the Hiſtories of the Primitive Sufferers, but not with a Spirit prepared to follow them. Some cenſure them as too prodigal of their Blood, and others commend their Courage and Conſtancy; but where are they that ſincerely reſolve and prepare to be followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes?* Heb. 6. 12. *or take them for an* Example of Suffering, Affliction, and of Patience, *Jam.* 5. 10.

*It is as much our* Intereſt, *as it is our Duty to be ſeaſonably awakened out of our pleaſant, but moſt pernicious drowzineſs. Troubles will be ſo much the more ſinking and intollerable, by how much they ſteal upon us by way of ſurprizal. For look as expectation deflowreth any temporal comfort, by ſucking out much of the ſweetneſs thereof before-hand, and ſo we find the leſs in it when we come to the actual enjoyment: So the expectation of evils abates much of the dread and terrour, by accuſtoming our Thoughts before-hand to them; and making preparation for them: So that we find them not ſo grievous, amazing and intollerable when they are come indeed.*

*This was exemplified to us very lively by Holy Mr.* Bradford *the* Martyr, *when the Keeper's Wife came running into his Chamber, ſaying,* O Mr. Bradford, I bring you heavy Tidings, for to Morrow you muſt be Burned, your Chain is now buying, and preſently you muſt go to *Newgate. He put off his Hat, and looking up to Heaven, ſaid, O Lord, I thank thee for it. I have looked for this a long time: It comes not ſuddenly to me, the Lord make me worthy of it: See in this Example the ſingular advantage of a prepared and ready Soul.*

Reader, *The Cup of Sufferings is a very bitter Cup, and it is but needful that we provide ſomewhat to ſweeten it, that we may be able to receive it with Thankſgiving: And what thoſe ſweetning ingredients are, and how to prepare them, you will have ſome direction and help in the following diſcourſe, which hath once already been preſented to the publick view; And that it may at this time alſo (wherein nothing can be more ſeaſonable) become farther uſeful and aſſiſting to the People of God in their preſent duties, is the hearty deſire of*

*Thine and the Churches Servant in Chriſt.* J. F.

## ACTS XXI. xiii.

*Then* Paul *anſwered, What mean ye to weep, and break my Heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but alſo to die at* Jeruſalem *for the Name of the Lord Jeſus.*

### CHAP. I.

*Wherein the Text is opened and the Doctrine propounded.*

THE Divine Providence is not more ſignally diſcovered in Governing the motions of the Clouds, than it is in diſpoſing and ordering the Spirits and Motions of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, who in a Myſtical Senſe are fruitful Clouds to diſpenſe the ſhowers of Goſpel-Bleſſings to the World. The Motion of the Clouds is not ſpontaneous, but they move as they are moved by the Winds; neither can Goſpel-Miniſters chuſe their own Stations, and govern their own Motions, but muſt go when and where the Spirit and Providence of God directs, and guides them; as will evidently appear in that dangerous Voyage to *Jeruſalem* in which the Apoſtle was at this time engaged; *Acts* 20. 22. *And now behold I go bound in the Spirit to* Jeruſalem: [*Bound in the Spirit*] alluding to the watery Vapours which are bound up in Clouds, and conveyed according to the motion of the Winds: This Journey was full of Danger; *Paul* foreſaw his buſineſs was not only to plant the Goſpel at *Jeruſalem*, with his Doctrine, but to water it alſo with his Blood; but ſo effectually was his Will determined by the Will of God, that he chearfully complies with his Duty therein, whatſoever difficulties and dangers did attend it.

And indeed it was his great advantage, that the Will of God was ſo plainly and convincingly revealed to him touching this matter; for no ſooner did he imploy himſelf to obey this Call of God, but he is preſently aſſaulted by many ſtrong Temptations to decline it.

The firſt Rub he met in his way, was from the Diſciples of *Tyre*, who pretending to ſpeak by the Spirit, ſaid unto *Paul*, that he ſhould not go up to *Jeruſalem*, *Acts* 11. 4. The Lord by this trying the Spirit of his *Apoſtle* much, as he did the young Prophet coming from *Judea* to *Bethel*, 2 *Kings* 13. 18. But not with like Succeſs.

His next diſcouragement was at *Cæſarea*, where *Agabus* (whom *Dorotheus* affirms to be of the ſeventy two Diſciples, and had before Propheſied of the Famine in the Reign of *Claudius*, which accordingly came to paſs) takes *Paul*'s Girdle and binding his own Hands and Feet with it, ſaid, *Thus ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, ſo ſhall the* Jews *at* Jeruſalem *bind the Man that oweth this Girdle, and ſhall deliver him into the Hands of the* Gentiles, *ver.* 11. And ſurely he was not ignorant what he muſt expect whenever he ſhould fall into their Hands; yet neither could this afright him from his Duty.

But then, laſt of all, he meeteth with the ſoreſt Tryal from his deareſt Friends, who fell upon him with paſſionate Entreaties, and many Tears, beſeeching him to decline that Journey: O they could not give up ſuch a Miniſter as *Paul* was! This even melted him down, and almoſt brake his Heart; which yet was eaſier to do, than to turn him out of the Path of Obedience: Where by the way we may note two things;

Firſt, That Divine Precept, not Providence, is to Rule out our way of Duty.

Secondly, That no hinderances or encouragements whatſoever will juſtifie our neglect of a known Duty.

All theſe Rubs he paſſes over, all theſe diſcouragements he overcame with this Heroick and truly Chriſtian Reſolution in the Text; *What mean you to weep, and to break my Heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but alſo to die at* Jeruſalem, *for the Name of the Lord Jeſus.*

In which words we have:

1. A loving and gentle Rebuke.
2. A quieting and calming Argument.

Firſt, He lovingly and gently rebukes their fond and inordinate Sorrow for his Departure, in theſe words, *What mean ye to Weep, and break my Heart?* As if he ſhould ſay, What mean theſe Paſſionate Entreaties, and tempting Tears? To what purpoſe is all this a-do? They are but ſo many Snares of Satan to turn my Heart out of the way of Obedience: You do as much as in you lies to break my Heart; Let there be no more of this, I beſeech you.

Secondly, He labours to charm their unruly Paſſions with a very quieting and calming Argument: *For I am ready*, &c. ἑτοίμως ἔχω, *parate habeo.* I am prepared and fitted for the greateſt Sufferings which ſhall befall me in the purſuit of my Duty, be it a Priſon or be it Death, I am provided for either; Liberty is dear, and Life much dearer, but Chriſt is dearer than either.

But what was there in all this to ſatisfie them whoſe trouble it was to ſee him ſo forward? Let the words be conſidered, and we ſhall find divers things in them to ſatisfie and quiet their Hearts, and make them willing to give him up.

Firſt, *I am ready*, that is, God hath fitted and prepared my Heart for the greateſt Sufferings; this is the Work of God; Fleſh and Blood would never be brought to this, were not all its intereſts and inclinations ſubdued and over-ruled by the Spirit of God: What do ye therefore in all this, but work againſt the Deſign of God, who hath fitted and prepared my Heart for this Service?

Secondly, *I am ready*, that is, my Will and Reſolution ſtands in a full bent, my Heart is fixed, you cannot therefore ſtudy to do me a greater Injury, than to diſcompoſe and diſorder my Heart again, by caſting ſuch Temptations as theſe in my way, to cauſe the Fleſh to rebel, and the Enemy that is within to renew his oppoſition.

Thirdly, *I am ready*, that is, my Heart is ſo fixed to follow the Call of God whatever ſhall befal me, that all your Tears and Entreaties to the contrary are but caſt away, they cannot alter my fixed purpoſe, you had as good be quiet, and chearfully reſign me to the Will of God.

Thus you ſee the Equipage and preparation of *Paul*'s Spirit to receive both Bonds and Death for Chriſt at *Jeruſalem*; This made him victorious over the Temptations of Friends, and the Malice and Cruelty of his Enemies; by this readineſs and preparation of his Mind he was carried through all, and enabled to finiſh his courſe with Joy. From hence the Obſervation is;

Doct. *That it is a bleſſed and excellent thing for the People of God to be prepared, and ready for the hardeſt Services, and worſt of Sufferings to which the Lord may call them.*

This is that which every gracious Heart is reaching after, praying and ſtriving to obtain, but, ah, how few attain it? Certainly there are not many among the Multitude of Profeſſors of this Generation, that can ſay as *Paul* here did, *I am ready to be bound, or to die for Chriſt.*

## CHAP. II.

*Shews that although God takes no delight in afflicting his people; yet he ſometimes expoſeth them to great and grievous Sufferings, with a brief account why, and how he calls them thereunto.*

THE Mercies and Compaſſions of God over his people are exceeding great and tender, *Pſal.* 103. 14. *Like as a Father pitieth his Children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him*; He delights not in afflicting and grieving them, Lam. 3. 33. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of men.* The Scripture intimates to us a ſeeming Conflict betwixt the Juſtice and Mercy of God, when he is about to deliver up his people into their Enemies hands, *Hoſea* 1. 8, 9. *How ſhall I give thee up* Ephraim? *How ſhall I deliver thee* Iſrael? *How ſhall I make thee as* Adma? *How ſhall I ſet thee as* Zeboim? *Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together*: Which ſhews us with what reluctance and great unwillingneſs the Lord goes about ſuch work as this: The work of Judgment is his *ſtrange work*; it pleaſes him better to exerciſe the milder Attribute of Mercy towards his Children. Hence we find when he is preparing to execute his Judgments, that he delays the execution as long as the Honour of his Name, and ſafety of his People will permit, *Jer.* 44. 22. He bears till he can bear no longer; He often turns away his wrath from them, *Pſal.* 78. 38, 39. He tries them by leſſer Judgments, and gentler Corrections, to prevent greater, *Amos* 4. 6. When his people are humbled under the Threatnings of his Wrath, his Heart is melted into Compaſſion to them, *Jer.* 31. 17, 20. And when ever his Mercy prevails againſt Judgment, it is with joy and triumph, *James* 2. 13. *Mercy rejoyceth againſt Judgment.*

For he feels his own tender Compaſſions yerning over them; he foreſeeth, and is no way willing to gratifie the inſulting pride of his and their Enemies, *Deut.* 32. 26, 27. *I ſaid I would ſcatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to ceaſe from among men, were it not that I feared the wrath of the Enemy, leſt their Adverſaries ſhould behave themſelves ſtrangely*, &c.

Yet all this notwithſtanding, it often falls out by the provocations of his Sons and Daughters, that the Lord gives them up into the hands of their Enemies, for the correction of their evils, and the manifeſtation of his own Glory. *Seneca* (though a Heathen) could ſay, that God loves his People with a Maſculine Love, not with a Womaniſh Indulgence and Tenderneſs: If need require, they ſhall be in heavineſs through manifold Temptations, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. He had rather their Hearts ſhould be heavy under Adverſity, than vain and careleſs under Proſperity; The choiceſt Spirits have been exerciſed with the ſharpeſt ſufferings, and thoſe that now ſhine as Stars in Heaven, have been trod under foot as Dung on the Earth, 1 *Cor.* 4. 11. *Unto this preſent hour we both hunger and thirſt, and are naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling places, and labour, working with our hands; being reviled we bleſs, being perſecuted we ſuffer it, being defamed we entreat; we are made as the filth of the World, and the off-ſcouring of all things unto this day.* The Eleventh Chapter to the *Hebrews* is a Compendium of the various, and grievous ſufferings of the Primitive Saints: *They were tortured, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the Sword, they wandered about in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins being afflicted, deſtitute, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy; They wandered in Deſarts, and in Mountains, in Dens, and Caves of the Earth.* And ſince the Earth had dryed up thoſe Rivers of precious blood, whereof the Sacred Records make mention, what Seas of Chriſtian blood have ſince thoſe days been ſhed by bloody Perſecutors? Hiſtories inform us, that in the Ten Primitive Perſecutions, ſo many of the Saints and Martyrs of Jeſus have been ſlain, as that you may allow five Thouſand a day to every day in the whole Year. Thoſe bloody Emperors ſported themſelves with the Deaths of Gods deareſt Saints; many precious Chriſtians were burnt by night at *Rome*, to ſerve as Torches to light their Enemies in their paſſage through the Streets; Eight hundred Thouſand Martyrs are mentioned within the ſpace of thirty Years, ſince the *Jeſuits* aroſe out of the Bottomleſs Pit.

To what grievous Sufferings did the Lord give up thoſe precious Servants of Chriſt, the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes*, who received the Light of Reformation about the Year, 1260. when the Fogs of Antichriſtian Darkneſs had overſpread the Earth; a People ſound in judgment, as appears by their Letters, Catechiſms, and Confeſſions which are extant; a People of a ſimple, plain and inoffenſive Behaviour; yet with what fury and rage did that impious Pope *Pius* proſecute them to deſtruction? driving them into the Woods and Mountains, except the Aged and Children that could not flee, who were murdered in the way: Some Famiſhed in the Caves and Clefts of the Rocks, others endured the Rack for eight Hours together; ſome beaten with Iron Rods, others thrown from the tops of high Towers, and broken to pieces.

What bloody Shambles and Slaughter-houſes have *France*, *Ireland*, and *England* been made by Popiſh cruelty? More might be related out of each Story, than a tender Hearted Reader is able to bear the rehearſal of: But what God hath done, he may do again; we are not better than our Fathers, diſmal Clouds of indignation are gathering over our heads, charged with double deſtruction, ſhould the Lord pleaſe to make them break upon us; we cannot imagine the rage of Satan to be abated, now that his Kingdom haſtens to its period, *Rev.* 12. 12. nor are his Inſtruments grown leſs cruel and skilful to deſtroy. The Land indeed hath enjoyed a long reſt, and this Generation is acquainted with little more of Martyrdom, than what the Hiſtories of former times inform us of: but yet let no man befool himſelf with a groundleſs expectation of a continuing tranquillity. *Auguſtin* thinks that the Bloody Sweat which over-ran the Body of Chriſt in the Garden, ſignified the ſharp and grievous Sufferings, which in his Myſtical Body he ſhould afterwards endure; and indeed it is a truth, that theſe are alſo called the Remains of Chriſt's Sufferings, *Col.* 1. 24. His *Perſonal Sufferings* were indeed compleated at his Reſurrection, that Cup was full to the brim, to which no drop of Suffering can be added; but his Sufferings in his *Myſtical Body* are not yet full; by his Perſonal Sufferings he fully ſatisfied the Wrath of God, but the Sufferings of his People have not yet ſatisfied the Wrath of Men; though Millions of precious Saints have ſhed their blood for Chriſt, whoſe Souls are now lying under the Altar, *How long Lord*! *how long*! Yet there are many more coming on behind in the ſame Path of Perſecution, and much Chriſtian Blood muſt yet be ſhed before the Myſtery of God be finiſhed; and notwithſtanding this Lucid Interval, the Clouds ſeem to be returning again after the Rain. Thus you ſee to what grievous Sufferings the Merciful God hath ſometimes called his deareſt People.

Now God may be ſaid to call forth his People to ſuffer, when he ſo hedgeth them in by Providence, that there is no way to eſcape ſuffering, but by Sinning; whatſoever Providence labours with ſuch a Dilemma as this, is a plain Signification of God's Will to us in that Caſe. We may not now expect Extraordinary Calls to Suffering-Work, as ſome of the Saints had of old, *Gen.* 22. 2. *Acts* 9. 16. But when our way is ſo ſhut up by Providence, that we cannot avoid Suffering, but by ſtepping over the Hedge of the Command, God will have us look upon that Exigence as his Call to ſuffer: And if the Reaſons be demanded why the Lord, who is ſo inclined to Mercy, doth ſo often hedge in his own People by his Providence in a ſuffering Path; let us know; that in ſo doing he doth both

1. Illuſtrate his own Glory. And
2. Promote his Peoples Happineſs.

Firſt, Hereby the moſt Wiſe God doth Illuſtrate the Glory of his own Name, clearing up the Righteouſneſs of his ways by the ſufferings of his own People: By this the World ſhall ſee, that how well ſoever he loves them, he will not indulge or patronize their Sins; if they will be ſo diſ-ingenuous to abuſe his Favours, he will be ſo juſt to make them ſuffer for their Sins, and by thoſe very Sufferings will provide for his own Glory, which was by them Clouded in the Eyes of the World. He hates not Sin a jot the leſs becauſe it is found in his own People, *Amos* 3. 2. And though for the magnifying of his Mercy he will pardon their Sins, yet for the clearing of his Righteouſneſs he will take Vengeance upon their Inventions, *Pſal.* 99. 8.

Moreover, by expoſing his People to ſuch grievous Sufferings, he gives a fit opportunity to manifeſt the Glory of his Power in their Support, and of his Wiſdom in the Marvellous ways of their eſcape and deliverance. It is one of the greateſt wonders in the World how the Church ſubſiſts under ſuch fierce and frequent Aſſaults as are made upon it by its Enemies: *I will turn aſide* (*ſaid* Moſes) *and ſee this great ſight, why the Buſh is not conſumed*, Exod. 3. 3. That Flaming Buſh was the lively Emblem of the oppreſſed Church in *Egypt*, the crackling Flames noted the heat of their Perſecution, the remaining of the Buſh unconſumed in the Flames ſignified the wonderful Power of God in their Preſervation; no People are ſo Priviledged, ſo Protected, ſo delivered as the People of God; much leſs oppoſition than hath been made againſt the Church, hath overturned and utterly deſtroyed the mighty Monarchies of the World.

*—— Sic Midus ademit*
*Aſſyrio, Medoque tulit moderamina Perſes,*
*Subjecit Perſen Macedo, ceſſurus & ipſe*
*Romanis——*

Clandian lib. 3. in laudes Stiliconis.

And no leſs admirable is the Wiſdom of God in fruſtrating and defeating the moſt deep and deſperate Deſigns of Hell againſt his poor People. Now you may ſee the moſt Wiſe God going beyond a malicious and ſubtil Devil, overturning in a Moment the deep-laid Deſigns and Contrivances of many Years, and that at the very birth and point of Execution, *Heſt.* 6. 1. Snaring the Wicked in the Works of their own Hands, making their own Tongues to fall upon them, working out ſuch marvellous Salvations with his own Hand, as fills them with Aſtoniſhment and Wonder: *Pſal.* 126. 7. *When the Lord turned back the Captivity of* Sion, *We were like them that dreamed.*

Secondly, As God provides for his own glory by the Sufferings and troubles of his People: So he advanceth their Happineſs, and greatly promotes their Intereſt thereby.

For firſt, Theſe Troubles are ordered as ſo many occaſions and means to mortifie the Corruptions that are in their Hearts; there are Rank Weeds ſpringing up in the beſt Soil, which need ſuch Winter Weather to rot them; and certainly if we reckon Humility, Heavenly-mindedneſs, Contempt of the World, and longing deſires after Heaven, to be the real Intereſt and Advantage of the Church; then 'tis evident nothing ſo much promotes their Intereſt as a ſuffering Condition doth; Adverſity kills thoſe Corruptions which Proſperity bred.

Secondly, By theſe tryals their Sincerity is cleared, to the Joy and Satisfaction of their own Hearts; many a doubt and fear which had long entangled and perplexed them is removed and anſwered: When Adverſity had given them proof and tryal of their own Hearts, one ſharp tryal wherein God helps us to be faithful, will do more to ſatisfie our Fears, and reſolve our Doubts, than all the Sermons that ever we heard in our Lives could do.

Thirdly, theſe Sufferings and Tryals of the Church are ordained to free it of abundance of Hypocrites, which were its reproaches as well as burthen. *Amos* 9. 9, 10. Affliction is a Furnace to ſeparate the Droſs from the more pure and noble Gold. Multitudes of Hypocrites, like Flies in a hot Summer, are generated by the Churches Proſperity ; but this Winter Weather kills them ; many gaudy Profeſſors grow within the Incloſure of the Church , like beautiful Flowers in the Field, where they ſtand, during its Peace and Proſperity , in the pride and bravery of their Gifts and Profeſſions ; but the Wind paſſeth over them, and they are gone, and their places ſhall know them no more ; to allude to that in *Pſal.* 103. 16. Thunder and Lightning is very terrible Weather , but exceeding uſeful to purifie and cleanſe the Air.

Fourthly, the Churches Sufferings are ordered and ſanctified to endear them each to other. Times of Common-Suffering are times of Reconciliation, and greater endearments among the People of God , never more endeared, than when moſt Perſecuted ; never more united than when moſt ſcattered : *Mal.* 3. 17. *Then they that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to another.* Certainly there is ſomething in our Fellowſhip in the ſame Sufferings that is endearing and engaging ; but there is much more in the diſcoveries that Perſecution makes of the ſincerity of our Hearts , which, it may be was before entertained with Jealouſie , and there is yet more than all this in the Reproofs of the Rod, whereby they are humbled for their Pride , Wantonneſs, and bitterneſs of their Spirits each to other, and made to cry in the ſenſe of theſe tranſgreſſions, as *Pſal.* 70. 8. *Remember not againſt us former Iniquities.*

Laſtly, By theſe Troubles and Diſtreſſes they are awakened to their Duties , and taught to pray more frequently , Spiritually, and Fervently. Ah what drowſineſs and formality is apt to creep in upon the beſt Hearts in the time of Proſperity ; but when the Storm riſes, and the Sea grows turbulent and raging , now they cry as the Diſciples to Chriſt, *Lord ſave us, we periſh.* They ſay Muſick is ſweeteſt upon the Waters ; I am ſure the ſweeteſt Melody of Prayer is upon the deep waters of Affliction : For theſe, among many other righteous, wiſe, and holy ends, the Lord permits and orders the Perſecutions and Diſtreſſes of his People.

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## CHAP. III.

*Shews that it is uſual with God to premoniſh his People of approaching Tryals and Sufferings ; with ſome account of the manner how, and the reaſons why he ſo forewarns them.*

AS *Paul* had many clear Premonitions and fore-notices of the Sufferings that ſhould befall him at *Jeruſalem* , that he might not be ſurprized by them when they came ; ſo it is uſual with God (though not in ſuch an immediate and extraordinary manner.) to admoniſh the World, and eſpecially his own People, of great Tryals and Sufferings before-hand, *Amos* 3. 7. *Surely the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his Secrets unto his Servants the Prophets.*

Thus when he was about to bring the Flood upon the World, he gave one hundred and twenty Years warning of it before it came, *Gen.* 6. 3. And when he was to deſtroy *Sodom*, he ſaith, *Gen.* 18. 17. *Shall I hide from* Abraham *the thing that I do* ? And the like diſcovery he made about the ſame Judgment to *Lot*, *Gen.* 9. 12, 13, 14. So when the Captivity of the *Jews* was nigh at hand, the People had many forewarnings of it ; God forewarned them both *Miniſterially*, and *Providentially* ; he warned them by the Prophets , *Ezek.* 3. 17. *Hear the Word of my Mouth, and give them warning from me.* And when the time drew nigh to execute the Judgment determined upon *Jeruſalem* , and the *Temple*, how plainly did Chriſt foretel them of it ? *Luke* 19. 43, 44. *Thine Enemies ſhall caſt a Trench about thee, and compaſs thee round , and keep thee in on every ſide, and ſhall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy Children within thee.*

And when the Storm was juſt ready to fall, their own Hiſtorian tells us a Voice was heard in the *Temple* , ſaying *Migremus hinc* , *Let us go hence* : Which Voice *Tacitus* alſo mentions in his *Annals* , affirming it to be more than a humane Voice, telling them God was departing , and that it was accompanied with a ruſhing noiſe , as of Perſons going out ; Theſe were extraordinary Warnings. The like Signs have been given to divers other Nations, by dreadful *Eclipſes* of the Heavenly Bodies , *Portentous Comets*, Earthquakes , and other Signs of Judgment.

Joſephus de bello *Jud. lib.* 7. *cap.* 2. *Audita major humana vox excedere Deos, ſimul ingens motus excedentium.* Tacitus *lib.* 21.

Now though we have no ground to expect ſuch extraordinary Warnings ; yet we have the moſt apparent and certain ſigns of approaching Calamities , after which if they ſurprize us, the fault muſt lie in our own inexcuſable negligence ; for we have a ſtanding Rule to govern our ſelves in this matter , and that is this : *When the ſame Sins are found in one Nation , which have brought down the Wrath of God upon another Nation, it is an evident ſign of Judgment at the Door ; for God is unchangeable, Juſt, and Holy, and will not favour that in one People which he hath puniſhed in another, nor bleſs that in one Age which he hath curſed in another.* Upon this very ground it was that the Apoſtle warned the *Corinthians* by the Example of the *Iſraelites*, whoſe Sins had ruined them in the Wilderneſs, 1 *Cor.* 10. 6. *Now theſe things were our Examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as they alſo luſted* : As if he ſhould ſay, Look upon thoſe dead Bodies which are as it were caſt up upon the Scripture Shore for a warning to you ; follow not the ſame *courſe*, leſt you meet in the ſame *curſe* ; if you tread the ſame *paths*, expect the ſame *puniſhment* ; God is as righteous now as he was then, he hates, and will puniſh Sin in you, as much as he did in them.

Let us therefore conſider what theſe Provocations were , that haſtened the wrath of God upon his own *Iſrael* , a People that were nigh and dear unto him , a People upon whom he ſpent as much of the riches of his Patience , as upon any

People in the World; that ſo we may reckon whereabout we are at this day, and what is like to be the Lot of this ſinful and provoking Generation, and we ſhall find by the Conſent of all the Prophets, that theſe Sins were the immediate fore-runners and proper cauſes of their overthrow.

Firſt, The great corruption of God's Worſhip among them, kindled his Wrath, and haſtened their Ruin, Pſal. 106. 39, 40, 41, 42. *They were defiled with their own Works, and went a Whoring with their own Inventions; therefore was the Wrath of God kindled againſt his People, inſomuch that he abhorred his own Inheritance, and he gave them into the Hand of the Heathen, and they that hated them ruled over them, their Enemies alſo oppreſſed them, and they were brought into ſubjection under their hand.* They that will not bear the Golden Yoke of Chriſt, ſhall be galled with the Iron Yoke of Men: Nothing more provokes the Anger of God, than the adulterating of his Worſhip; a Man will bear with a Thouſand Infirmities in the Wife of his Boſom, but unfaithfullneſs in the Marriage Covenant breaks his Heart: After the manner of Men ſo abuſed and grieved, the Lord expreſſeth himſelf. *Ezek.* 6. 9. *I am broken with their Whoriſh Heart, which hath departed from me, and with their Eyes that go a Whoring after their Idols.* Men cannot invent a ſurer and ſpeedier way to their own Ruin, than to bring their own Inventions into God's Worſhip.

Secondly, incorrigible Obſtinacy and Impenitency under gentler ſtrokes and leſſer Judgments, makes way for utter Ruin and Deſolation, *Amos* 4. from the 6th to the 12th Verſe. Scarcity, Mildews, Peſtilence, and Sword had been tried upon them, but without effect; for the remnant that eſcaped thoſe Judgments; (although pluckt as ſo many Brands out of the Fire, in which their Fellow-Sinners Periſhed) were not Reformed by thoſe gentler and *Moderated* Judgments.

Thirdly, Stupidity, and ſenſleſsneſs of God's Hand, and the tokens of his Anger was a provoking cauſe, and forerunning of their National Deſolation; they neither ſaw the Hand of God when it was lifted up, nor humbled themſelves under it when it was laid on; the Hand of God is then ſaid to be *lifted up*, when the Providences of God prepare and poſture themſelves for our Affliction; when the Clouds of Judgment gather over our Heads, and grow blacker and blacker as theirs did upon them, and do upon us at this day, but they took no notice of it, *Iſa.* 26. 11. *Lord, when thy Hand is lifted up, they will not ſee*; and (which is the height of Stupidity) they all remain ſenſeleſs and regardleſs when the Hand of God was *laid upon them*, Iſa. 24. 25. *Who gave* Jacob *for a ſpoil, and* Iſrael *to the Robbers? Did not the Lord? He againſt whom we have ſinned, for they would not walk in his Ways, neither were they obedient to his Law; therefore he hath poured upon them the fury of his Anger, and the ſtrength of Battel, and it hath ſet him on fire round about, and he knew not, and it burned him, yet he laid it not to Heart.* O prodigious Sottiſhneſs! It was not ſome ſmall drops of God's Anger, but *the fury of his Anger*, not ſome lighter skirmiſh of his Judgments with them, but *the ſtrength of Battel*; it was not ſome particular ſtrokes upon ſingle Perſons, or Families, but *it ſet him on Fire round about*, a general Conflagration; yet all this would not awaken them.

Fourthly, the Perſecution of God's Faithful Miniſters and People was another ſin that procured, and a ſign that foretold the deſtruction of their Nation, 2 *Chron.* 36. 15, 16. *And the Lord of their Fathers ſent to them by his Meſſengers, riſing up betimes and ſending, becauſe he had compaſſion on his People, and on his Dwelling-place; but they mocked the Meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his Words, and miſuſed his Prophets, until the Wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his People, till there was no Remedy.* There were alſo a number of upright Souls among them, who deſired to worſhip God according to his own Preſcrption; but a Snare was laid for them in *Miſpah*, and a Net ſpread for them upon *Tabor*, *Hoſ.* 5. 1. And this haſtened Judgment towards them: *Miſpah and Tabor*, were placed lying in the way betwixt *Samaria* and *Jeruſalem*, where the true Worſhip of God was; and in thoſe places Spies were ſet by the Prieſts to obſerve and inform againſt them, ſo that it became very hazardous to attend the pure and incorrupt Worſhip of God, which quickly haſtened on their Ruin.

Fifthly, The Removal of Godly and uſeful Men by Death in more than ordinary haſte, was to them a ſign of Deſolation at Hand, *Iſa.* 57. 1. *The Righteous periſheth, and no Man layeth it to Heart, and merciful Men are taken away, none conſidering that the Righteous is taken away from the Evil to come.* In this caſe God acts towards his People, as the Husbandman in a catching Harveſt doth by his Corn, he hurries it with a ſhuffling haſte into the Barn, when he ſees a Storm coming; or as a careful Father with his Sons that are abroad at School, who ſends his Horſes to fetch them home ſpeedily when he hears the Plague is begun in the Place: Upon this Ground the Prophet *Amos* bewails himſelf, *Amos* 7. 1. *Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the Summer Fruit, as the Grape gleanings of the Vintage, there is no Cluſter to eat: My Soul deſireth the firſt ripe Fruit*; *q. d.* Alas, alas, what miſerable days are at hand! What Miſeries muſt I expect to ſee! The pleaſant Cluſters (*i. e.*) the Societies of the Saints are gathered away by the Hand of Death; there are but few that remain, here and there a ſingle Saint, like Grapes after the Vintage is done, two or three upon the outmoſt Branches.

Sixthly, The general decay of the Life and Power of Godlineſs amongſt them that were left, foreboded Deſtruction at the Door; this is both a provoking Sin, and a fore-running ſign of National Calamity, *Hoſea* 4. 18. *Their Drink is ſower*; A Metaphor lively expreſſing the deadneſs and formality of the People in the Worſhip of God, it was like ſower or dead Drink which hath loſt its Spirit and reliſh, and is become flat; ſuch were their Duties, no Spiritual Life, Affection or ſavour in them; they heard as if they heard not, and prayed as if they prayed not; the Ordinances of God were to them as the Ordinances of Men, of which the *Apoſtle* ſaith, that they Periſh in the uſing.

Seventhly, To conclude, Mutual Animoſities, Jars, and Diviſions, were to them manifeſt Symptoms of National Calamities and Deſolations; for then *Ephraim* envied *Judah*, and *Judah* vexed *Ephraim*, Iſa. 11. 13. Hoſea 9. 7. *The Days of Viſitation are come, the days of recompence are come*, Iſrael *ſhall know it: The Prophet is a Fool, the ſpiritual Man is mad, for the multitude of thine Iniquities, and the great Hatred.*

When ſuch Symptoms of God's Indignation do appear upon any People, the Lord by them, as by ſo many glazing Meteors and blazing Comets, forewarns the World that his Judgments are near, even at the Door. Theſe ſigns all Men ought to obſerve and behold with trembling. If you ask why doth God uſually give ſuch warnings of his Indignation before it comes, the Reaſons are:

1. To prevent the Execution.
2. To make them more Tollerable.
3. To leave the Incorrrigible inexcuſable.

Firſt, Warning is given with deſign to prevent the Execution of Judgments, *Amos* 4. 12. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee,* O Iſrael; *and becauſe I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God,* O Iſrael; *i. e.* Prepare thy ſelf to meet me in the way of my Judgments, by Humiliation and Interceſſion, to prevent the Execution: And what elſe was the Deſign of God in ſending *Jonah* to that great City *Nineveh*, but to excite them to Repentance for the prevention of their Ruin. This *Jonah* knew to be the Lord's meaning, how poſitive ſoever the words of his Commiſſion were; and therefore he declined the Meſſage to ſecure his Credit; knowing that if upon warning given they Repented, the Gratious Nature of God would ſoon melt into Compaſſion over them, and free Grace would make him appear as a Liar; for ſo we muſt expound his Words, *Jonah* 4. 2. *Was not this my ſaying when I was yet in my Country? Therefore I fled before unto* Tarſhis, *For I knew that thou art a gracious God, and Merciful, ſlow to Anger, and of great Kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the Evil. q. d.* Yea Lord, I knew before-hand it would come to this; thou ſendeſt me poſitively to denounce thy Judgments to *Nineveh*, mean time deſiring nothing more than that the Execution of them might be prevented by their Repentance: And thus thy Mercy hath expoſed my Reputation in ſaving them from Deſtruction.

Secondly, God forewarns his People of Judgments, to make them more tolerable when they come; expected Evils are nothing ſo heavy, as thoſe that come by ſurprizal; for look as the long expectation of a Mercy makes it leſs ſweet, our Thoughts having anticipated and ſucked out much of the ſweetneſs before-hand; ſo the expectation of Judgments before they befall us, make them leſs bitter and burthenſome than elſe they would be, the Soul having inured and accuſtom'd it ſelf to them by frequent Thoughts, and prepared and made ready it ſelf to entertain them, as *Paul* did in my Text. To prevent the Diſciples ſurprizal and offence at thoſe days of Perſecution that were coming upon them, Chriſt foretold them, and gave them fair warning before-hand, *Joh.* 16. 4.

Thirdly, He forewarns his People of approaching Dangers, to leave the Incorrigible wholly inexcuſable, that thoſe who have no ſenſe of Sin, nor care to prevent Ruin, might have no Cloak for their folly when Judgments overtake them; *What wilt thou ſay when he ſhall puniſh thee?* Jer. 13. 21, 22. As if he ſhould ſay, What Plea or Apology is left thee after ſo many fair Warnings and timely Premonitions? Thou canſt not ſay I have ſurprized thee, or that thou waſt ruined before thou waſt warned; Thy Deſtruction therefore is of thy ſelf.

## CHAP. IV.

*Demonſtrating the Excellency of a prepared Heart for the worſt of Sufferings; and what a bleſſed thing it is to be ready to be bound, or to die for* Chriſt, *as* Paul *here was.*

I *Am Ready*] O bleſſed frame of Spirit! how hard, but how happy is it to get a Heart ſo tempered! Every Chriſtian can ſay, I would be ready, and the Lord make me ready for Sufferings; but few can ſay I am ready, my Heart is prepared and fitted for ſuch a work; yet this example ſhews us it is attainable; and what a bleſſed thing it is to attain it, the following particulars will abundantly convince us.

Firſt, Readineſs for ſufferings will bring the Heart of a Chriſtian to an holy Reſt and Tranquility in a Suffering Hour, and prevent that Anxiety, Perturbation, and diſtraction of Mind, which puts the ſinking weight into Afflictions; the more cares, fears and troubles we have before our Sufferings come, the more calm, quiet and compoſed we are like to be when our Sufferings are come indeed. It is admirable to conſider with what Peace and Patience *Job* entertained his Troubles, which conſidering the kinds, degrees and manner in which they befel him, one would think they ſhould at leaſt have ſtartled and amazed him, and put his Soul (as gracious and mortified as it was) into great diſorder and confuſion; but you find the contrary; never did the Patience of a Man Triumph at that rate over Adverſity, he worſhips God, owns his Hand, and reſigns himſelf up to his Pleaſure, *Job.* 1. 20, 21. And whence was this? Surely had his Troubles come by way of Surprize, he could never have carried it at that rate; but in the days of his Peace and Proſperity he had prepared for ſuch a day as this, *Job.* 3. 25, 26. *I was not in ſafety, neither had I reſt, yet Trouble came; The thing that I feared* (ſaith he) *is come upon me.* He laid it to Heart before it came, and therefore it neither diſtracted nor brake the Heart when it came. In like manner the Prophet

*Habakkuk* ſtood upon his Watch-Tower, *i. e.* He made his Obſervations by the Word upon the probable events of Providence, whereby he got a clear foreſight of thoſe troubulous days that were at hand; which though it made him tremble in himſelf, yet it gave him reſt in the day of Evil, *Hab.* 3. 16,17,18. There is a Twofold reſt in the day of evil, *viz.*

1. A Reſt of Deliverance.
2. A Reſt of Contentation.

It is a ſingular Mercy to find reſt in a Man's own Spirit, to enjoy inward Peace and Tranquillity of Mind, when there is no reſt without; and the way to obtain this, is to foreſee, count upon, and make due preparation for troublous times before-hand: Evils that come by way of Surprizal are not only amazing, but very frequently deſtructive Evils; 'tis a ſad aggravation to feel a Miſery before we fear it; thoſe Calamities that find Men *ſecure*, do uſually leave them *deſperate*; the Enemy that comes upon your Backs hath a great advantage to ruin us, yet this is the common caſe of the World. *For Man knoweth not his time, but as the Fiſhes are taken in an evil Net, and as the Birds that are caught in the Snare; ſo are the Sons of Men ſnared in an evil time, when it falleth on them ſuddenly*, *Eccleſ.* 8. 12. Thus periſhed the old World; there was but one *Noah* provided for the Flood, and he only with his Family was preſerved in it; all the reſt were Eating and Drinking, Marrying, and giving in Marriage, until the Flood came and ſwept them all away, *Mat.* 24. 38. Men will not uſe their foreſeeing Faculties, but becauſe it is all quiet to day, they conclude it ſhall be ſo to Morrow. Thoſe that are at reſt in their habitations, and have got a ſoft Pillow under their heads, are apt to fall aſleep in Security, and dream pleaſantly of continued Reſt and Peace, and loath they are to interrupt their ſenſual Pleaſure with Melancholly Thoughts of changes and ſufferings.

*Philoſophers* tell us, that immediately before an Earthquake, the Air is very quiet and ſerene, and before the great Rain falls, the Wind uſually lies; Were the aſpect of ſecond cauſes much more favourable and encouraging than it is; yet there were cauſe enough for all that are wiſe in Heart to fear and tremble, under the conſideration of that National guilt which is treaſured up, and will certainly produce diſtreſs and trouble.

O Chriſtians look out for days of Viſitation, prepare for a Storm, and provide you an Ark, an hiding place in Chriſt and the Promiſes, as ever you expect Reſt and Peace in your own Spirits, when the Earth ſhall be full of Tumults, Uproars and Deſolations.

Secondly, Our Preparations for Sufferings is an excellent Argument of the Honeſty and Sincerity of our Hearts in the matters of Religion; He that makes account of Sufferings, and is daily at work with his own Heart, mortifying its Corruptions, weaning its Worldly Affections, exciting and making ready its Suffering-Graces, reſolving in the Strength of God to take his Lot with Chriſt, where-ever and howſoever it ſhall fall, this is the Man that hath deliberately cloſed with Chriſt upon his own terms, and is like to be the durable and victorious Chriſtian.

As for Hypocrites, (Chriſt's Summer Friends) they have either their Exceptions againſt the Severities of Religion, and ſtudy to ſecure to themſelves a Retreat from danger, or elſe they ruſh inconſiderately into the Profeſſion of Chriſt, never debating the terms which he propoſes to all that will follow him, *Mark* 8. 34. The neceſſity of a rational and well adviſed cloſure with Chriſt upon ſuffering and ſelf-denying terms, is by himſelf fully ſet forth in that excellent Parable, *Luke* 14. 25, 26, 27, 28. There was a great Multitude that followed him at that time; Chriſt began to grow in requeſt among them, they flocked from all pars to ſee and hear him; but he foreſaw that if once a ſharp Tryal ſhould befall them, it would quickly thin and diminiſh that great Multitude, and reduce them, like *Gideons* Hoſt, into a little Handful; and therefore he reſolves to deal candidly and plainly with them, he propounds his terms, and ſets down his Conditions, which every one of them muſt ſubſcribe that will follow him, the Sum of which is this; *Let him deny himſelf, take up his Croſs, and follow me.* And to evince the rationality of theſe terms, he argues from the moſt common and obvious practiſes of Men in their Civil Affairs: No Man that exerciſeth Reaſon will begin to build an Houſe, and lay a large Foundation, when he is not provided with a Stock to carry up the Walls, and compleat the Work; no Man in his Wits would engage with a Handful of Men againſt a great armed Multitude; poſſibly they may intend to *face*, but no Man would think they intend to *Fight* the Enemy on ſuch a diſadvantage: Juſt ſo ſtands the caſe in our Profeſſion of Chriſt, if we really intend to go through with the Buſineſs of Religion, we muſt ſit down and compute the coſt and charges of Chriſtianity, think upon the worſt, as well as the beſt, caſt upon Reproaches, Priſons and Death for his ſake, as well as the eaſier and more pleaſant parts of Active Obedience; and having ſo done, if then we can be content to hazard and forego all the reſt upon his account, and accordingly manage our ſelves in a day of Suffering, then we deal ſincerely with Chriſt, and clear our ſelves from the danger of Hypocriſie. It is for want of this that ſo many Profeſſors faint and fall away in times of Temptation, furniſhing the Devil with ſo many Triumphs over Religion, and the more upright Profeſſors of it. It was for want of *Depth of Earth*, (*i. e.*) a deep Conſideration, and well-rooted Reſolution at firſt, that the ſtony-ground Hypocrite ſo quickly withered away, when the Sun of Perſecution began to ſhine fervently upon him, *Mat.* 13. 5, 6. And doubtleſs it is to prevent this fatal Iſſue of our Profeſſion, that God makes ſuch deep wounds by Conviction upon his Peoples Hearts at firſt; it is for our Eſtabliſhment in future Tryals and Sufferings, that he ſo diſtreſſes and humbles them, that he makes Sin ſo bitter and burthenſome to them, as well knowing that all this is no more, than needs to prevent their returning again to Sin in the times of their Temptation.

O Profeſſor, if thou be one that art come to Chriſt in this way, and haſt thus deliberately cloſed with him; if thou haſt as well bethought thy ſelf of bearing his Croſs, as of wearing his Crown, thou haſt then a fair Evidence of the uprightneſs of thy Heart, than which the World affords not a ſweeter Comfort.

Thirdly, the Advantage of Preparations for Sufferings lies in this, that it prevents and cuts off the Scandal of the Croſs, with reſpect both to our ſelves and others.

Firſt, It prevents our own offence at Sufferings; and by Chriſt's own Teſtimony, That Soul is Bleſſed that is not offended in him, *Mat.* 11. 6. Among the Multitudes of Profeſſors, few are found that are no way offended at the Suffering of Chriſt; they expected much Peace, Honour and Proſperity in the ways of Religion, but finding their Expectations fruſtrated, and their Carnal Intereſt rather expoſed than ſecured by their Profeſſion of Chriſt, they go back like thoſe, *Joh.* 6. 66. And walk no more with him. And it is very remarkable, that Chriſt dates the offence that Men ſhall take at him, from the firſt appearance of Sufferings, *Mat.* 24. 8, 9. *All theſe are the beginnings of Sorrows, and then ſhall many be offended.* Sorrows and Apoſtacies Commence together.

But Reader, if thou be one that makeſt it thy Buſineſs to foreſee and prepare for an evil day, thou wilt have as good thoughts of Chriſt and his ways at the loweſt Ebb, as ever thou hadſt in the greateſt flouriſh and time of Proſperity: *Great Peace* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* O happy Soul, whom no Troubles, Reproaches, or Sufferings are able to offend! Thou mayeſt meet with Priſons, Death, Baniſhments; yea, but none of theſe things ſhall offend or ſtumble thee, but thou ſhalt peaceably and ſafely paſs over them, becauſe they are no more than thou expecteſt and provideſt for.

Secondly, And by this means thou wilt alſo prevent the offence and ſcandals of *others* at the ways of Religion: It is a ſad and dangerous thing to be an occaſion of ſtumbling, either to the weak or to the wicked. *Woe to the World becauſe of Offences, for it muſt needs be that offences come; but Woe to that man by whom the Offence cometh*, Mat. 18. 7. The Apoſtacies and ſinful compliances of ungrounded Profeſſors, and weak Chriſtians in times of Temptation, are the woful occaſions of prejudicing others againſt Religion, and ſhedding the Blood of Souls. Ah, it were much better never to be in the ways of Profeſſion than to be there only as a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a Rock of offence to others: But all this Miſchief will be prevented, by thy ſerious Expectation of, and Proviſion for the Evil Day.

Fourthly, A fourth Excellency of Preparation for Sufferings lies in this, that it hath a tendency to convince and awaken the drowſie World. O! if the Lord's People would but fall about this Work in earneſt, and live as People that are providing for a Storm, and reſolve in the Strength of God to run all hazards and hardſhips for Chriſt, I am perſwaded it would be of more uſe, to ſtartle and convince the World, than all the Sermons that ever they heard: For here is that which daſhes and cuts the throat of all our Labours, we preach up Self-denial, and contempt of Life and Liberty for Chriſt. Now though they hear us preach the neceſſity and excellency of theſe things, and hear you profeſs them as your Principles; yet when they look upon the Lives of Profeſſors in times of danger, and find no proportion betwixt Profeſſion and Practice, when they ſee us cling to the World, and are as loath to give it up as others; when they obſerve Priſons and Sufferings, afright and terrifie us, as much as thoſe that make no Profeſſion; when they ſee us ſtart like Hares at every ſound, and that we live not looſe from the World, as Men prepared to let it go, and give it up for Chriſt: Why then they conclude that we dare not truſt our own Principles, when it comes to the Puſh; And how can they be perſwaded to believe that which they think we our ſelves do not really believe, although we perſwade them to believe it?

My Friends; the World hath *Eyes* to ſee what you can *do*, as well as *Ears* to hear what you can *ſay*; and as long as they ſee you do no more than others, you may talk your Hearts out, e're they will believe your way is better than others.

But now when Perſecution ariſeth, did they ſee you providing your ſelves for it, and putting on your Harneſs to enter the Liſts, carry your deareſt Injoyments in your hands, and put on the Shoo of Preparation, to follow the Lord through the rougheſt ways of Sufferings: This would convince to purpoſe, and preach the Excellency of Chriſt, the Vanity of the Creature, the rationality and certainty of Chriſtian Principles, in a more intelligible and rouzing Dialect to them, than all our cheap and Eaſie Commendations of them did. And hence it is, that *Noah* was ſaid to condemn the World, *Heb.* 11. 7. *By Faith* Noah *being warned of God, of things not ſeen as yet,* (*i. e.*) of the Deluge that was coming, though no appearance of it yet, the Heavens being as clear as ever; yet believing the Threatning, *He was moved with Fear*: The Fear of God, an Effect of his Faith in the Word of God, *moved*, (*i. e.*) impelled him to his Duty: Set him about his Preparation Work to provide an *Ark*; and this was it by which he *condemned the World*, left them excuſeleſs. For they not only heard of an approaching Flood by his Miniſtry, but now ſaw he himſelf believed what he preached, by his daily Preparations againſt it came. O conſider this, how much it would tend to the World's Conviction. Now they will ſee that you are in good earneſt and that there is a reality in Godlineſs. This will induce them to ſearch into the matter more than ever, and remove thoſe Prejudices they have taken up againſt the Good Ways of God, as if they were but *Phantaſms* and Conceits.

5. In the next place, this foreſight and preparation, muſt needs be an excellent thing, becauſe the Spirit of God every where ſets an honourable Character upon it, and always mentions ſuch Perſons with ſome ſingular commendation and reſpect. Theſe only were wiſe Men in the Judgment of God; and all the reſt (what great Politicians ſoever they are famed to be among Men) are accounted Fools, *Prov.* 22. 3. *Eccleſ.* 2. 14. *The Wiſe Man's Eyes are in his Head*; that is, he is a foreſeeing Man; *but the Fool goes on, and is puniſhed*: Ruſhes on without Conſideration, ſuſpecting no danger that he at preſent ſees not, and ſo ſmarts for his Folly. Beloved, there are *Signs of the Times*, as well as of the Weather, *Mat.* 16. 3. You may ſee the Clouds of Judgment gathering before the Storm falls upon you: And this is the meaning of *Zeph.* 2. 1, 2. *Gather your ſelves together, before the Decree bring forth, and the day paſs as the Chaff.* Where there is a *Conception* of Judgment, there will be a *Birth*, unleſs the Reformations and Prayers of the Saints give it a miſcarrying Womb. But it requires Wiſdom to diſcern this; they muſt be Men of much Obſervation, that can deſcry it at a great diſtance: Yet this may be done, by conſidering what GOD hath done in like caſes in former Ages, when Nations have been guilty of the ſame Sins as now they are: For God is as Juſt now as then, and hates Sin as much as ever he did; and partly by attending to things *preſent*, to what fullneſs and maturity the Sins of a Nation are grown, *Joel* 3. 16. Or what *beginnings* of Judgment are already upon a People, as Harbingers and Fore-runners of more at hand, *Luke* 3. 30, 31. 1 *Sam.* 2. 12. Or what is the univerſal note and cry of God's Miniſters, who are his Watchmen to foreſee danger, *Ezek.* 3. 17. And his Trumpeters to diſcover it, *Numb.* 10. 8. And when theſe have one Mouth given them, certainly there is much in it, *Luke* 1. 70. Or laſtly, by pondering thoſe Scripture-Propheſies that yet remain to be fullfilled: They muſt all go out their times, and accompliſh their full number of Years and Months; but certainly they ſhall be fullfilled in their Seaſons.

By attending to theſe things, a Chriſtian may give a near gueſs at the Judgments that are approaching a Nation, and ſo order himſelf accordingly, *Eccleſ.* 8. 5. *A Wiſe Man's Heart diſcerns both Time and Judgment.* And this is even in the Judgment of God) a choice point of Wiſdom. Whereas on the contrary, heedleſs and careleſs ones, that regard not theſe things are branded for Fools, and upbraided with more Brutiſhneſs than the Beaſts of the Field, or Fowls of the Air, *Mat.* 16. 3. *Jer.* 8. 7. *The Stork in the Heavens, the Swallow, Turtle,* and *Crane*, obſerve their Seaſons of departing, and returning upon the approach of the *Winter* and *Spring*, and that by a natural Inſtinct, whereby they prolong their Lives, which elſe muſt periſh. But though God hath made Man wiſer than the Fowls of the Air, and Beaſts of the Earth, which by Inſtinct will quit colder Climates, or run to the Hedge when Winter or Storms approach; yet the Heavens may be aſtoniſhed at this to ſee Nature caſt by ſin ſo far below it ſelf, and that in reaſonable Creatures.

But now, if this be fore-ſeen, then there is a ſingular advantage in a Man's Hand, either to uſe the means of preventing thoſe approaching Calamities, *Zeph.* 2. 3. Or if it cannot be prevented, yet to take Sanctuary in Chriſt, *Mic.* 5. 5. To run to the Promiſes and Attributes, *Eſa.* 26. *ult.* And ſo have a good Roof over his Head while the Storm falls, and the Weather is tempeſtuous abroad. And therefore certainly this Preparation is an excellent thing. Whatever the Spirit of God ſpeaks in the commendation of foreſeeing Evils, is with reſpect to this Duty of preparing for them; for foreſight of Evils without Preparation, rather increaſes, than diminiſhes the Miſery.

6. A ſixth Excellency of Preparation, lies in the Influence that it hath into a Chriſtians ſtability in the Evil Day. You cannot but know that your ſtability in that *critical hour* of Temption, is a choice and ſingular Mercy, in as much as all you are worth in the other World depends upon your ſtanding then, *Rev.* 21. 7, 8. *Rom.* 2. 6, 7. *Luke* 22. 28. Neither can you be ignorant how much you are like to be tried and put to it then; whether you reſpect the Enemy that engage you, *Eph* 6. 12. Or your own weakneſs, who have been ſo often foiled in leſſer Tryals. *Jer.* 11. 5. All the Grace you have will be little enough to keep the Field, and bear you up from ſinking; and therefore it cannot but be a Bleſſed thing, to be able to ſtand and cope with the greateſt difficulties, in ſuch a nick of Tryal as that will be. Now he that expects to do this, muſt *put on the whole Armour of God.* See *Epheſ.* 6. 12, 13, 14. There's no Expectation of ſtanding in the evil day, except *your foot be ſhod*, that is, your Wills prepared, with the *preparation of the Goſpel of Peace.*

It is true, that our ability to ſtand, is not from our own inherent Grace; *For by his ſtrength ſhall no Man prevail*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 9. And yet it is as true, that without Grace, both inherent in us, and excited and prepared for Action, we cannot expect to ſtand: For theſe two, Grace inherent in us, and Grace exciting and aſſiſting without, are not *oppoſed*, but *co-ordinated.* Grace in us, is the Weapon by which our Enemy falls; but then that Weapon muſt be managed by the Hand of the Spirit. —— Well then, look upon this as a choice Mercy which tends ſo much to your ſtability.

7. A ſeventh Excellency of a prepared Heart is, that it is a very high teſtification of our love to Jeſus Chriſt, when we thus ſhew our willingneſs to take our Lot with him, and follow him where-ever he goes. What an high expreſſion of love was that of *Ruth* to her Mother *Naomy*? *I will not go back, but where thou lodgeſt I will lodge, and where thou goeſt I will go.* 'Tis excellent when a Soul can ſay to Chriſt, as *Ittai* to *David*, 2 Sam. 15. 21. *Surely, in what place my Lord the King ſhall be, whether in Death, or in life, even there alſo will thy ſer-*

*vant be.* This is love indeed to cleave to him in a time of ſuch diſtreſſes and dangers. This is *love which the waters cannot quench, nor the Flood drown*, Cant. 1. 6. *Probatio amoris, eſt exhibitio operis*: If you love Chriſt indeed, ſhew your love by ſome fruits of it; and ſurely, this is a very choice fruit and proof of it. There be many that profeſs a great deal of love to Chriſt; but when it comes to this Touchſtone, it appears falſe and counterfeit, but a meer flouriſh, when no danger is near: But that Soul which buckles on the Shoo of Preparation, to follow him through Thorns and Briars, and over the Rocks and Mountains of Difficulties and Troubles, loves him indeed, *Jer.* 2. 2, 3. Beloved, it's one of the choiceſt diſcoveries of your love to your Maſter Chriſt; yea, it is ſuch a teſtification of love to him, as Angels are not capable of. They ſhew their love by their readineſs to do his Will, in the Execution of which they fly as with Wings, *Ezek.* 1. 24. But you only have the Happineſs of teſtifying your love, by your readineſs to ſuffer for him, and is not this Excellent?

8. When the heart is prepared for the worſt Sufferings; it's an Argument that your Will is ſubdued to the Will of God; for till this be done in a good meaſure, you cannot ſtand ready to ſuffer for him. But now, to have the Will ſubdued by Grace to the Will of God, is a very choice and excellent frame indeed; for in this the main power of Grace lieth: Look in what faculty the chief Reſidence and ſtrength of ſin was, in the ſame chief Reſidence the power of Grace, after converſation, is alſo: Now it is in the Will, that the ſtrength and power of ſin (before Converſation) lay. See *Joh.* 5. 40. *Pſal.* 81. 11. *Jer.* 44. 16, 17. And indeed it was the Devils ſtrong Hold, which in the day of Chriſts Power, he ſtorms and reduces to his obedience, *Pſal.* 110. 3. Oh what a bleſſed thing is this! The Will rules the Man, it hath the Empire of the whole Man, it commands the Faculties of the Soul, *imperio politico*; and it commands the Members of the Body, *imperio deſpotico.* Now to have Chriſt and Grace rule that, which rules and commands your inner and outer Man too, is no ſmall Mercy: And a better Evidence that it is ſo cannot be given than this, you ſtand ready, or do ſeriouſly prepare your ſelves to ſuffer the hardeſt things for Chriſt: If your will can like that Work, its an Argument Grace hath conquered and ſubdued your wills indeed.

9. This Preparation of Heart to Sufferings, is an excellent thing, becauſe God is ſo abundantly pleaſed with it, that he often excuſes them from ſufferings, in whom he finds it, and accepts it, as if the Service had been actually done. So *Abraham, Gen.* 22. 12. He was ready to offer up his *Iſaac's* life to God; but God ſeeing his ſervants heart ready prepared, and ready for that difficult ſervice, and high point of Self-denial, provided himſelf another Sacrifice inſtead of *Iſaac. Abraham* ſhall have his *Iſaac* back again, and that with advantage; for he hath with him not only a choice Experiment of his love to God, but Gods high approbation of him, and acceptation of his offering. It was all one, in reſpect of Divine Acceptance, as if he had been ſlain; and ſo the Scripture repreſents it, *Jam.* 2. 21. And in this ſence, that Promiſe is often made good to Gods People, who ſtand ready to give up their *Iſaacs*, their lives, liberties, and deareſt enjoyments to the Lord; *He that will loſe his Life for my Names ſake, ſhall ſave it*, Luke 9. 24.

Now what a bleſſed thing is this! you may this way have the Crown of Martyrdom, and yet not ſhed one drop of Blood for Chriſt actually. Ah how kindly doth God accept it at his poor Creatures hands, when he ſees how willing they are to ſerve him with their beſt enjoyments! *It is well* (ſaith he to *David*) *that it was in thy heart*, 1 King. 8. 18.

10. And then laſtly, to add no more it is beyond Controverſie an excellent and bleſſed thing; becauſe ſhould ſuch a Chriſtian, after all his pains and preparations, be overborn, and fall by Temptation; yet this preparation of his heart excuſes his fall, from thoſe aggravations that are upon the falls of others, and will give him both *ſupport* under ſuch a Condition, and *encouragement* to hope for a ſpeedy recovery out of it. Ah! It's no ſmall comfort, when a poor Soul that hath been overborn by temptation, can come to God and ſay, *Lord, thou knoweſt that this was not a wilful departure from my duty, but contrary to the bent and reſolution of my Heart, thou ſaweſt my diligence before hand to prepare for it; thou ſaweſt my Fears and Tremblings of heart about it; O Lord forgive, O Lord recover thy Servant, waſh away this ſpot, it is one of the ſpots of thy Children, an infirmity, not a Rebellion*: This may much ſtay the Soul.

Surelly in this caſe, thou haſt many grounds of comfort that another wants: For thy ſin being but an infirmity, (1.) It's that which is common to all Saints, *Pſal.* 103. 11, 12, 13, 14. (2.) God hath mercy and pardons for ſuch ſins as theſe, elſe woe to the holieſt Soul, *Pſal.* 130. 3, 4. *Solomon*, upon this ground, pleads for mercy for them that prepared their hearts, 2 *Chron.* 30. 18, 19. And God hath laid in ſweet grounds of encouragement for ſuch Souls, *Numb.* 15. 27, 28. *Heb.* 5. 2. How tenderly doth Chriſt deal with the Diſciples under this kind of ſin, *Mat.* 26. 41. And though they forſook him for a time, yet he received him again; though they fled from him, yet they all returned again, and appeared boldly for Chriſt afterwards, and ſealed their Confeſſion of him with their blood: And that which recovered them again was this, that their fall and departure was contrary to the reſolution and ſtanding frame and bent of their hearts; for they reſolved all to cleave to him to the death, *Mat.* 26. 35. Whereas thoſe that ingaged in a profeſſion of him inconſiderately, and never reſolved nor prepared for the worſt, fell off from him, and never returned any more, *Joh* 6. 66. So then, upon the whole, you cannot but grant, that it is a very bleſſed and excellent thing, to prepare thus for the greateſt Sufferings that can befall us for Chriſt. We come next to ſhew wherein it lies.

## CHAP. V.

### *Evincing the neceſſity of a ſound and real work of Grace upon the Heart, to fit a Man for the Sufferings of Chriſt.*

HAving ſhewed you that God doth ſometimes put his deareſt People upon very hard Services for him, and what an excellent thing it is to prepare our ſelves to obey the Call of God to them. In the next place I come to ſhew you, wherein this *Preparation* or *Readineſs* for Sufferings conſiſts, and how many things concur and contribute their aſſiſtance to this Work.

Now there is a twofold *Preparation* or *Readineſs* for Suffering; the one is *habitual*, the other *Actual*: That *Habitual Readineſs* is nothing elſe but the *Inclination* of a Soul to ſuffer any thing for Chriſt; which *Inclination* ariſeth from the Principles of Grace infuſed into the Soul: But then as Fire, though it have a natural Inclination to aſcend, yet may be violently depreſt and hindred, that it cannot aſcend actually, ſo may it be in this caſe; and therefore, before a Man can be fitted for Sufferings, as *Paul* was, there muſt to this habitual be ſuperadded an *Actual Readineſs*, which is nothing elſe but the rouzing of Grace out of the ſleepy and dull habits, and awakening it to its work in a time of need: as the Lion was ſaid to laſh himſelf with his Tail, to rouze up his Courage before he fight. The former is a *remote* Power, the latter a *Proxim* and immediate Power. I muſt handle the former in this Chapter, and you are to know that *it conſiſteth in a ſound and real work of Grace or Converſion wrought upon the Soul*; without which I ſhall make it evidently appear to you, that no Man can be fit or ready to ſuffer as a Chriſtian.

Whatever ſtock of Natural Courage, Moral Principles, or common Gifts of the Spirit be lodged in any Man's Breaſt, yet all this (without Special Grace) can never fit him to ſuffer for Chriſt. And had not this Work been really and ſoundly wrought upon the Heart of this Bleſſed Man, as indeed it was, *Acts* 9. 3, 4, 5. He had quickly fainted under his Sufferings; and ſo will every Soul ſooner or later do, that ſuffers not upon the ſame Principles he did.

1. For firſt, No Man can ſuffer for Chriſt until he be able to deny himſelf: See *Mat.* 16. 4. Self denial goes in order of nature before Sufferings. Beloved, in a Suffering Hour the Intereſts of Chriſt and Self meet like two Men upon a narrow Bridge, one muſt of neceſſity go back, or the other cannot paſs on: If you cannot now deny *ſelf* you muſt deny *Chriſt*. The Yoke and Dominion of *ſelf* muſt be *caſt off*, or elſe Chriſt's Yoke and Burthen cannot be taken on.

It is confeſt that Self may not only *conſiſt with*, but be a *Motive* to ſome kind of Sufferings: Ambition and Applauſe may carry a Man far this way; Pride is a *Salamander* that it ſeems can live in the Flames of Martyrdom, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. But to be a *Servant* to Self, and a true *Sufferer* for Chriſt, is incompatible. Self may make you the *Devil's Martyrs*, but Grace only can make you *Chriſt's Martyrs*. So that let a Man be ſeemingly carried for a while with never ſo high a Tide of Zeal for Chriſt, yet if Self be the Spring that feeds it, thoſe Self-ends like ſo many little *Ditches* joined to the Bank of a River, ſhall ſuck and draw away the Water into themſelves, that the lofty ſtream will ſink and come to nothing e're it have ran far: So then of neceſſity Self muſt be dethroned in the Hearts of Chriſt's ſuffering Servants.

But now it is real Grace only that depoſes Self, and ſubjects its Intereſt to Chriſt's; for Sanctification is nothing elſe but *the dethroning of exalted ſelf, and the ſetting up of Chriſt's Intereſt above it in the Soul.* This is it that alters the Property of all a Man hath, and ſuperſcribes them with a new Title, *Holineſs to the Lord*, *Iſai.* 23. 18. *Zech.* 14. 20, 21. Thenceforth a Man looks at himſelf as none of his own, but paſt into anothers right, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. And that he muſt neither *live*, nor *act ultimately* for himſelf, but for Chriſt, *Rom.* 14. 7. *Heb.* 13. 7, 8. *Phil.* 1. 20. He is no more as a *Proprietor*, but a Steward of all he hath; and ſo holds upon theſe terms to lay it out, or lay it down, as may beſt ſerve his Maſter's ends and glory.

All that he is or hath, is by Grace ſubordinated to Chriſt; and once *ſubordinated*, then no more *oppoſed* to him, *ſubordinata non pugnant.* This is it that makes him ſay, I care not what becomes of me or mine, ſo Chriſt may be glorified. *Let Chriſt be magnified in my Body, whether it be by Life, or Death*, Phil. 1. 20.

By Converſion Chriſt enters the Soul, as an Army doth an Enemies Garriſon by Storm, and when he is poſſeſt of it by Grace, he preſently divides the whole Spoil of Self betwixt himſelf and his Church. This is the firſt that evinces the neceſſity of a Work of Grace to prepare the Heart for Sufferings. 2 *Cor.* 10. 5.

2. And then in the next place, it is as evident that a Man can never be fit to ſuffer hard things for Chriſt, until his Spirit be inlarged, raiſed, and enobled, ſo that he be able to deſpiſe dangers, and look all difficulties in the face. That low and *private* Spirit muſt be removed, and a *publick* Spirit muſt poſſeſs him. If a Man be of a feeble and effeminate Spirit, every petty danger will daunt and ſink him; Delicacy and Tenderneſs is as unſuitable to a Chriſtian as to a Soldier, 2 *Tim.* 2. 3. They that mean to enter into the Kingdom of God muſt reſolve to make their way through that brake of Troubles betwixt them and it, 2 *Tim.* 3. 12. They that will be Crowned with Victory, muſt ſtand to it, and play the Men, as that Word imports, 2 *Cor.* 16. 13. Look over all the Sacred and Humane Hiſtories, and ſee if you can find a Man that ever honoured Chriſt by Suffering, that was not of a raiſed and noble Spirit, and in ſome meaſure able to contemn both the allurements and threats of Men. So thoſe three noble Jews, *Dan.* 3. 16, 17. So *Moſes*, *Heb.* 11. 27.

And ſo our Apoſtle, *Acts* 20. 24. And the ſame Heroick and brave Spirit was found in the ſucceeding Ages amongſt the Witneſſes of Chriſt. When *Valence* the Emperor endeavoured to draw *Baſil* from the Faith by Offers of Preferment, *Offer theſe things* (ſaid he) *to Children* ; when he threatned him with torments, *Threaten theſe things* (ſaid he) *to your Purple Gallants that live Delicately.* And the ſame *Baſil* relating the Story of the forty Martyrs, ſaith, That when great Honours and Preferments were offered them to draw them from Chriſt, their Anſwer was, *Why offer you theſe ſmall things of the World to us* ( *O Emperour*) *when you know the whole World is contemned by us* ! So *Luther*, Mony could not tempt him, nor the fear of Man daunt him. *Let me* (ſaid he in his Letter to *Staupicius*) *be accounted Proud, Covetous, a Murtherer, Guilty of all vices, rather than of wicked Silence and Cowardize in the Cauſe of Chriſt.* Thus you ſee to what an height and holy greatneſs the Spirits of Suffering Saints in all Ages have been raiſed.

But now it is Grace that thus raiſes the Spirits of Men above all the ſmiles and honours, frowns and fears of Men : and no other Principle but Grace can do it. There is indeed a *Natural Stoutneſs* and Generoſity in ſome, which may carry them far, as it's ſaid of *Alexander*, that when any great danger approached him, his courage would riſe, and he would ſay, *Jam periculum par animo* Alexandri ; Here is a danger fit for *Alexander* to encounter : So *Pompey* when diſſwaded from a dangerous Voyage anſwered, *Neceſſe eſt ut eam, non ut vivam* ; *It's neceſſary that I go, not that I live.* But this being fed only by a natural Spring, can carry a Man no higher than Nature, and will flag at laſt. If applauſe and the obſervation of the world ſupply it not, it quickly ebbs and fails.

But as Grace raiſes Men much higher ; ſo it maintains it even when there is nothing to encourage without ; when forſaken of all Creatures, and viſible ſupports, 2 *Tim.* 4 10. And this it doth three ways : ( 1. ) By giving him that hath it a view of far greater things, which ſhrinks up all temporary things, and makes them appear but trifles and ſmall matters, *Rom.* 8. 18. 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. By Grace a man riſes with Chriſt, *Col.* 3. 1. It ſets him upon his high places, and thence he looks down upon things below, as very poor and inconſiderable. The great Cities of *Campania* ſeem but little ſpots to them that ſtand on the top of the *Alps*. (2.) By teaching him to value and meaſure all things by another Rule than he was wont to do. He did once meaſure life, liberty, riches, honours, by ſenſe and time ; and then they ſeemed great things, and it was hard to deny them or thus to ſlight them ; but now he values and meaſures all by Faith and Eternity ; and eſteems nothing great and excellent, but what hath a reference to the Glory of God, and an influence into Eternity. ( 3. ) Grace raiſes and enobles the Spirit thus, becauſe it is the Divine Nature ; 'tis the Spirit of Chriſt infuſed into a poor Worm, which makes a ſtrange alteration on him, transforms him into another manner of perſon ; as much difference betwixt his Spirit now and what it was, as betwixt the Spirit of a *Child* that is filled with ſmall matters, and taken up with Toys ; and of a grave *Stateſman*, that is daily imployed about the grand affairs of a Kingdom.

3. A Man can never ſuffer as Chriſtian, till his will be ſubjected to the Will of God. He that ſuffers *involuntary*, and out of neceſſity, not out of Choice, ſhall neither have acceptance nor *Reward* from God. Of neceſſity the will muſt be ſubjected ; A Man can never ſay, *Thy will be done*, till he can firſt ſay, *Not my will.*

But it is Grace only that thus conquers and ſubjects the will of Man to God's, *Pſal.* 110. 3. This is that which exalts Gods Authority in the Soul, and makes the heart to ſtoop and tremble at his Commands. 'Tis this which makes our will to write its *fiat* at the foot of every Command, and its *placet* under every Order it receives from God. No ſooner was Grace entred into the Soul of *Paul*, but preſently he crys out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts 9. 6. The Will is to the Soul what the Wheels are to the Chariot ; and Grace is to Will what Oyl is to thoſe Wheels. When we receive the Spirit of Grace, we are ſaid to *receive an Unction from the Holy One*, 1 Joh. 2. 20. And then the Soul is made as the Chariots of *Aminadab*, *Cant.* 6. 12. *Non tardat uncta rota*, it runs freely after the Lord, and chearfully addreſſeth it ſelf to every Service.

4. A Man can never ſuffer as a Chriſtian, until his heart be compoſed, fixed, and determinated to follow the Lord through all hazards and difficulties. As long as a man is heſitating and unreſolved what to do, whether to go forward, or turn back again to the proſperous World, when a Man is at ſuch a *pauſe*, and ſtand in his way, he is very unfit for Sufferings. All ſuch Diviſions do both *weaken* the Soul, and *ſtrengthen* the Temptation : The Devils work is more than half done to his hand in ſuch a Soul, and he is now as unfit to endure hardſhip for Chriſt, as a Ship is to ride out a Storm, that hath neither Cable, Anchor, nor Ballaſt to hold and ſettle it, but lies at the Mercy of every Wave, *Jam.* 1. 8. *The double-minded man is unſtable in all his Ways.* But it's Grace, and nothing beſides it, that brings the heart to a fixed reſolution and ſettlement to follow the Lord. 'Tis Grace that *eſtabliſhes the heart*, *Heb.* 13. 9. And unites it to fear the Name of God, *Pſal.* 86. 11. This gathers all the Streams into one Channel, and then it runs with much ſtrength and ſweeps away all Obſtacles before it. So that look as it is with a wicked man that hath ſold himſelf to do wickedly, if he be ſet upon any one deſign of ſin, he pours out his whole heart and ſtrength in the proſecution of that deſign, which is the ground of that ſaying, *Liberet me Deus ab homine unius tantum negotii*, Let God deliver me from a Man of one only deſign. He will do it to purpoſe : So is it alſo in Grace ; if the heart be compoſed, fixed, and fully reſolved for God, nothing ſhall then ſtand before him. And herein lies much of a Chriſtians habitual fitneſs and ability to ſuffer.

5. The neceſſity of ſaving-grace in all Sufferers for Chriſt will farther appear from this

Conſideration, that he who will run all hazards for Chriſt, had need of a continual ſupply of Strength and Refreſhment from time to time. He muſt not depend on any thing that is failable: For what ſhall he do then, when that Stock is ſpent, and he hath no Proviſion left to live upon? Now all natural Qualifications, yea, all the common gifts of the Spirit are failable and ſhort-liv'd things; they are like a ſweet Flower in the Boſom, that is an Ornament for a little while, but withers preſently: Or like a Pond or Brook occaſioned by a great fall of Rain, which quickly ſinks and dries up, becauſe it is not fed by Springs in the bottom, as other Fountain-waters are; and hence it is they cannot continue and hold out when Sufferings come, *Mat.* 13. 21. Becauſe there is no Root to nouriſh and ſupport. The Hypocrite will not always call upon God, *Job.* 27. 10. Though they may keep company with Chriſt a few Miles in this dirty way, yet they muſt turn back at laſt, and ſhake Hands eternally with him, *John* 6. 66. Theſe *Comets* may ſeem to ſhine for a time among the Stars, but when that earthly matter is ſpent, they muſt fall and loſe their glory.

But now Grace is an Everlaſting Principle, it hath Springs in the bottom that never fail. *It ſhall be in him* (ſaith Chriſt) *a Well of Water ſpringing up into Eternal Life*, Joh. 4. 14. The Spirit of God ſupplies it from time to time as need requires. It hath daily Incomes from Heaven, 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. *Phil.* 4. 13. *Col.* 1. 11. So that it is our Union with Chriſt the Fountain by Grace, that is the true ground of our conſtancy and long-ſuffering.

6. And then laſtly, it will appear by this alſo, that there is an abſolute neceſſity of a real change by Grace on all that will ſuffer for Chriſt; becauſe although we may engage our ſelves in Sufferings without it, yet we can never *manage* our Sufferings like Chriſtians without it. They will neither be honourable or acceptable to God, nor yet beneficial and comfortable to our ſelves or others, except they be performed from this Principle of Grace: For upon what Principle ſoever beſide this any Man is acted in Religion, it will either cauſe him to decline Sufferings for Chriſt; or, if he be engaged in them, yet he will little credit Religion by his Sufferings. They will either be ſpoiled by an ill managment, or his own Pride will devour the praiſe aud glory of them. I do not deny, but a Man that's Graceleſs, may ſuffer many hard things upon the account of his Profeſſion, and ſuffer them all in vain, as theſe Scriptures manifeſt. See 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. *Gal.* 3. 4. And although you may find many ſweet Promiſes made to thoſe that ſuffer for Chriſt, yet you muſt conſider that thoſe pure and Spiritual ends and Motives, by which Men ought to be acted in their Sufferings, are always ſuppoſed and implied in all theſe Promiſes that are made to the external Action. And ſometimes it is expreſt, 1 *Pet.* 4. 16. To ſuffer [as a Chriſtian] is to ſuffer from pure Chriſtian Principles, and in a Chriſtian manner, with *Meekneſs, Patience, Self-denial*, &c. And this Grace only can enable you to do: So that by all this, I ſuppoſe, what I have undertaken in this Character, *viz.* To evince the neceſſity of a work of Grace to paſs upon you, before Sufferings for Religion come, is by all this performed to ſatisfaction.

## CHAP. VI.

*Wherein the Nature of this Work of Grace, in which our habitual fitneſs for ſuffering lies, is briefly opened, and an account given of the great advantage the gracious Perſon hath for any, even the hardeſt work thereby.*

HAving in the former Chapter plainly evinced the neceſſity of ſaving Grace to fit a Man for Sufferings; it will be expected now that ſome account be given you of the nature of this Work, and how it advantages a Man for the diſcharge of the hardeſt Services in Religion: Both which I ſhall open in this Chapter, by a diſtinct Explication of the parts of this deſcription of it.

*What ſaving Grace is.*

*This work of Grace, of which I am here to ſpeak, conſiſts in the real change of the whole Man, by the Spirit of God, whereby he is prepared for every good Work*: In which brief deſcription, I ſhall open theſe four things to you.

1. That it is a Change; this is palpably evident, both from Scripture and Experience. 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *Old things are paſt away; behold, all things are become new*; and it is ſo ſenſible a Change, that it's called a *Turning from Darkneſs to Light*, *Act.* 26. 18. And a new Creature formed and brought forth. But to be little more diſtinct and particular, there are ſeveral other Changes that paſs upon Men, which muſt not be miſtaken for this; and therefore, (1.) It is not a meer change of the Judgment from Error to Truth, from Paganiſm to Chriſtianity. Such a change *Simon Magus* had, yet ſtill remained in the gall of bitterneſs, and faſt bound in the Bonds of Iniquity, *Act.* 8. 23. (2.) Nor only of a Man's Practice, from *Prophaneneſs* to *Civility*: This is common among ſuch as live under the Light of the Goſpel, which breaking into Mens Conſciences, thwarts their Luſts, and over-awes them with the fears of Hell: Which is no more than what the *Gentiles* had, *Rom.* 2. 15. (3) Nor is it a change from meer *Morality*, to meer *Formality* in Religion. Thus *Hypocrites* are changed, by the common gifts of the Spirit, illuminating their Minds, and ſlightly touching their Affections, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5. (4.) Nor is it ſuch a Change as Juſtification makes, which is relative, and only alters the ſtate and condition, *Rom.* 5. 1, 2. (5) Laſtly, it is not a Change of the Eſſence of a Man; he remains eſſentially the ſame Perſon ſtill. But this Change conſiſts in the infuſion of new habits of Grace into the old Faculties; which immediately depoſe Sin from its dominion over the Soul, and deliver up the Soul into the Hands and Government of Chriſt, ſo that it lives no more to it ſelf, but to Chriſt. This is that Change whereof

we ſpeak: And this Change (2.) I aſſert to be *Real*, no Phanſie, nor deluſion; not a groundleſs conceit, but it is really exiſtent, *extra mentem*, whether you conceit it or not. Indeed the blind World would perſwade us it is *ſuppoſititious*, and *phantaſtick*; and that there is no ſuch real difference betwixt one Man and another, as we aſſirm Grace makes. And hence it is, that whoever profeſſeth it, is preſently branded for a *Phanatick*; and that Scripture, *Eſa.* 56. 5. *Stand by thy ſelf, I am holier than thou*, &c. clapt in their Teeth, in their abſurd and perverſe ſence of it.

But I ſhall briefly offer theſe ſeven things to your conſideration, which will abundantly evince the reality of it, and at once both ſtop the ſlanderous Mouths of Ignorant Men, and ſilence thoſe Atheiſtical Surmiſes, which at any time Satan may inject into the Hearts of God's own People touching this matter. And *firſt*, let it be conſidered, that the Spirit of God hath repreſented to us this work of Grace, under ſuch Names and Notions in Scripture, as if they had been choſen purpoſely to obviate this Calumny. It's called a *Creature*, *Gal.* 6. 15. A *Man*, *Pet.* 3. 4. A *New Birth*, *Joh.* 3. 3. Chriſt formed in us, *Gal.* 4. 19. All which expreſs its reality, and that it is not a conceited thing. (2.) It appears to be real by the marvellous effects it hath upon a Man, turning him both in Judgment, Will, Affections and Practice quite counter to what he was before. This is evident in that famous inſtance of *Paul*, *Gal* 1. 23. Which is abundantly atteſted and ſealed by the conſtant Experience of all gracious Souls that are witneſſes of the Truth hereof. (3.) A Divine and Almighty Power goes forth to produce and work it; and hence Faith is ſaid to be of the operation of God, *Col.* 2. 12. Yea, that the ſame Power which raiſed Jeſus Chriſt from the Dead, goes to the production of it, *Epheſ.* 1. 19, 20. And if ſo, how much leſs than Blaſphemy is it, to call it a Conceit or Phanſie? Doth God ſet on work his Infinite Power to beget a Phanſie, or raiſe an Imagination? (4) Conceits and Whimſies abound moſt in Men of weak Reaſon: Children and ſuch as are crackt in their Underſtandings have moſt of them: Strength of Reaſon Baniſhes them, as the Sun doth Miſts and Vapours: But now the more Rational any gracious Perſon is, by ſo much the more he is fixed, ſettled, and ſatisfied in the Grounds of Religion: Yea, there is the higheſt and pureſt Reaſon in Religion; and when this change is wrought upon Men, it's carried on in a rational way, *Eſa.* 1. 18. *Joh.* 16. 9. The Spirit over-powers the Underſtanding with clear demonſtrations, and ſilences all Objections, Pleas and Pretences to the contrary. (5.) It's a real thing, and gracious Souls know it to be ſo; elſe ſo many Thouſands of the Saints would never have ſuffered ſo many cruel Torments and Miſeries, rather than forſake a Phanſie, and ſo ſave all. They have been ſo well ſatisfied of the reality of that which the World calls a Phanſie, that they have choſen rather to embrace the Stake than deny it. The conſtancy of Chriſtians, in cleaving to Religion, was common to a *Proverb* among the *Heathen*; who when they would expreſs the greateſt difficulty, would ſay, *You may as ſoon turn a Chriſtian from Chriſt, as do it.* Surely no Wiſe Man would Sacrifice his Liberty, Eſtate, Life, and all that is dear, for a Conceit. 6. It's reality appears in its uniformity in all thoſe on whom it is wrought: *They have all obtained like precious Faith*, 2 Pet. 1. 1. *They are all changed into the ſame Image*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. Three Thouſand Perſons affected in one and the ſame manner at one Sermon; *Act.* 2. 37. Could one and the ſame Conceit poſſeſs them all together? Take two Chriſtians that live a thouſand Miles diſtant from each other, that never heard of one another, let theſe Perſons be examined, and their reports compared, and ſee if they do not ſubſtantially agree, and whether as Face anſwers Face in Water, ſo their Experiences do not anſwer one to the other? Which could never be if it were a groundleſs Conceit. (7.) And laſtly, it's manifeſt, it is a reality, and puts a real difference betwixt one, and another, becauſe God carries himſelf ſo differently towards them, after their Converſion; now he ſmiles, before he frowned; now they are under the Promiſes, before they were under the Threats and Curſes: And what a vaſt difference will be put betwixt the one and the other in that great day? See *Mat.* 25. Surely, if theſe Nominal Chriſtians did but differ in Conceit, not really from others, the Righteous Judge of all the Earth would not paſs ſuch a different Judgment and Doom upon them.

By all this you evidently ſee, that Grace is a real Change, and not a conceited one.

3. We ſay that this real Change paſſes upon the whole Man: he is changed in *Soul*, *Body* and *Practice*; all things are become new. (1.) This Change appears in his Soul: For by it, (1) His Underſtanding is ſtrangely altered, and receives things in another way than formerly. It did look at Chriſt and things Eternal, as uncertain and light matters; The things that are ſeen and preſent, did moſtly affect, and appeared great and excellent: It admired Riches and Honours, while Chriſt and Glory were over-looked and deſpiſed. But now all theſe Temporals are eſteemed Dung, Droſs, Vanity, *Phil.* 3. 8. 11. *Rom.* 8. 5. And Jeſus Chriſt is now eſteemed *the Wiſdom and the Power of God*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 23, 24. It did look on the Saints as deſpicable Perſons, but now as the *Excellent of the Earth*, Pſal. 16. 3. Strictneſs and Duty was once eſteemed a needleſs thing, but now the only thing deſirable, Pſal. 119. 14. *Oh*, ſaith the renewed Soul, *where were mine eyes, that I could ſee no more Excellency in Chriſt, his ways, and people!* (2) It ſtops not there (as it doth in Hypocrites) but paſſes on further and reduces the Will; that ſtrong hold is taken, and delivered up to Chriſt. It did rebel againſt God, and could not be ſubject, but now it ſubmits, Acts 9. 6. *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* In the day of Chriſt's Power, he preſents himſelf in all his drawing glory and lovelineſs before the Will, and cryes to that

ſtubborn Faculty, *Open to me, open to me*; with which Word there goes forth an opening and ſubduing Power, which the Will no ſooner feels, but it ſpontaneouſly moves towards him, and ſaith, *Stand open ye everlaſting Gates, that the King of Glory may come in.* Henceforth it votes for God, ſubſcribes and ſubmits to his Will as its only Rule and Law; and indeed, it becomes the Principal Seat where Grace makes its Reſidence; and where, for the moſt part, it is more viſible than in any other Faculty. For after a Man hath ſearched for it in all other Faculties, and cannot diſcern it, yet here he ordinarily finds it; to will is preſent, *Rom.* 7. 18. (3) The Will being thus gained to Chriſt, Love comes in of courſe; it, feeling the power of Grace alſo, preſently changeth its Object: It ſeizeth not ſo greedily on Earthly Objects as before, but is ſtrangely cooled and deadned to them, by the appearance of a far greater Glory in Jeſus Chriſt; which hath ſo captivated the Soul, and ſtrongly attracted this Affection, that its now become very remiſs in all its actings towards them; and often (eſpecially at firſt) it is ſo weaned from all things on Earth, that the Temptation ſeems to lie on the other extream, even in too great neglect of our lawful Employments and Comforts. Now Jeſus Chriſt, *Cant.* 1. 3. His Ordinances, *Pſal.* 119. 97. and his Saints 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. are the only Delights, and ſweeteſt Companions; he could ſit from Morning till Night, to hear Diſcourſes of Chriſt his Beloved, and could live and die in the company of his People, whoſe company is now moſt delightful and ſweet, *Pſal.* 119. 63. (4) The Deſires are altered, they pant no more after the Duſt of the Earth, *Pſal.* 4. 6. but pant for God, as the *Hart for the Brooks of water*, *Pſal.* 42. 1. Yea, ſo big is the Soul with them, that its ſometimes ready to faint, yea to break with the longing it hath after him, *Pſal.* 119. 20. (5) The Thoughts are changed, *Pſal.* 119. 113. and the Thoughts of God are now moſt precious, *Pſal.* 139. 47. Muſing, when alone, of him; and in its Solitudes, the Soul entertains it ſelf with a delightful Feaſt, which its Thoughts of God bring in to refreſh it, *Pſal.* 63. 5, 6. (6) The Deſigns and Projects of the Soul are changed; all are now ſwallowed up in one grand Deſign, even to approve himſelf to God, and be accepted of him, 2. *Cor.* 5. 9 And if he fail not there, it will not much trouble him, if all his other Deſigns ſhould be daſhed. It were eaſie to inſtance in the reſt of the Affections, and ſhew how Grace ſpreads and diffuſes it ſelf into them all, as Light in the Air, or Leaven in the Lump; but this may ſuffice, to ſhew how it paſſes upon the whole Soul, and enters the ſeveral Faculties and Affections thereof.

And the Soul being thus poſſeſt for God, the Body with all its Members, is conſequently reſigned up to him alſo: For the Will hath the *Empire* of the Members of the Body, as well as of the Paſſions and Affections of the Soul. Theſe are not any more delivered up to execute the Luſts of Satan, but are yielded up to God for his ends and uſes, *Rom.* 6. 19. And thus you have the third thing in the deſcription made out alſo, that it is an univerſal, as well as a real Change But then,

4. Laſtly, you muſt know that by this change God prepares a Man for Choice and Excellent ſervices; and this indeed is the main thing deſign'd in this Chapter, and is the Reſult and Iſſue of all that hath hitherto been ſaid about this work of Grace.

Beloved, can you imagine that God would employ his Infinite and Glorious Power, to produce this new Creature in ſuch an excellent nature, it being the Maſter-piece of all his works of Wonder wrought upon Man, and not aim at ſome ſingular Uſe, and excellent End? Every wiſe Agent deſigns ſome End; and what God aims at he hath told us, *Iſa.* 43. 21. *Epheſ.* 2. 20. And accordingly he expects ſingular things from ſuch Perſons, *Mat.* 5. 47. If God had not aimed at ſome new Service, he need not have made a new Creature: the old Creature was fit enough for the old uſe and ſervice it was employed in. But God hath ſome choice ſervice to be done, wherein he will be glorified, he will have his Name glorified, even in this world, by the active and paſſive obedience of his People. But this being far above all the power of Nature, God therefore brings them forth in a New and Heavenly nature, endowed with rare ſupernatural and Divine Qualities, by which it is fitted and excellently prepared for any Service of God, by doing or by ſuffering which before he had no fitneſs or ability for.

The very Make and Conſtitution of this New Creature ſpeaks its uſe and end: As now, if a Man look upon a Sword or Knife (ſuppoſing he had never ſeen either before) yet, I ſay, by viewing the ſhape and properties of it, he will ſay, this was made to cut. Even ſo here, this new Creature was formed for ſome glorious and ſingular ſervice for God, to which it is exceedingly advantaged, whether God put you upon doing or ſuffering. If you ask wherein this Advantage of the new Creature to Honour God either way lies: I anſwer, It principally conſiſts in its *heavenly inclination*, or natural *tendency* to God. This is its great advantage: For by vertue of this:

1. If God call a Man to any Duty, there is a *Principle* within, cloſing with the *Command* without, and moving the Soul freely and ſpontaneouſly to duty, *Pſal.* 27. 8. If God ſay, *Seek my Face*, Such an heart ecchoes to the call, *Thy Face Lord will I ſeek.* And this is it which is call'd, *The writing of Gods law in the heart*, *Jer.* 31. 33. And muſt needs be a mighty advantage; for now its work is its delight and wages, *Pſal.* 19. 11. The Command to ſuch a Soul is not grievous, 1 *John* 5. 3. And by this it's kept from tiring in duty, and being weary of its work; as you ſee what pains Children can take at play, how they will run and ſweat, and endure knocks and falls, and take no notice of it; put them upon any manual labour, and they cannot endure half ſo much. When our Work is our delight, we never faint nor tire at it. This inclination to God is to the Soul as wings to a bird, or ſails to a ſhip. This carries the Soul eaſily through every duty. O there is a vaſt difference betwixt a man that *works for wages*, and one whoſe *work is wages* to him. And here you may at once ſee wherein the principal difference betwixt the Hypocrite and the real

Chriſtian lies in the performance of duty; and alſo have a true account of the reaſon why one perſeveres in his work to the end, when the other flags. Why, here is the true account of both; the one is moved to duty from a natural inclination to it, the other is forced upon it by ſome external motives: For the Hypocrite takes not delight in the ſpiritual and inward part of duty, but is ſecretly weary of it, *Mal.* 1. 13. only his ambition and ſelf-ends put him upon it as a task. But now the upright heart goes to God as his joy, *Pſal.* 43. 4. And ſaith, *It is good for me to draw nigh to God*, *Pſal.* 73. *ult.* When the Sabbath comes, (*that Golden ſpot of the the Week*) oh how he longs to *ſee the beauty of the Lord* in his Ordinances! *Pſal* 27. 4. And when engaged in the Worſhip of God, he cannot ſatisfie himſelf in *Bodily Service*, or to ſerve God *in the oldneſs of the letter*. He knoweth that *this perſwaſion cometh not of him that called him*, *Gal.* 5. 7, 8. He labours to engage his heart to approach to God, *Jer.* 30. 21. And hence thoſe mountings of heart, and violent ſallies of the deſires heavenward. And thus you ſee one rare advantage to glorifie God actively, flowing from the inclination of this new Creature.

2. But then ſecondly; Hence in like manner hath the Soul as great an advantage for ſufferings: For this new Creature having ſuch a natural tendency to God, will enable the Soul, in which it is to break its way to God through all the interpoſing obſtacles and diſcouragements. What are perſecutions, what are reproaches, what are the fears and frowns of enemies, but ſo many blocks thrown in the Souls way to keep it from God and duty? And indeed where this Principal of Grace is wanting, they prove inacceſſible Mountains. Graceleſs hearts are ſtalled and quite diſcouraged by them; but now this tendency of the Soul to God enables the Chriſtian to break his way through all. You may ſay of him in ſuch a caſe, as the Hiſtorian doth of *Hannibal* (who forced away over the *Alps* with Fire and Vinegar) either he will find a way, or make a way; *Shall Sword or Famine; or any other Creature ſeparate me from Chriſt?* ſaith an upright Soul. No, no, it will through all to him, and that from this tendency of his new Nature. You ſee in Nature, every thing hath a tendency to its center; Fire will up, do what you can to ſuppreſs it; Water will to the Sea, if it meet with Dams, yea Mountains in its way; if it cannot bear them down it will creep about ſome other way, and wind and turn to find a paſſage to the Sea. God is the center of all gracious Spirits, and Grace will carry the Soul through all to him. This is Grace, and this is your advantage by it in the moſt difficult part of your work. It will carry you through all; make the hardeſt work eaſie and pleaſant, 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. And if great ſufferings or temptations interpoſe betwixt you and your God, it will break through all, and enable you to withſtand all; as it did *Paul* in the Text, who forced his way not only through the Fury of Enemies, but alſo through the entreaties and tears of Friends.

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## CHAP. VII.

*In which the neceſſity of getting clear Evidences of this work of Grace in us, in order to our readineſs for ſufferings is held forth; the nature of that Evidence opened, and divers things that Cloud and obſcure it, removed out of the way.*

I Have done with *habitual readineſs*, conſiſting in an inwrought work of Graces. The following particulars are the thing in which our *actual readineſs* lies. And of them that which comes next to be handled, is the getting of clear Evidences in our own Souls that this work hath been wrought on us, this will exceedingly tend to your ſtrengthning, and comfort in a ſuffering hour. Bleſſed *Paul*, who here profeſſeth himſelf ready both for Bonds and Death, was clear in this point. 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. 2 *Tim.* 4. 6, 7. And indeed had he been cloudy and dark in this, he could not have ſaid, *I am Ready*. No, no, he had been in an ill caſe to undertake that Journey to *Jeruſalem*: And thou wilt find it a ſingular advantage in dark and difficult days to have all clear and right within. Now for the opening of this, I will ſhew:

1. What the Evidence or Manifeſtation of the work of Grace is.

2. How it appears to be of ſuch great advantage to a ſuffering Saint.

3. Preſcribe ſome Rules for the obtaining of it.

1. What it is. And in ſhort it's nothing elſe but the *Spirits ſhining upon his own work in the hearts of Believers, thereby enabling them ſenſibly to ſee and feel it to their own Satisfaction.* And this is expreſt in Scripture under a pleaſant variety of Metaphors. Sometimes it is called the *ſhedding abroad of the love of God in the heart*, *Rom.* 5. 5. ſometimes the *lifting up of the light of Gods countenance*, *Pſal.* 4. 6. and ſometimes it's expreſt without a *Trope* by Chriſts *manifeſting himſelf* to the Soul, *John* 14. 21.

For the opening of it, I deſire you would conſider theſe ſix things.

1. That it is attainable by Believers in this life, and that in a very high degree and meaſure. Many of the Saints have had it in a full meaſure, 1. *Cor.* 2. 12. 1 *John* 3. 24. *John* 21. 15.

2. Though it be attainable by Believers, yet it is a thing ſeparable from true Grace, and many precious Souls have gone mourning for the want of it, *Iſa.* 50. 10. This was ſometimes the caſe of *Heman*, *David*, *Job*, and multitudes more.

3. During its continuance, it is the ſweeteſt thing in the world. It ſwallows up all Troubles, and doubles all other comforts: It puts more gladneſs into the heart, than the increaſe of Corn and Wine, *Pſal.* 4. 6. *Suavis hora, ſed brevis mora; ſapit quidem ſuaviſſimè, ſed guſtatur Rariſſimè*, Bern.

4. Both in the Continuation and removal of it the Spirits acts *arbitrarily*. No man can ſay

how long he ſhall walk in this pleaſant Light, *Pſal.* 30. 7. *By thy Favour thou haſt made my Mountain ſtand ſtrong, thou biddeſt thy face, and I was troubled.* And when in darkneſs, none can ſay how long it will be e're that ſweet light break forth again. God can ſcatter the Cloud unexpectedly in a moment, *Cant.* 3. 4. *It was but a little that I paſſed from them, but I found him whom my Soul loveth.* There is ſuch an obſervable difference in *David*'s Spirit in ſome Pſalms, as if one man had written the beginning, and another the end of them.

5. Though God can quickly remove the darkneſs and doubts of a Soul, yet ordinarily the Saints find it a very hard and difficult thing to obtain and preſerve the Evidences of their Graces. Such is the darkneſs, deadneſs, and deceitfulneſs of the heart; ſo much unevenneſs and inconſtancy in their practice, ſo many counterfeits of Grace, and ſo many wiles and devices of Satan to rob them of their peace, that few (in compariſon) live in a conſtant and quiet fruition of it.

6. Notwithſtanding all theſe things which increaſe the difficulty, yet God hath afforded his people a ſure Light, and ſufficient means, in the diligent uſe and improvement whereof they may attain a certainty of the work of Grace in them. And there is a threefold Light by which it may moſt clearly and infallibly be diſcovered.

1. Scripture Light, which is able to diſcover the ſecrets of a mans heart to him; and is therefore compared to the *Anatomizers* Knife, *Heb.* 4. 12.

2. The Innate light of Grace it ſelf; or if you will the light of experience, 1 *John* 5. 10. It hath ſome properties and operations which are as eſſential, neceſſary, and inſeparable, as heat is to the fire, and may be as ſenſibly felt and perceived by the Soul, *Pſal.* 119. 20.

3. The Light of the Spirit, ſuperadded to both the former, which is ſometimes called its *Earneſt*, ſometimes its *Seal.* The Spirit doth both *plant* the *habits*, *excite* and draw forth the *acts*, and alſo *ſhine* upon his own work that the Soul may ſee it; and that ſometimes with ſuch a degree of light as only begets peace, and quiets the heart though it do not fully conquer all the doubts of it. And at other times the heart is irradiated with ſo clear a Beam of light that it's able to draw forth the Triumphant Concluſion, and ſay, Now I know the things that are freely given me of God: I believe, and am ſure.

And ſo much briefly for the opening of the nature of this Evidence.

2. I ſhall ſhew you the neceſſity of it to a ſuffering Saint, in order to the right management of a ſuffering condition.

And this will appear by the conſideration of five things.

1 *Dem.* You will readily grant that the Chriſtians love to God hath a mighty influence into all his ſufferings for God. This Grace of *Love* enables him victoriouſly to break through all difficulties and diſcouragements. *The flouds cannot drown it, nor the Waters quench it*, Cant. 8. *verſe* 6, 7. It facilitates the greateſt hardſhips, 1 *John* 5. *ver.* 3. And whatever a Man ſuffer, if it be not from this Principle, it is neither acceptable to God, nor available to himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3.

But now nothing more inflames and quickens the Chriſtians love to God, than the knowledge of his intereſt in him, and the ſenſible perception and taſte of his love to the Soul Our love to God is but a reflection of his own love; and the more powerful the ſtroke of the direct Beam is, the more is that of the reflex Beam alſo. Never doth that *Flame* of *Jah* burn with a more vehement heat, than when the Soul hath the moſt clear Manifeſtations of its intereſt in Chriſt and his Benefits, *Luke* 7. 47.

2. *Dem.* It muſt needs be of ſingular uſe to a ſuffering Saint, becauſe it takes out the ſinking weight of affliction. That which ſinks and breaks the Spirit, is the conjunction and meeting of inward and outward troubles together; then if the Lord do not ſtrangely and extraordinarily ſupport the Soul, it's wrackt and overwhelmed as the Ship in which *Paul* ſailed was, when it fell into a place where two Seas met, *Acts* 27. 41. Oh how tempeſtuous a Sea doth that Soul ſail in, that hath fightings *without*, and fears *within*! How muſt that poor Chriſtians heart tremble and meditate terrour, that when he retires from troubles without, for ſome comfort and ſupport within, ſhall find a ſad *Addition* to his troubles from whence he expected relief againſt them! Hence it was that *Jeremy* ſo earneſtly deprecates ſuch a miſery, *Be not thou a terrour to me, thou art my hope in the day of evil*, Jer. 17. 17. This is prevented by this means: If a Man have a clear breaſt, and all be quiet within, he is like one that hath a good Roof over his head when the Storm falls. *We glory in tribulation, becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in our Hearts*, Rom. 5. 3, 5.

3 *Dem.* It is a Fountain of joy and comfort in the darkeſt and ſadeſt hour. Hence the glorious triumphs of Saints in their afflictions, *Rom.* 5. 5. And in the Chriſtians joy in the Lord, lies much of his ſtrength for ſufferings, *Neh.* 8. 10. If once the Spirit droop and ſink, the man is in a bad caſe to ſuffer: Holy joy; it is the oyl that makes the Chariot-wheels of the Soul free to follow the Lord, *Non tardat uncta rota.* To ſuffer with joyfulneſs for Chriſt is a qualification that Gods Eye is much upon in his ſuffering Servants, *Col.* 1. 11. How did the famous Worthies that went before us magnifie Chriſt, and glorifie religion by their holy triumphs of their Faith and Joy under Tribulation! One kiſs'd the *Apparator* that brought him news of his Condemnation, and was like a man tranſported with an exceſs of Joy. Another upon the pronouncing of the Sentence kneels down, and with Hands and Eyes lifted up, ſolemnly bleſſes God for ſuch a day as that. Oh how is Chriſt magnified by this; And this cannot be until intereſt be cleared. It's true, the *faith of Recumbency* gives the Soul a ſecreet ſupport, and enables the Chriſtian to *live*; but the *faith of Evidence* keeps him *lively*, and prevents all thoſe uncomfortable and uncomely ſinkings and deſpondencies of Spirit, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16, 17. And therefore cannot but be of a ſingular uſe to a Soul at ſuch a time.

4 *Dem.* Laſtly, it is of ſpecial uſe to a Chriſtian under Sufferings, inaſmuch as it enables him to repel the temptations that attend

tend upon ſufferings. Nothing ſets a keener edge upon his indignation againſt unworthy compliances, than this. Indeed a poor Cloudy and dubious Chriſtian will be apt to catch at deliverance, though upon terms diſhonourable to Chriſt: but he that is clear in point of intereſt, abhors compoſitions and capitulations upon unworthy terms and conditions, *Heb.* 11 35. *Heb.* 10. 34. He that ſees the gain and reward of ſuffering, will think he is offered to his loſs, when life and deliverance are ſet before him upon ſuch hard terms as ſin is.

And thus you ſee what influence it hath into a ſuffering condition.

3. In the next place I promiſed to preſcribe ſome Rules for the attaining of this Evidence, and the diſpelling of thoſe doubts by which it is uſually clouded in the Souls of Believers. And oh, that by the faithful uſe of them you may attain it, againſt a ſuffering day come upon you.

1 *Rule.* And the firſt Rule I ſhall give you is this, make it your buſineſs to improve Grace more; for the more *vigorous* it is, the more *evidential* it muſt needs be, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Oh how much time have many Chriſtians ſpent in inquiring after the loweſt ſigns of ſincerity, and what may conſiſt with Grace: Which had they ſpent in the diligent improvement of the means of Grace for the increaſing of it, they would have found it a ſhorter cut to peace and comfort by much.

Miſtake not the Rule, by which you are to try your ſelves, leſt you give a falſe judgment upon your ſelves. Some are apt to make thoſe things ſigns of Grace, which are not; and when the falſeneſs of them is detected, how is that poor Soul plunged into doubts and fears, that leaned upon them? As now, If a man ſhould conclude his ſincerity from his diligence in attending on the Word preached; this is but a *Paralogiſm* (as the Apoſtles calls it) *Jam.* 1. 22. By which a man deceiveth his own Soul: For that which is a note or mark, muſt be proper to the thing notified, and not common to any thing elſe. There are divers ſorts of *marks*; ſome are *excluſive*, the principal uſe of which is to convince bold pretenders, and diſcover Hypocrites: Such is that, 1 *Cor.* 9. 9. It is a moſt certain ſign where theſe are, there is no Grace; but yet it will not follow on the contrary, that where theſe are not, there is Grace. See *Luke* 18. 11. Others are *incluſive*, the uſe of which is not ſo much for trying of the truth, as the ſtrength and degrees of Grace. As now, when Faith is deſcribed by the *radiancy* of it, or by ſome of its heroick acts, and promiſes made to ſome raiſed degrees and operations of it; as that, *Epheſ.* 3. 12. *&c.* Here a miſtake is eaſily made. Beſides theſe, or rather betwixt theſe, are another ſort of marks, which are called *poſitive* marks; and theſe agreeing to the loweſt degree of Grace, are for the tryal of the truth and ſincerity of it. Such are theſe, 1 *John* 4. 13. 1 *John* 2. 3. *Matth.* 5. 3. Be ſure to try by a proper mark.

3 *Rule.* Take heed of ſuch ſins as violate and waſte the Conſcience; for theſe will quickly raiſe a Miſt, and involve the Soul in Clouds and darkneſs, *Pſal.* 51. 8. *&c.* Such are ſins againſt Light, and the reclamations of Conſcience.

4 *Rule.* Labour to ſhun thoſe common miſtakes that Chriſtians make in Judging of their ſtate; amongſt which I ſhall ſelect theſe five as principal ones.

1. Call not your condition into queſtion upon every failing, and involuntary lapſe into ſin. *Iniquities prevail againſt me, as for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away*, *Pſal.* 65. 3. In ſhort, thou needeſt not call thy Condition into queſtion, provided thou find thy Spirit working as *Paul*'s did under the ſurprizals of temptation: *viz.* If (1) thou do approve of and delight in the Law, though thou fall ſhort of it in thy Practice, *Rom.* 7. 12, 14. (2) If thy failings be involuntary, and againſt the Reſolution and bent of thy Soul, *verſ.* 25. 18, 19. (3) If it be the load and burthen of thy Soul, *verſ.* 24. (4) If the thoughts of deliverance comfort thee, *verſe* 25.

2. Queſtion not the truth of thy Grace, becauſe it was not wrought in the ſame way and manner in thee, as in others: For there is great variety, as to the circumſtances of *time* and *manner*, betwixt the Spirits operations upon one and another. Compare the Hiſtory of *Paul*'s Converſion with that of the *Jaylor*, *Zacheus*, or *Lydia*, and ſee the variety of circumſtances.

3. Conclude not that you have no Grace becauſe you feel not thoſe tranſports and raviſhing joys that other Chriſtians ſpeak of. If thou canſt not ſay as *Paul* doth, *Rom.* 8. 38. Yet bleſs God, if thou canſt but breath forth ſuch language as that, *Mark* 9. 24. *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.*

4. Say not thou haſt no Grace, becauſe of the high attainments of ſame Hypocrites, who in ſome things may excel thee. When ſome perſons read the ſixth Chapter to the *Hebrews*, they are ſtartled to ſee to what a glorious height the Hypocrite may ſoar; not conſidering that there are theſe three things wherein they excel the moſt glorious Hypocrite in the world. (1.) That Self was never dethroned in Hypocrites, as it is in them. All that an Hypocrite doth is for himſelf. (2) The Hypocrite never hated every ſin, as he doth; but hath ſtill ſome *Agag*, *Rimmon*, or *Delilab.* (3) That the Hypocrite never acted in duty from the bent and inclination of a new nature, taking delight in heavenly imployment, but is moved rather as a Clock by the weights and poiſes of ſome external motives and advantages.

5. Conclude not you have no Grace, becauſe you grow not ſo ſenſibly as ſome other Chriſtians do. You may be divers ways miſtaken about this. (1) You may meaſure your growth by your deſires, and then it appears nothing; for the Chriſtian aims high, and graſps at all. (2.) Or by comparing your ſelves with ſuch as have larger Capacities, Time, and Advantages, than you. (3.) Or by comparing your Graces with other Mens Gifts, which you miſtake for their Graces. (4) Or by thinking that all growth is upward in Joy, Peace, and Comfort; whereas you may grow in Mortification and Humility, which is as true a growth as the former. Oh! take heed of theſe miſtakes; they have been very prejudicial to the peace of many Chriſtians.

5. *Rule.* Laſtly, Decline not ſufferings when *God* gives you a fair call to them. Oh! the Chriſtians ſuffering time is commonly his cleareſt and moſt comfortable time. *Then the Spirit of God and glory relieth on them*, 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. That which hath been in ſuſpence for ſome years, is decided and cleared in a ſuffering hour. And thus I have ſhewed you how to *attain this neceſſary qualification alſo.*

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## CHAP. VIII.

### *Diſcovering the neceſſity of an improved faith for the right management of ſufferings, and directing to ſome ſpecial means for the improvement thereof.*

THE next thing conducing to our actual readineſs for Sufferings, is the improvement of Faith to ſome conſiderable degree of ſtrength. This is the Grace that muſt do the main ſervice in ſuch an hour, as hath the principal hand in ſupporting the Chriſtian under every burden. This the Grace that Crowns our Heads with Victory in the day of battle, *Epheſ* 6. 16. *Above all taking the ſhield of Faith.* It's true, every grace is of uſe, and contributes aſſiſtance: Suffering Saints have been beholding to them all. But of this we may ſay, as *Soloman* of the Vertuous Woman; *Though many Graces have done excellently, yet this excels them all.* In this Grace ready *Paul* was eminent. It was the life he daily lived, *Gal.* 2. 20. Oh! It is a precious Grace, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. So precious that Chriſt who ſeldom admired at any thing, yet wondred at this, *Mat.* 8. 10. A victorious Grace it is that overcomes all difficulties, *Mark* 9. 23. By this Sword it was that all thoſe famous *Heroes*, *Heb.* 11. atchieved all thoſe glorious Conqueſts; and in every diſtreſs it may ſay to the Soul, as Chriſt to the Diſciples, *John* 15. 5. *Without me you can do nothing.* This is that *Sword* that hath obtained ſo many Victories over the World, 1 *John* 5. 4. And that truſty *Shield* that hath quenched ſo many deadly Darts of temptation, has been levelled at the very Heart of the Chriſtian in the day of Battle. By it a Chriſtian lives, when all outward ſenſible comforts die, *Heb.* 2. 4. It's the ground upon which the Chriſtian fixes his foot, and never fails under him, 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. The neceſſity of it will more clearly appear, by conſidering how many ways it relieves the Soul in trouble, and diſburthens the Heart of all its ſinking loads and preſſures: There are two things that ſink a Man's Spirit when under Sufferings; *viz.* The *greatneſs* of the Troubles, and the *weakneſs* of the Soul to bear them; againſt both which, Faith relieves the Soul, *viz.* by making a *weak* Soul *ſtrong*, and *heavy* Troubles *light*.

*Firſt*, It makes a weak Soul ſtrong and able to bear; and this it doth divers ways.

1. By purging out of the Soul thoſe enfeebling and weakening Diſtempers; not only *guilt* in general, which is to the Soul, as a Wound upon the bearing Shoulder, *Rom.* 5 1. The removal whereof enables the Soul to bear any other burden, *Iſa.* 33. 24. But it alſo removes *Fear*, that Tyrant Paſſion, that cuts the Nerves of the Soul. For, as *Faith* comes in, ſo *Fear* goes out: Look in what degree the Fear of God is aſcendant in the Soul, proportionably the ſinful Fear of the Creature declines and vaniſheth, *Iſa.* 8. 12, 13. This Fear extinguiſhes that, as the Sun-ſhine puts out fire, *The Righteous is bold as a Lyon*, *Prov.* 28. 1. The ככפיר ſignifies a young Lyon in his hot blood, that knows no ſuch thing as fear: And look how much of the Soul is *empty* of Faith, ſo much it's *filled* with fear: *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little Faith?* Mat. 8. 26. Certainly, it's a rare advantage, to be freed from the *common diſtraction*, in times of *common deſtruction*: and this advantage the Soul hath by Faith.

2. It ſtrengthens the Soul to bear Afflictions and hardſhips, not only by purging out its weakning Diſtempers, but by turning it ſelf to Chriſt, in whom all its ſtrength lies, and that ſuitably to the ſeveral Exigencies of the Soul, in all its Diſtreſſes. Doth Darkneſs, like the ſhaddow of death, overſpread the Earth, and all the Lights of Earthly Comforts diſappear, then Faith ſupports the Heart, by *looking to the Lord*, *Mic.* 7. 7. And this look of Faith exceedingly revives the Heart, *Pſal.* 34. 5. And enlightens the Soul. Doth God pluck away all Earthly Props from under your feet, and leave you nothing viſible to reſt upon; in that Exigence Faith puts forth a ſuitable Act, *viz. Reſting or ſtaying upon God*, Eſa 26. 3. and by this the Soul comes to be quieted and eſtabliſhed. *Pſal.* 125. 1. Do temptations ſtrive to put off the Soul from Chriſt, and diſcourage it from leaning upon the Promiſe? Then it puts forth *an act of Reſolution*, Job. 13. 15. And ſo breaks its way through that diſcouragement; Or hath the Soul been long ſeeking God for deliverance out of Trouble, and ſtill there is ſilence in Heaven, no Anſwer comes; but inſtead of an Anſwer, comes a Temptation, to throw up the Duty, and ſeek to deliver it ſelf? Then Faith puts forth another Act upon Chriſt, ſuitable to this diſtreſs, *viz. An act of waiting*, Iſa. 49. 23. Which *waiting* is oppoſed to that *ſinful haſte* which the Soul is tempted to, *Iſa.* 28. 16. Or doth God at any time call the Soul forth to ſome difficult Service, againſt which the Fleſh and Carnal Reaſon diſpute and plead? Now Faith helps the Soul, by putting forth *an act of Obedience*; and that whilſt Carnal Reaſon ſtands by diſſatisfied, *Gal.* 1. 16. And hence it is, that Obedience carries the name of Faith upon it, to ſhew its deſcent, *Rom.* 16. 26 Faith encourages the Soul to obey, not only by urging God's *Command*, but by giving it God's *Warrant* for its Indempnity, *Heb.* 11. 24, 25, 26. Or doth a poor Believer find himſelf over-matched by Troubles and Temptations, and his own inherent ſtrength begin to fail under the burden? Then Faith leads him to an Omnipotent God, and ſo ſecures him from fainting under his Trouble, *Pſal.* 61. 2. In the Lord is everlaſting ſtrength. *El Shaddai*, is a Name of encouragement to a feeble Soul, *Iſa.* 40. 29, 30, 31. And thus you ſee the firſt particular made good, *viz.* What a ſtrengthning influence it hath unto a weak Soul.

*Secondly*, In the next place, let us ſee how it *lightens* the Chriſtians Burthen, as well as *ſtrengthens* his Back to bear.

And certainly, This Grace of Faith doth ſtrangely alter the very Nature of Sufferings, taking away both the *heavineſs* and *horrour* of them; and this it doth divers ways

1. By committing the buſineſs to Chriſt, and leaving the matter with him; and ſo quitting the Soul of all thoſe anxieties and perturbations, which are the very burden and weight of affliction, *Pſal.* 37. 5. For certainly, that which ſinks us in days of Trouble, is rather from within, from our unruly, ſeditious, and clamorous thoughts, than from the troubles themſelves with which we conflict: But by committing the matter to God, the Soul is quickly brought to reſt.

2. By diſcovering much preſent good in our Troubles; the more good Faith diſcovers in a Trouble, the more ſupportable and eaſie it makes it to the Soul. Now Faith brings in a comfortable Report, that they are not *only Evils*, as the Troubles of the Wicked are, *Ezek.* 7. 5. But have an allay and mixture of much good, *Heb.* 12. 10. *Iſa.* 27. 9.

3. By fore-ſeeing the end and final removal of them, and that near at hand, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. That which daunts and amazes Men in times of Trouble, is, that they can ſee no end of them, Hence the Heart faints, and Hands hang down through diſcouragement: But now Faith brings the joyful tidings of the end of Troubles, and ſaith to the Soul, *Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul? and why ſo diſquieted and diſcouraged within me? as if thy ſufferings were like the ſufferings of the Damned, endleſs and everlaſting, whereas they are but for a moment; Yet a little, a very little while, and he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry, Heb.* 10. 37. Yet a little while, and then the days of thy mourning ſhall be over.

4. By comparing our ſufferings with the ſufferings of others, which exceedingly deminiſheth and ſhrinks them up; ſometimes the Believer compares his ſufferings with Chriſts, and then he is aſhamed that ever he ſhould complain and droop under them. Oh! ſaith he, What is that, to that which the Lord Jeſus ſuffered for me? He ſuffered in all his *Members*, Head, Hands, Side, Feet, from all *Hands*, Friends and Enemies, in all his *Offices*; Yea, in his Soul, as well as in his Body: And indeed the ſufferings of his Soul, were the very Soul of his ſufferings: Sometimes he compares them with the ſufferings of others of the Saints in former Ages: When he reads in Faith the Hiſtory of their Perſecutions, he is ſhamed out of his Complaints, and ſaith, *Am I better than my Fathers?* Sometimes he compares them with the ſufferings of the Damned: *Oh what is this to the everlaſting burnings! What is a Priſon to Hell? How light and eaſie is it to ſuffer for Chriſt, in compariſon of thoſe ſufferings which are from Chriſt?* And thus the Soul is quieted, and the Terrour of ſufferings abated.

5. Faith entitles Chriſt to the Believers ſufferings, and puts them upon his ſcore; and ſo it exceedingly transforms and alters them: Ah! it's no ſmall Relief, when a man can hold up the Bible, as that *Martyr* did at the Stake, and ſay, *This is that which hath brought me hither*: Or, as the Pſalmiſt, *For thy ſake we are killed all the day long*: Or, as the Apoſtle, Col. 1. 14. *I fill up that which is behind of the ſufferings of Chriſt in my fleſh.*

6. Laſtly, Faith engages the preſence of God, to be and abide with the Soul in all its ſolitudes and ſufferings: It lays hold upon the Promiſes made to that Purpoſe, *Pſal.* 23. 2. *Iſa.* 43. 2. *Heb.* 13. 5. *John* 14. 18. And whileſt a poor Soul enjoys this, the very ſenſe of Troubles is ſwallowed up.

And thus I have given ſome brief hints, how Faith relieves and ſtrengthens the Soul in a ſuffering hour: The next thing is to direct you how to improve this excellent Grace, that it may do you ſuch ſervice as this in a time of need: And, in order thereunto, I ſhall give you theſe Seven Directions.

1. Attend diligently upon the Miniſtration of the Goſpel, which is not only the procreant, but alſo the conſerving cauſe of Faith, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. The *Doctrine of Faith*, is the Food and Nutriment of the *Grace of Faith*: There are its Rules, its Encouragements, its Cordials. Thence Faith takes and treaſures up its *Michtams*, to which it hath recourſe in times of need: Every *Attribute*, *Command* or *Promiſe*, that ſhines forth there, is a diſh for Faith to feed on, but all together are a Royal Feaſt; *Pſal.* 63. 5. Some ſay the Land of *Judea* is called *the Land of the Living*, in *Pſal.* 27. 13. In reſpect of the Ordinances of God, which that People enjoyed. Certain it is, they are the great Inſtruments of quickning Souls at firſt, and preſerving that life it ſo begat in them: But then be ſure they have Chriſt's Stamp upon them, and that they be miniſtred by his own Officers, and in his own way: And ſo you may reaſonably expect more Fruits and Influences from them, than from all private gifts and helps in the World: *For the Lord loveth the Gates of* Zion, *more than all the Dwellings of* Jacob. *Pſal.* 87. 2. And all private helps may ſay, in compariſon of Chriſt's publick Ordinances, as *Gideon* ſaid to the Men of *Ephraim*, Judg. 8. 2. *What have we done in compariſon of you?*

2. Improve well your *Sacrament Seaſons*, thoſe *Harveſt-days of Faith*: This *Ordinance* hath a direct and peculiar *tendency* to the improvement and ſtrengthning of Faith. It is a Pledge ſuperadded to the Promiſe for Faiths ſake: Heavenly and ſublime Myſteries do therein ſtoop down to your Senſes, that you may have the clearer apprehenſions of them; and the clearer the apprehenſions are, the ſtronger the aſſent of Faith muſt needs be: By this Seal alſo the Promiſe comes to be more ratified to us; and the firmer the Promiſe appears to the Soul, the more bold and adventurous Faith is in caſting it ſelf upon it: Oh! how many poor doubting trembling Souls have in ſuch a Seaſon gathered the full ripe fruits of Aſſurance, from the Top-boughs of that Ordinance!

3. Frequent actings of Faith, are rare and ſpecial means of improving it: *To him that hath* (i. e.) that improves and uſes

what he hath, *ſhall be given*, *Mat.* 25. 29. This was the way by which *Paul* thrived in Faith, and every other Grace ſo exceedingly, that he out-grew them that were in Chriſt before him, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. It's true, that its beginning in the Soul, is not after the manner of other Habits, either *Moral* or *Natural*: This is not of *Natural Acquiſition*, but by *Divine Infuſion*: But yet its Improvement is in the ſame manner. Oh then! if ever you would have a flouriſhing Faith, rouze it up out of the dull Habit, and live in the daily exerciſe of it.

4. Go to Jeſus Chriſt, who is *the Author and Finiſher of Faith*, and cry to him as *Mark* 9. 24. *Lord increaſe my Faith*: Yea, beg the Aſſiſtance of others Prayers in this behalf, as the Apoſtle did, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 10. 2 *Theſ.* 1. 11. Faith animates Prayer, and Prayer increaſes Faith.

5. Improve times of Affliction for the increaſe of Faith: For certainly, Sanctified Afflictions do notably exerciſe and increaſe this Grace, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. In times of Proſperity, we know not what ſtock of Faith we have: We live ſo much upon things ſeen, that we cannot many times tell whether we have Faith or no: But when difficult days come, then we muſt get out our whole Subſiſtence and Livelihood by Faith, *Hab.* 2. 4. Yea, then we have many proofs and experiments of God's Fidelity in the Promiſes, which is a choice help to Faith, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10.

6. Keep Catalogues of all your remarkable Experiences; treaſure them up as food for your Faith in time to come: Oh! it is a ſigular encouragement and heartning to Faith, when it can turn over the Records of God's dealing with you in Years paſt, and ſay as *Joſhua*, *Not one thing hath failed*, *Joſ.* 23. 14. When it can ſay ſo of Promiſes, that have already had their Accompliſhments, then they will be apt to ſay concerning thoſe yet to be accompliſhed, as *Elizabeth* ſaid to *Mary*, Luke 1: 45. *Bleſſed is the Soul that believeth, for there ſhall be a performance of thoſe things which are told it by the Lord.*

Theſe Experiments are the Food of Faith: *Pſal.* 74. 14. *Thou breakeſt the Heads of* Leviathan *in pieces, and gaveſt him to be meat to thy People inhabiting the Wilderneſs*, (*i. e.*) That famous Experience of the Power and Love of God in their Red-Sea deliverance, where he deſtroyed that Sea-Monſter *Pharaoh*, and his Hoſt, was Meat to the Faith of God's *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs afterwards. We often find Chriſt charging the Peoples unbelief on a Memory, *Mat.* 16. 8, 9. And hence it was, that the Lord commanded the *Iſraelites* to keep *Journals* of every days *Occurences*, Numb. 13. 1, 2. It is a thouſand Pities ſuch choice helps ſhould be loſt. Oh! if you could but remember, how the Lord hath appeared for you in former Exigencies, and how often he hath ſhamed you for your unbelief, it would exceedingly animate your Faith both in preſent and future diſtreſſes, *Mic.* 6. 5.

7. Laſtly, Beware of Senſe, which is the ſupplanter of Faith. O if you live upon things Earthly, you put Faith out of its Office: Things Earthly have an Enmity to Faith. *This is the Victory by which we overcome the World, even our Faith*, 1 *John* 5. 4 Overcoming notes a Conflict, and Conflicts infers Oppoſitions. Oh you that live ſo much by ſight and ſenſe on things viſible, what will you do when in *David*'s or *Paul*'s Caſe, *Pſal.* 142. 4. 2 *Tim.* 4. 16. When all outward Encouragements and ſtays ſhall utterly fail. What had *Abraham* done, if he had not been able to believe againſt Hope, *i. e.* ſuch an hope as is founded in Senſe and Reaſon.

Reader, I adviſe and charge thee in the Name of the Lord, and as thou hopeſt to live when viſible comforts die, that thou be diligent in the improvement and preparation of this excellent Grace of Faith: if it fail, thou faileſt with it; and as thy Faith is, ſo art thou. Conſult all the Cloud of Witneſſes, and ſee if thou canſt find a Man among them, that did not atchieve the Victory by his Faith. Had they not all been run down by the furious aſſaults of Temptation, and inſtead of a *Cloud of Witneſſes*, been ſo many *Pillars of Salt*, and Monuments of reproach and ſhame to Religion, if their Faith had failed in its Tryal.

## CHAP. IX.

*Wherein the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of Chriſtian Fortitude in order to Sufferings, is evinced with a brief account of its nature and the means of attaining it.*

THE next Grace which concurs to the compleating of our actual Readineſs for Sufferings, is *Chriſtian Fortitude*, or holy Courage; which muſt ſay in thy Heart in a time of danger, as *Elijah* once did, *As the Lord lives I will ſhew my ſelf.* This alſo is a choice part of your preparation work. In this grace our *Apoſtle* was eminent: When he was told, *Bonds and Afflictions waited for him*; he could ſay, That *none of thoſe things moved him*, *Acts* 20. 24. Yea, when he was to appear before the Lyon *Nero*, and not a Man would own or ſtand by him, yet he ſtands his Ground, reſolving rather to die on the place*, than diſhonourably to recede from his Principles and Profeſſion, 2 *Tim.* 4. 16, 17. He ſet the World, with all its Threats and Terrours, lower than it ſet him. Oh how conſpicuous was this Grace in all thoſe *Heroes* that have paſt on before us! And if ever you hope to ſtand in the evil day, and be fetched off the Field with Honour, you muſt rouze up and awaken your Courage for God: And the neceſſity thereof will appear upon theſe four Conſiderations.

1. Becauſe the ſucceſs and prevalence of Satan's Temptations in the hour of Perſecution depends upon the fainting and overthrow of this Grace. Wherefore doth he raiſe Perſecutions in the World, but becauſe ſuch terrible things are fitted to work upon the paſſion of Carnal Fear, which riſes with thoſe dangers, and makes the Soul as a tumultuous Sea. This is it he aims at, *Neh.*

6, 13. This is a multiplying Paſſion, that repreſents dangers more and greater than they are, and ſo drives the Soul into the very Net and Snare laid by the Devil to take it. *Prov.* 29.25. *The fear of Man brings a Snare*; which was ſadly exemplified in *Abraham*, *Gen.* 12. 12. And divers others of the Saints. If he can but ſubdue this Grace, he will quickly bring you to capitulate for Life and Liberty upon the baſeſt and moſt diſhonourable terms; therefore the preparation of this Grace is ſo exceedingly neceſſary.

2. Becauſe this is the Grace that honours Jeſus Chriſt abundantly, when you are brought upon the Stage for him.

There is a great Solemnity at the ſuffering and tryal of a Saint: Heaven, Earth, and Hell are Spectators, obſerving the Iſſue, and how the Saints will acquit themſelves in that Hour. *We are made a ſpectacle*, ſaith the Apoſtle. The word is, Θέατρον ἐγενήθημεν, we are ſet as upon a Theatre in publick view, 1 *Cor.* 4 9. God, Angels, and Saints, wait to ſee the glorious Triumphs of their Faith and Courage, reflecting Honour upon the Name and Cauſe of Chriſt. Devils and wicked Men gape for an advantage by their Cowardize. Certainly very much lies now upon the Chriſtians hands. Should he faint and give ground, how will it furniſh the triumphs of Hell, and make Chriſt's Enemies vaunt over him, as if his Love ran ſo low in the Hearts of his People, that they durſt not adventure any thing for him: Or if notwithſtanding their brave words and glorious Profeſſion, they durſt not truſt their own Principles when it comes to the Trial! But if now they play the Men, and diſcover an holy Gallantry of Spirit and Reſolution for Chriſt, how will it daunt the Enemies, and make them ſay as *Marcus* Biſhop of *Aretheuſa* made one of *Julian*'s Nobles, preſent at his Torments, to ſay concerning him, *We are aſhamed*, O *Emperour*; *the Chriſtians laugh at your Cruelty*! And how will God himſelf rejoice and glory over them, as he once did over *Job* when he fetched him with Honour off that firſt Field! *Job.* 2. 3. *Still he holdeth faſt his Integrity.*

3. Your own Peace is wrapt up in it. as well as God's Glory. Is it nothing think you, to be freed from thoſe *Vultures* and *Harpies*, that feed upon the Hearts of Men at ſuch times? Surely God reckons, that he promiſeth a very great Mercy to his People, when he promiſeth it, *Prov.* 1. *ult.* *Pſal.* 112. 7. When *Borromæus* was told of ſome that lay in wait to take away his Life, it troubled him not; but he ſaid, *An Deus in mundo pro Nihilo*? What, is God in the World for nought? And like to this was the Anſwer of *Silentiarus* in the like caſe; *Si Deus mei curam non habet. quid vivo*? If God take not care for me, how do I live? Oh this is it that brings you to an holy quietude of Spirit in times of Confuſion and Diſtraction, which is a choice Mercy.

4 Your Magnanimity is of ſpecial uſe to other Saints, who are following you in the ſame path of Sufferings If your faint, it's like the fainting of a Standard-bearer in an Army: You bring thereby an evil report upon the Croſs of Chriſt, as the *firſt Spies* did upon the Land of *Canaan*. And a like influence with that it is like to have on your Brethren; ſo that there is a neceſſity of improving this Grace alſo before you can ſay with *Paul* you are ready.

2. But what is this Chriſtian Fortitude, and wherein doth it conſiſt?

I anſwer briefly, *It is an holy boldneſs in the performance of difficult duties, flowing from Faith in the Call of God, and his Promiſe to us in the diſcharge of them.*

And ſo you have the Nature of it in theſe four Particulars:

1. It is an *Holy Boldneſs*, not a natural or ſinful boldneſs, ariſing either from the natural Conſtitution, or evil diſpoſition of the Mind

2. It is expreſt about duties for Truth, not Error, *Jer.* 9 3. for the Intereſt of Chriſt, not of the Fleſh

3. The Seaſon in which it appears is, when duties are ſurrounded and beſet with difficulties and dangers, *Dan.* 3. 16. *Dan.* 6. 10

4. The Fountain whence it flows is Faith, and that as it reſpects the command and call of God to duty, *Acts* 16. 10. And his promiſe to us in the diſcharge thereof, *Joſh.* 1. 5, 6.

And this Grace ſtands oppoſed both to the fear of Man in the cauſe of God, *Heb.* 11. 27. And to Apoſtacy from the Truth for fear of ſuffering. Thus briefly of the nature of it

3. In the laſt place I ſhall lay down ſome Rules for the promoting and improvement of it, and ſo finiſh this Chapter.

Now there are ten Rules heedfully to be obſerved for the breeding of holy Courage in the Breaſt of a Saint in evil times.

And the firſt Rule is this, Get a weaned Heart from all Earthly Enjoyments. If the Heart be inordinately fixed upon any one thing that you poſſeſs in the World, that inordinate Eſtimation and Affection of it will ſtrangely effeminate, ſoften and cowardize your Spirit when your trial comes, 2 *Tim.* 2. 4. You meet not with a Man of Courage for God, but had his Heart dead to Earthly things; ſo it was with *Paul*, *Philemon* 3. 8. Since the Apoſtles we ſcarce meet with a greater Example of Holy Magnanimity than *Luther*; and if you read his Story, you will find few Men ever ſet a lower rate on the World than he. All the *Turkiſh Empire* in his Eye was but a Crumb caſt to the Dogs. *Germana eſt hæc beſtia pecuniam non curat*, Money could not tempt him.

2. Suffer not guilt to lie upon your Conſciences: It is a fountain of Fears, and you can never attain boldneſs for God, till it be removed, *Rom.* 5. 1, 2, 3. *The ſpirit of a ſound Mind* is oppoſed to the Spirit of Fear, 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. Now that ſound Mind is a Mind or Spirit that is not wounded, and made ſick and infirm by guilt. Oh what black Fogs and Miſts ariſe out of Guilt, which becloud our Evidences, and fill us with Fears and Diſcouragements! *Gen.* 42. 21, 22.

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reſts. No ſooner is the Soul acquainted with, and intereſted in Chriſt, but he heartily wiſhes well to all his Affairs and Concernments, *Pſal.* 45. 3, 4. This is that which puts mettle and reſolution for Chriſt into the Soul.

7. *Rule.* Beware you be not cheated with Maximes of Carnal Policy, miſtaken for Chriſtian prudence. Many are ſo : And they prove deſtructive to all true zeal and courage for Chriſt. Never was Religion profeſſed with greater plainneſs and ſimplicity, than by the Primitive Chriſtians : And never was there an higher Spring-tide of Courage and zeal for God, than in thoſe days. We are apt to call it prodigality, and are grown wiſer to husband our Lives and Comforts, better than they did. But indeed our Prudentials have even ſwallowed up our Religion. It's true, there is ſuch a thing as Chriſtian prudence ; but this doth not teach men to ſhun all coſtly and difficult duties, and proſtitute Conſcience to ſave the Skin. *But a man of underſtanding walketh uprightly*, Prov. 15. 21.

8. *Rule.* Look upon the inſide of troubles for Chriſt, as well as upon the outſide of them. If you view them by an eye of ſenſe, there appeareth nothing but matter of diſcouragement. To look on the outſide of a Priſon, Baniſhment, or Death, is affrighting and horrible : But then if you look into the inſide of theſe things by faith, and ſee what God hath made them to his people, how joyful and comfortable they have been in theſe conditions ; what honey they have found in the Carkaſs of a Lion, what Songs in the Stocks and Dungeons, what glorying in Tribulation, and an hundred fold reward even in their Sufferings : O then ! that which looked like a Serpent at a diſtance, will appear but as a Rod in hand. How many have found themſelves quite miſtaken in their apprehenſions of ſufferings ; and been more loth to come out of a Priſon, than they were to go in ! If you did but ſee your ſupports, and the comforts that Souls ordinarily meet with in their troubles for Chriſt, you would not look on them as ſuch formidable things.

9. *Rule.* View the iſſue and reward of ſufferings by an eye of Faith : This alſo will ſtrongly abate the horrour and dread of them, *Heb.* 10. 34. Upon this Account it is the Saints have ſo ſlighted and contemned them, *Rom.* 8. 18. 2 *Cor.* 4. 16, 17. But then ſee that you act your Faith, ( 1 ) Upon the certainty of it : Look at it as a moſt real and ſubſtantial thing, *Heb.* 11. 1. ( 2 ) View it as a great and *glorious Reward.* And ( 3 ) as near at hand : And then ſay to thy Soul, come on my Soul, come on ; Seeſt thou the joy ſet before thee ! The Crown of Glory ready to be ſet on thy head by the hand of a righteous God. Oh, what compare is there betwixt thoſe Sufferings, and that Glory !

10. *Rule.* Propound to your ſelves the beſt patterns and examples. Keep your eye upon the Cloud of Witneſſes ; theſe are of ſpecial uſe to beget holy courage, *Heb.* 12. 1. *Jam.* 5. 10. Who would be afraid to enter the Liſts, and grapple with that enemy that he hath ſeen ſo often foiled, and that by poor weak Chriſtians ? See how the enemy with whom you are to grapple, hath been beaten hand to hand, and triumphed over by poor

Women and Children; they had as great infirmities, and you have as gracious aſſiſtances as thoſe that are gone before you.

## CHAP. X.

*Diſcovering the neceſſity of an heart mortified to all earthly and Temporal enjoyments, in order to the managing of a ſuffering condition: with ſeveral directions for the attaining thereof.*

THE next thing wherein your actual readineſs for Bonds, or Death conſiſteth, is in *the mortification of your Affections to all earthly Intereſts and Enjoyments, even the beſt and ſweeteſt of them*: Till this be done, in ſome meaſure, you are not fit to be uſed in any ſuch ſervice for the Lord, 2 *Tim.* 1. 21. The living world, is the very Life of temptations: The travelling pains of Death, are ſtronger and ſharper upon none, than thoſe that are full of ſenſe and ſelf. As you ſee in Nature, what Conflicts and Agonies ſtrong and lively perſons ſuffer when they die: When others in whom nature is decay'd and ſpent beforehand, die away without half that pain, even as a Bird in a ſhell. Corruption in the Saints, is like the Sap in green Wood, which reſiſteth the fire, and will not burn well, till it be dried up. Prepared *Paul* had an Heart mortified in a very high degree, to all the Honour and Riches of the World, accounting them all but trifles, *Gal.* 6. 14. 1 *Cor.* 4. 3, 4.

The need of this will be evinced by theſe five Conſiderations.

1. Unleſs the Heart be mortified to all Earthly enjoyments, they will appear great and glorious things in your eye and eſtimation: And if ſo, judge what a Task you will have, to deny and leave them all in a ſuffering hour. It is corruption *within*, that puts the Luſtre and Glory upon things *without*: It's the carnal eye only that gazes admiringly after them, 2 *Cor.* 5. 16. and hence the *Luſt* is put to expreſs the *Affection*, 1 *Joh.* 2 16. becauſe all that inordinate affection we have to them, ariſes from our high eſtimation of them, and that eſtimation from our luſts that repreſent them as great and glorious. Therefore certainly, it will be difficult (if not impoſſible) to deny them, till they have loſt their glory in your eye; and that they will never do, till thoſe Luſts within you, that put that Beauty and Neceſſity upon them, be firſt crucified. As for inſtance, what a glory and neceſſity doth the Pride of Men put upon the Honour and Credit of the World, ſo that they will rather chooſe to die, than ſurvive it! but to a mortified Soul it's a *ſmall matter*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 3. So for Riches, how much are they adored, till our Luſts be mortified, and then they are eſteemed but *Dung and Droſs*, *Phil.* 3. 8. 'Tis our Corruption that paints and gilds over theſe things: When theſe are crucified, thoſe will be lightly eſteemed.

2. Mortification of Corruptions is that which recovers an healthful ſtate of Soul: Sin is to thy Soul, what a Diſeaſe is to the Body; and Mortification is to ſin, what Phyſick is to a Diſeaſe. Hence thoſe that are but a little mortified, are in a comparative ſenſe called *Carnal*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. and *Babes*, *verſe* 2. in reſpect of weakneſs. Now ſuffering Work being ſome of the Chriſtians hardeſt Labour and Exerciſe, he cannot be fitted for it, until his Soul be in an healthful ſtate: A ſickly man cannot carry heavy Burdens, or endure hard Labours and Exerciſes: The ſick Souldier is left behind in his Quarters, or put into the hoſpital, whilſt his Fellows are dividing the ſpoils, and obtaining glorious Victories in the Field. To this ſenſe ſome expound *Rom.* 8. 13. *If ye live after the Fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, mortifie the Deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live.* Whereas *Death* is put to note a languiſhing ſtate of Soul, whilſt Mortification is neglected: So *Life* is put to expreſs an healthful and comfortable ſtate; *vivere pro valere*; ſo that upon this account alſo the neceſſity of it appears.

3. Your *Corruptions* muſt be Mortified, elſe they will be raging and violent in the time of Temptation, and like a Torrent ſweep away all your Convictions and Reſolutions. It's ſin unmortified within, that makes the Heart like Gun-powder; ſo that when the ſparkles of Temptation fly about it, (and they fall thick in a ſuffering hour) they do but touch and take. Hence the *Corruptions* of the *World* are ſaid to be *through Luſt*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. With theſe internal unmortified Luſts, the *Tempter* holds correſpondence; and theſe be the *Traitors* that deliver up our Souls into his hands.

4. Unleſs you be diligent and ſucceſsful in this Work, though you ſhould ſuffer, yet not like Chriſtians, you will but diſgrace Religion, and the Cauſe for which you ſuffer: For it's not ſimple ſuffering, but ſuffering *as a Chriſtian*, that reflects Credit on Religion, and finds acceptation with God. If you be Envious, Fretful, Diſcontented and Revengeful, under your ſufferings, what Honour will this bring to Chriſt? Is not this altogether unlike the Example of your Lord? *Iſa.* 53. 7. and the behaviour of ſuffering Saints? 1 *Cor.* 4 13. Yet thus it will be, if your Pride, Paſſion and Revenge, be not firſt ſubdued: For what are the breakings forth of ſuch diſtempers of Spirit, but as the flaſhes of heat in the Face from an ill-affected Liver? Moſt certain it is, that all thoſe evils are in your Natures: And as certain it is, they will riſe like Mud and Filth from the bottom of a Lake, when ſome Eminent Tryals ſhall rake you to the bottom; *Natura vexata prodit ſeipſam.*

5. Laſtly, Mortification muſt be ſtudied and plyed with diligence; elſe you will find many Longings and Hankerings after Earthly Enjoyments and Comforts, which will prove a ſnare to you: What is ſin, but the *corrupt* and *vitiated appetite* of the *Creature*, to things that are Earthly and Senſual, reliſhing more ſweetneſs and delight in them, than in the bleſſed God? And what is Sanctification? but the rectifying of theſe *inordinate affections*, and placing them on their proper Object. A regenerate and mortified Chriſtian taſtes not half that ſweetneſs in forbidden fruits that another doth: Set but Money before *Judas*, and ſee how eagerly he catches at it —— *What will you give me, and I will betray him.* Set but Life, Liberty, or any ſuch Bait before an unmortified Heart, and how impotent is he to withſtand them, as offered in a Temptation. Oh thoſe unmortified Luſts! How do they make Men Hanker, Long, and their Lips water (as we

uſe to ſay) after theſe things? This makes them break Priſon, decline Sufferings, tho upon the baſeſt terms: Whereas a Mortified Chriſtian can ſee all theſe things ſet before him, yea, offered to him, and refuſe them. *Heb.* 10. 35. It is with them much as it was with old *Barzillai*, 2 *Sam.* 19. 35. When Nature is decayed, they find but little Pleaſure in natural actions, *Eccleſ.* 12. 1. And look as the body of ſin decays and languiſhes, ſo do theſe Longings alſo: It weans the Soul from them all, and enables it to live very comfortably without them, *Pſal.* 131. 1. *Phil.* 4. 12. There needs no more to be ſaid to evince the neceſſity of Mortification, and diſcover what influence it hath into a Chriſtians readineſs for ſufferings.

It remains therefore, that I open to you ſome of the principal *corruptions*, about which it moſtly concerns you, to beſtow pains e're ſufferings come. Now look as there are four principle enjoyments, in which you are like to be tried, *viz. Eſtate, Name, Liberty, Life*; ſo the Chriſtian Work in ſuffering times lies in mortifying theſe Four ſpecial *Corruptions, viz.* Firſt, The Love of the World Secondly, Ambition. Thirdly, Inordinate affectation of freedom and Pleaſure. Fourthly, Exceſſive love of Life.

1. For the love of this World, Away with it, Crucifie it, Crucifie it: Down with this Idol, and let it be dethroned in all that intend to abide with Chriſt in the hour of Temptation: How elſe will you take the ſpoiling of your Goods? How will you be able to part with all for Chriſt, as theſe bleſſed Souls did? It grieves my Heart to ſee how many Profeſſors of Religion are carried captive at the Chariot-Wheels of a bewitching World. Oh! Good had it been for many Profeſſors, if they had never taſted ſo much of the ſweetneſs of it. *Sirs*, I beg you, for the Lord's ſake down with it in your *Eſtimations*, down with it in your *Affections*, elſe Temptations will down with you e're long. I ſhall offer five or ſix Helps for the Crucifying of it.

*Firſt*, Conſider your Eſpouſals to Chriſt, and how you have choſen and profeſſed him for your Lord and Husband: Therefore your doting upon the World, is no leſs than Adultery againſt Chriſt, *James* 4. 4. If Chriſt be your Husband he muſt be a *Covering to your Eyes*; an unchaſte glance upon the World wounds him.

*Secondly*, The more you prize it, the more you will be tormented by it: Did you prize and love it leſs, it would diſquiet and vex you leſs: It's our doteing on it, that makes it draw blood at parting.

*Thirdly*, Get true *Scripture-notions* of the World, and rectifie your Judgments and Affections by them. If you will have the *true Picture* and *Repreſentation* of it drawn by the Hand of God himſelf, See 1 *John* 2. 16. It's nothing elſe but *luſt* that puts that *luſtre* upon it: It hath but a *Phantaſtick glory*, and that alſo paſſeth away. What is become of them that ruffled it out in the World but one hundred years ago? What could the World do for them? Are they not all gone down to the ſides of the Pit? *But he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.*

*Fourthly*, Study and Contemplate Chriſt, and the things above more: This would vail all its Glory, and kill it at the Root, *Phil.* 3. 18, 19. Juſt as a Man that hath been gazing upon the Sun, when he takes off his Eye from that bright and glorious *Creature*, and looks to the Earth, there is a Vail of Darkneſs overſpreading the Face of it, that he can ſee nothing. I wonder how ſuch as pretend to live above, and enjoy communion with God, can ever reliſh ſuch ſweetneſs in the World; or have their Hearts enticed and captivated by it?

*Fifthly*, Remember always, that by your love and delight in Worldly things, you furniſh the Devil with the chiefeſt Bait he hath to catch, and deſtroy your Souls. Alas! were your hearts but dead to theſe things, he would want an Handle to catch hold on. What hath he more to offer you, and tempt you off from Chriſt with, but a little Money? or ſome ſuch poor temporal Rewards: And how little would that Soul be moved by ſuch a Temptation, that looks on it all but as Dirt.

*Sixthly*, Laſtly, take notice of the approaches of *Eternity*; Remember you are almoſt at the end of *Time*: And when you come to lanch out into that endleſs Ocean, how will theſe things look then? It ſeems glorious, whilſt you are in the Chace and Purſuit of it; but upon a Death-bed, you will overtake and come up with it, and then you'l ſee what a deceitful and vain thing it is: Stand by the Beds of dying Men, and hear how they ſpeak of it. Oh! the difference betwixt our apprehenſions then, and now! Thus labour to wean off your Affections, and Crucifie them to the World.

2. Mortifie your *Ambition*, and vain *Affectation* of the Repute and Credit of the World: Oh ſtand not on ſo vain a thing as this! judge it but a ſmall thing to be judged of Man, to have your Names caſt out as *evil*: Let not *Scoffs* and *Reproaches* be ſuch terrible things to you. It is without doubt, a great trial; elſe the Holy Ghoſt had not added a peculiar *Epithete* to it, which is not given to any other of the ſufferings of the Saints: not cruel Tortures, nor cruel Stonings, Burnings, Slaying with the Sword; but *cruel mockings*, *Heb.* 11. 36. Yet learn to be dead to, and unaffected with theſe things; ſet the reproaching World as light, and as low as it ſets you: *Deſpiſe the ſhame*, as your Maſter *Chriſt* did, *Heb.* 12. 2. and to promote *Mortification* in this, take theſe helps:

1. Conſider this is no new or ſtrange thing that hath happened to you: The Holieſt of Men have paſt through the like, if not worſe Trials, *Heb.* 10. 33. *Pſal.* 44. 14. Reproaches have been the Lot of the beſt Men. They called *Athanaſius*, *Sathanaſius*; *Cyprianus*, *Coprianus*, a gatherer of Dung; Bleſſed *Paul* a *peſtilent Fellow*: Doctor *Story* threw a Fagot at ſweet Mr. *Denlie*'s Face, as he was ſinging a Pſalm in the midſt of the Flames, ſaying, *I have ſpoiled a good old Song*.

2. It may be Religion hath been Reproached and Scoffed at for your ſakes; and if ſo, think it not much to be reproached for Religions ſake.

3. It's much better to be reproached by Men for diſcharging Duty, than by your own Conſciences for the neglect of it: If all be quiet within, never be moved at the noiſe and clamour without: If you have a good Roof over your Head, be not troubled though the Winds and Storms bluſter abroad, 1 *Pet*. 4. 14. Take heed what you do, and be heedleſs what the World ſays.

4. Always remember, that you neither ſtand or fall at the World's Judgment, and therefore have the leſs reaſon to be troubled at it, 1 *Cor*. 4. 3. If your condition were to be caſt to Eternity by it, it were ſomewhat.

5. There is a Worth and Excellency in the Reproaches of Chriſt, as bad as they ſeem; and ſuch an Excellency, as is not to be matched by any Earthly Enjoyment, *Heb*. 11. 26. The Reproaches of Chriſt are of more worth than the Treaſures of *Egypt*, though *Egypt* then was the *Magazine* of the World for Treaſures. The Apoſtles counted them their Honours, *Acts* 5. 41. When *Ludovicus Marſocus*, a Knight of *France*, ſaw thoſe that were to ſuffer with him in the Chains, and that they put none upon him, becauſe of the Nobility of his Birth, he ſaid to the Executioner, *Cur me non quoq; Torque donas, & illuſtris illius ordinis militem non creas*? *Why do ye not honour me with a Chain too, and create me a Knight of that Noble Order*?

6. Laſtly, ſhould Scoffs and Reproaches ſcare you from Chriſt and Duty; then, though you ſhould eſcape the Reproaches of men, yet ſhall you fall under the everlaſting Contempt of God, Angels and good Men Therefore, *Fear ye not Reproaches of men that ſhall die, nor be afraid of their revilings, for the Morth ſhall eat them up like a Garment, and the Worm ſhall eat them like Wool, but my Righteouſneſs ſhall be for ever, and my Salvation from Generation to Generation*, Iſa. 51. 7, 8.

3. Mortifie your *inordinate affectation* of liberty, pleaſure, and delicate living. O let not a Priſon ſeem ſo formidable to you. It's true, as Chriſt told *Peter*, *John* 41. 18. *When thou waſt young, thou girdeſt thy ſelf, and walkeſt whither thou wouldſt; but when thou ſhalt be old, thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldeſt not.* You have now your liberty to go whither you will, and it's a precious mercy if well improved: The Birds of the Air (as one ſaith) had rather be in the Woods at liberty, though lean and hungry, than in a Golden Cage with the richeſt Fare. But yet, if God will call you to deny this alſo for Chriſt, ſee that you be ready to be bound as *Paul* was, and receive the Chain and Bonds of Chriſt with thankſgiving: To which end, conſider,

1. That the affliction, in ſuch caſes of Reſtraint, is more from within, than from without you. There's no place but may be delectable to you, if your heart be heavenly, and the preſence of God be ingaged with you. What a ſweet Night had *Jacob* at *Bethel*? *Paul* and *Silas* in the Stocks? See that precious *Letter* of *Pomponius Algerius*.

*Tranſtulit in cœlum Chriſti præſentia clauſtrum,*
*Quid faciet cœlo? quæ Cœlum jam creat antro.*
*It's your own Unbelief and Impatiency, that gives*
*you more trouble than the Condition.*

2. No *Keeper* can keep the *Comforter* from you, if you be the *Lord's Priſoners*, Act. 16. If they could bar out the *Spirit* from you, it would be a diſmal place indeed: But ordinarily, there the *Saints* have their cleareſt *Viſions* of *God*, and ſweeteſt *Preſence* of the *Spirit*: You are the Lord's *Freemen*, whilſt Mens *Priſoners*: All the World cannot deveſt you of the *ſtate of Liberty* Chriſt hath purchaſed for you, *John* 8. 36.

3. Though a *Priſon* look ſad and diſmal, yet it is not *Hell*: Oh bleſs God for that, that's a ſad *Priſon* indeed! Beloved, Men have their *Priſons*, and God hath his: *God's Priſon* is a *terrible Priſon*, indeed, Thouſands are now in Chains, 1 *Pet*. 3. 19. And there you deſerved to have been ſent long ago: If God exchange an *Hell* for a *Priſon*, have you any cauſe to complain?

4. How obdurate and cruel ſoever Men are to you, yet the *Lord Jeſus* is kind and tender-hearted to his *Priſoners*; he puts the kindneſſes that any ſhew them upon his own account, *Mat*. 25. 36. *He looks down from Heaven to hear the ſighings and groanings of his Priſoners*, Pſal. 102. 20. He will tenderly ſympathize with you in all your *Priſon-Straights and Troubles*.

5. A *Priſon* hath been hanſelled and perfumed by the beſt and holieſt of Men in all Ages, 1 *Kings* 22. 27. *Jer*. 32. 2. *Mat*. 4. 12. *Acts* 5. 18. and 26. 10. God hath made it a ſettled *School* of *Diſcipline* to them.

6. Should you, to avoid a *Priſon* commit a a Sin, inſtead of being Man's *Priſoner*, you ſhall be clapt up by God, for he hath a *Priſon* for your Souls even in this World, *Pſal*. 142.

7. And this is ten Thouſand times more dreadful, than any *Dungeon* in the World. Oh it's a *dark Priſon*! Not a *Cranny* to let in one *Beam of God's Countenance* upon your poor *Souls*. What a ſad exchange have you made then?

7. Conſider what a ground of Comfort GOD hath laid in that Word, *Rev*. 2. 10. to obviate the Fears and Terrours incident to us in ſuch a condition: God hath limited Satan and his Inſtruments, both for time, number, and all circumſtances of the Trial.

8. Laſtly, You do not know what a Mercy may be in it: It may be a time of retirement from the World, and the clamours and diſtractions that are abroad. Theſe days of Impriſonment may be your Holy-days; as a Priſoner of Chriſt once called them.

4. Get an Heart mortified to the exceſſive and inordinate love of Life: This, I confeſs, is the higheſt and hardeſt point of *Self-denial*, becauſe it wraps up all other *Self-Intereſts* in it. But yet Conſider,

Firſt, Though Life be very dear, yet Jeſus Chriſt is ten thouſand times dearer than thy Life: If thou be a Saint, he is the Life of thy Life, and the length of thy days; and in compariſon of him, and his glory, Saints ſhould, and have deſpiſed and ſlighted their Lives, *Luke* 14. 26. *Rev*. 12. 11.

Secondly, Die you muſt; and if by ſhrinking from Chriſt, you ſhould protract a miſerable Life for a few days longer, in the mean time loſing that *which is better than Life*, Pſal. 63. 3. *Mat.* 10. 39. Oh! when you lie upon your Death-bed, you will wiſh, that you had obeyed God's Call, and ſo have departed in peace.

Thirdly, if you have cordially Covenanted with Chriſt (as all ſincere Believers have done) then you have yielded up your Lives to him, to be diſpoſed of for his Glory, *Rom.* 14. 7. So that look, as Chriſt both lived and died for you; ſo, *ought you to live as Chriſt*: And all the Excellency you ſee in Life, conſiſts in that reference and ſubſerviency it hath to his Glory. I ſay then, if you have underſtandingly and cordially tranſacted in a Covenant way with him, your Care will not be ſo much how to ſhun death, as by what death you may moſt glorifie God, *John* 21. 19. And certainly, you can never lay them down upon a more honourable or comfortable Account than in his Cauſe, and for his Sake. It was a great trouble to *Luther*, that he carried his Blood to his Grave.

Fourthly, to die for Chriſt, is one of the higheſt Teſtifications of your Love to Chriſt, that you are capable of, *John* 13. 17. Yea, 'tis ſuch a Teſtification of your Love to the Lord Jeſus, as Angels are not capable of making.

Fifthly, Why ſhould you decline even a violent death for Chriſt, when as the bitterneſs of death is paſt, and there is no *Hell* following the *pale Horſe*? It cannot ſeparate you from Chriſt, *Rom.* 8. 38.

Sixthly, Think what a Death Chriſt ſuffered for you: In which the fullneſs of the Wrath both of God and Man meet together, ſo that he was ſore amazed; yet with deſire, did he deſire it for your ſakes.

7. Laſtly, Think what a Life you ſhall have with Chriſt, as ſoon as this is delivered up to, and for him, 2 *Tim.* 2. 12. It is but wink, and you ſhall ſee *God*.

Oh that theſe things might provoke you to follow on, and ply the Work of *Mortification.*

## CHAP. XI.

*Wherein is opened the ſingular advantage that ſuffering Saints have by their Skill and Inſight into the Methods and Myſteries of Satan's Temptation; ſome of thoſe Wiles of Satan opened, and Rules for the avoiding of the danger briefly preſcribed.*

THE hazards and dangers of Chriſtians in times of Perſecution, ariſe not ſo much from their Sufferings, as from the Temptations that always attend, and are by Satan planted upon their Sufferings: for the moſt part, Sufferings and Temptations go together, *Heb.* 11. 37. And therefore it behoves ſuch as are, or expect to be called to Sufferings, to dive into the myſteries of Temptations, and be well acquainted with the Enemies Deſigns upon them. So was *Paul*, and ſo he ſuppoſes all others to be, that ingage in the ſame Cauſe; *We are not ign rant of his Devices*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. There is a manifold advantage redounding to ſuffering Saints thereby.

1. He that is well acquainted with the methods of Temptation, will be the better able to deſcry the firſt approaches and beginning of it; and a Temptation diſcovered, is more than half conquered. It is a ſpecial Artifice of Satan, to ſhuffle in his Temptations as undiſcernable as may be into the Soul; for he knows, that *in vain is the Net ſpread in the ſight of any Bird*, Prov. 1. 17. And therefore he ordinarily makes a ſuffering Seaſon, to be a tempting Seaſon; becauſe Sufferings, like Fire to Iron, make it impreſſive and operable, they do ordinarily put the Soul into an hurry and diſtraction, and ſo gives him an advantage, to tempt the Soul with leſs ſuſpicion, and greater ſucceſs. But now, a skillful Chriſtian, that is acquainted with his Wiles, will diſcern when he begins to *enter into Temptation*; as Chriſt's Expreſſion is, *Luke* 22. 46. And ſo check the Temptation in its firſt Riſe, when it's weakeſt; and moſt eaſily broken. Doubtleſs one Reaſon why ſo many fall by temptation, is, becauſe it's got within them, and hath prevailed far, before it be diſcovered to be a Temptation.

2. He that is well acquainted with Satan's Methods of tempting, will not only diſcern it ſooner than another; but alſo knows his Work and Duty, and how to manage the Conflict with it, which is a great matter. There are many poor Souls that labour under ſtrong Temptations, and know not what to do: They go up and down complaining, from Chriſtian to Chriſtian, whilſt the Judicious Chriſtian plies the Terror of the *Throne of Grace* with ſtrong Cries. See 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. keeps up his Watch, *Luke* 22. 46. Countermines the Temptation, by aſſaulting that *Corruption* by endeavours of *Mortification*, which Satan aſſaults by Temptation, 1 *Cor.* 1. 9. 27.

3. Laſtly, To name no more; he that is beſt acquainted with *the myſtery of Temptation*, and can maintain his ground againſt it, he ſhall be the perſevering Chriſtian under Perſecutions, and the Victorious Chriſtian over them. Here lies the main deſign of Satan, in raiſing Perſecution againſt the Saints. It is not ſo much their Blood that he thirſteth after, as their fall by Temptation: And all Perſecutions are deſigned by him, to introduce his Temptations. Theſe work upon our Fear, and Fear drives us into his Trains and Snares, *Prov.* 29. 25. The Devil's work in raiſing Perſecution, is but as the Fowler's Work in beating the Buſh in the Night, when the Net is ſpread to take the Birds, which he can affright out of their Coverts. He that underſtands this, is not eaſily moved by the ſtrongeſt oppoſition from his Place and Duty; and ſo is like to prove the moſt conſtant and invincible Chriſtian in times of Perſecution.

Oh then how neceſſary is it, that ſince all Perſecutions are intended as means to promote Temptation: And that Skill and Inſight into theſe deſigns of Satan, ſo advantages as to fruſtrate his deſigns in both? I ſay, how neceſſary is it that you ſhould be all inſtructed wherein the Strength of temptation lies: As alſo how to reſiſt thoſe ſtrong and dangerous Temptations, which your Sufferings only are intended to uſher in, and make way for?

It will not be unſeaſonable or impertinent then in this Chapter to ſhew you; Firſt, wherein the force and efficacy of Temptations lieth; Secondly, what you are to do, when in a ſuffering Hour ſuch Temptation ſhall aſſault you. And firſt,

1. *Qu.* Wherein doth the efficacy and Power of Temptation lie?

*Sol.* I anſwer, It lies principally in three things:

1. In the kind and nature of the Temptation.

2. In the Craft and Policy of Satan in managing them.

3. In that ſecret Correſpondency, that Satan hath with our Corruptions.

1. It lies in the kind and nature of the Temptation it ſelf: For it's moſt certain, that all Temptations are not alike forcible and dangerous. Some are ordinarily more ſucceſsful than others; and ſuch are theſe that follow.

1. Strange and unuſual Temptations, I mean not ſuch as none have been troubled with before us; for there is not a Dart in Satan's Quiver, but hath been let fly at the Breaſts of other Saints, before it was levell'd at ours, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. But by ſtrange and unuſual, I mean ſuch as the People of GOD are but rarely troubled with, and poſſibly we were never exerciſed with before. Theſe are the more dangerous, becauſe they daunt and amaze the Soul, and ordinarily beget deſpondency, even as ſome ſtrange Diſeaſe would do that we know not what to make of, nor can learn that others have been ſick of.

2. Mark them for moſt dangerous Temptations, that are *adapted* and ſuited to your proper Sin, or *Evil Conſtitution*: For certainly that is the moſt dangerous nick and criſis of Temptation when it tries a Man there. Now if he be not truly Gracious, he falls by the Root irrecoverably, *Luke* 22. 5, 6. Or if ſincere, yet without ſpecial aſſiſtance, and extraordinary vigilance, he falls ſcandalouſly, 2 *Sam.* 11. 2. compared with 1 *Sam.* 16. 12.

3. When it is a *Spiritual Temptation*, which riſes undiſcernably out of a Chriſtian's Duties. This is the leſs ſuſpected, becauſe Temptations uſually come from the ſtrength and livelineſs of *Corruptions*; but this, from the Slaughter and Conqueſts we make of them. Duties, and Enlargements in them, which are the Poyſon of other Luſts, proves the Food and Fewel of this, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7, 8. And how much the more covert and cloſe any Temptation is, by ſo much the more dangerous it is.

2. The ſtrength and efficacy of temptation lies much in the skill and policy of Satan in the management of it: And hence they are called wiles, methods, and devices, 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. *Epheſ.* 6. 11. and himſelf an old Serpent, *Rev.* 12. 9. And amongſt the reſt of his deep and deſperate Stratagems theſe following are Remarkable.

1. In imploying ſuch inſtruments to manage his Temptations as are leaſt ſuſpected, and have the greateſt influence. *A Teacher*, *Gal.* 2. 14. *A Wife*, *Gen.* 3. 6. *Job.* 2. 9. *Friends*, *Acts* 21. 13. The Devil knows it is a bad buſineſs, and therefore muſt make the beſt of it; *Pauls* soreſt tryal was by his deareſt Friends.

2. In the orderly diſpoſition and ranging of his Temptatations; beginning with little things firſt, and then by degrees working over to greater. His firſt motions are commonly moſt modeſt, *Gen.* 3. 1. Should he diſcover the Depth of his deſign at firſt, it would ſtartle the Soul, and make it reply as *Haſael*, *Am I a Dog that I ſhould do thus*? It's far eaſier to gain his end by parts, then putting for all at once.

3. In endeavouring to engage the Soul upon his own ground. I mean to tempt him from his Station and Duty where God ſets, and expects to find him. He knows while you are with God, God is with you, 2 *Chro.* 15. 2. Whilſt a man abides there he abides with God, 1 *Cor.* 7. 24. Whilſt he is there, the Promiſe is a good breaſtwork to keep off all his darts: And therefore as Fiſhes, when they have ſpread their Net in the River, beat the Fiſhes out of their Coverts and Caverns; ſo doth Satan.

4. In not preſenting the Temptation, till the Soul be prepared to receive it. He loves to ſtrike when the iron is hot. He firſt lets their troubles come to an height, brings them to the Priſon, Gibbit or fire, and then offers them deliverance, *Heb.* 11. 35, 37.

5. In tiring our Souls with the long continuance of temptations. What he cannot win by a *ſuddain ſtorm*, he hopes to gain by a *tedious ſiege*. Forty days together he aſſaulted the Captaim of our Salvation, *Mark.* 1. 13. And truly it's a wonder the Soul yields not at laſt, that hath been tried long, *Pſal.* 125. 3. When the *rod of the wicked lies long upon the back of the righteous, it is much if he put not forth his hand to iniquity.*

6. In falling moſt violently upon them, when they are loweſt and moſt proſtrate in their Spirits and comforts: So he aſſaulted *Job* with a Temptation to curſe God and die, when he ſat in that deplorable ſtate upon the Dunghil, *Job.* 2. 8, 9. He loves to fall upon us as *Simeon* and *Levi* did upon the *Sechemites* when we are ſore and wounded: And therefore ordinarily you find times of *divine deſertions*, to be times of *Diabolical temptations*. So that look as the wild Beaſts of the Deſart come out of their Dens in the night, and then roar after their prey, *Pſal.* 104. 20. So doth Satan when the Soul ſeems to be benighted and loſt in the darkneſs of ſpiritual troubles.

And this is the ſecond thing wherein the Efficacy and Strength of Temptation lies.

3. Laſtly, it lies in that ſecret correſpondency Satan holds with our boſome enemies. Were it not for this *domeſtick Traitor*, he could not ſurprize us ſo eaſily: As you ſee in *Chriſt*; he could do nothing becauſe he found nothing to faſten a temptation on. He was

like a *Chryſtal Glaſs* filled with pure Fountain water: So that though he ſhould have been agitated and ſhaken never ſo much by temptation, yet no filthy ſediment could appear; but now we have an enemy within that holds intelligence with Satan without; and this would prove a *Devil* to us, if there were no other *Devil* to tempt us, *Sam.* 1. 14, 15. Its a Fountain of temptation in it ſelf. *Mat.* 15. 19. and the chief inſtrument by which Satan doth all his tempting work, *Pet.* 1. 4.

Our ſeveral paſſions and affections are the handles of his temptations. Every thing ſaith *Epictetus* hath δύο λάβας, two handles to take it by. Our affections are the handles of our Souls. The temptation of Self-confidence, and Pride, takes hold of a during and forward diſpoſition; the temptation of Apoſtacy upon a timerous diſpoſition, *&c.* Theſe imbred luſts go over to the Enemy in the day of Battle and fight againſt the Soul, 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. This is a more dangerous Enemy than the Devil. 'Tis true, they both work againſt us, but with a double difference. Satan works *externally* and *objectively*; but Luſt *internally*, and *Phyſically*, i. e. *quoad materiale*, as it's capable of Phyſical Efficiency. *Sin wrought in me all manner of Concupiſcence*, *Rom.* 7. 8. Yea, 'tis a ſubtil Enemy that doth his Buſineſs politickly. *Rom.* 7. 11. *Sin deceived me*; it betrays with a Kiſs, ſtrangles with a *ſilken Halter*, *Heb.* 3. 13. *Eph.* 4. 22. Theſe be his Agents ſitting at the *Council Table* in our own Breaſts, and there carrying on his Deſigns effectually: Yea, it's the reſtleſs and perpetual Enemy, no ridding of your Hands of him. Satan is ſometimes put to flight by reſiſtance, *Jam.* 4. 7. and ſometimes ceaſes his Temptations, *Luke* 4. 13. But when he ceaſeth to tempt and *inject*, this ceaſeth not not to irritate and ſollicite: Where we are, it will be; it's our ſad lot to be tied to it, and perpetually aſſaulted by it, *Rom.* 7. 24. We may ſay of it as *Hanibal* ſaid of *Marcellus*, That it's never quiet, whether a *Conquerour*, or conquered. Yea, it is a Potent Enemy too, it hauls Men away to the commiſſion of Sin, *Jam.* 1. 14. It ſeizeth the Magazine of the Soul, and delivers up the Arms, I mean the Members to be ὅπλα ἀδικίας, weapons of Unrighteouſneſs.

Thus you ſee wherein the efficacy and power of Temptation conſiſts. And it mightily concerns you that are, or expect to be Sufferers for Chriſt, to be acquainted with theſe things, and know where the ſtrength of your Enemy lies.

But how ſhall the ſuffering Saint ſo manage himſelf in a ſuffering hour, as not to be captivated by Temptations? This brings me upon the ſecond thing I promiſed; *viz.* to preſcribe ſome Rules for the eſcaping or conquering of thoſe Temptations that are incidental to a ſuffering State. And firſt:

1 *Rule.* Labour to cut off the advantages of Temptation before they come. It's our inordinate love to Life, Eſtate, Liberty, and Eaſe, that gives the Temptations ſo much Strength upon us. Do not over-value them, and you will more eaſily part from them, *Rev.* 12. 11. O mortifie Self-love, and Creature-love; let your Heart be looſened and weaned from them, and then the Temptation hath loſt its Strength.

2. *Rule.* Secure to your ſelves an Intereſt in the Heavenly Glory. When once you clearly ſee your Propriety in the Kingdom above, you will ſet the lighter and lower by all things on Earth. That is a pregnant Text to this purpoſe, *Heb.* 10. 34. It's our darkneſs and uncertainties, about thoſe, that make us cling ſo faſt to theſe.

3 *Rule.* Settle this Principle in your Heart, as that which you will never depart from, That it's better for you to fall into any Suffering, than into the leaſt Sin, *Heb.* 11. 24, 25. This all will acknowledge, but how few practice it! Oh that you would practically underſtand and receive it! Sufferings is but a *reſpective*, *external*, and *Temporal* Evil; but Sin is an univerſal, internal, and everlaſting Evil.

4 *Rule.* Believe that God hath curſed and blaſted all the ways of Sin, that they ſhall never be a ſhelter to any Soul that flies for refuge to them, *Mark* 8. 35. *Prov.* 13. 15. The way of Tranſgreſſors is an hard and difficult way. There is no ſecurity in the way of Iniquity. He that runs from Suffering to Sin, runs from the ſeeming to the real danger; from the painted, to the living Lion.

5 *Rule.* Live up to this Principle, that there is no Policy like Sincerity and Godly Simplicity. This will preſerve and ſecure you, when Carnal Wiſdom will expoſe and betray you. *Pſal.* 25. 2. *Job* 2. 3. Sinful Policy never thrives with Saints.

6 *Rule.* Conſider ſadly what the Conſequence of yielding up your ſelves to Temptations will be: The Name of God will be dreadfully reproached, 2 *Sam.* 12. 14. A fatal Stumbling-Block is laid before the blind World, 1 *Sam.* 2. 36. The Hearts of many upright ones made ſad, *Pſal.* 25. 3. The fall of a Profeſſor is as when a Standard-bearer fainteth; and a dreadful Wound it will be to thine one Conſcience, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. *Math* 25. 76. One hours Sleep of Security, may keep you many days and nights waking upon the rack of Horrour.

7. *Rule.* Never engage a Temptation in your own Strength, but go forth againſt it trembling in your ſelves, and relying on Divine Aids and Aſſiſtances, *Epheſ.* 6. 10. What are you to grapple with Spirits, to enter the Liſts with *Principalities and Powers*? Or what is your ſtrength that you ſhould hope?

8 *Rule.* Let the days of your Temptation, be days of ſtrong cries and ſupplications. Thus did *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. *Pſal.* 109. 4. Your beſt poſture to wreſtle with Temptation, is upon your Knees.

9 *Rule.* Dwell upon the conſideration of thoſe choice Encouragements God hath laid up in the World for ſuch a time. As (1) though he give Satan leave to tempt you, yet you are ſtill in his Hand to preſerve you, *Deut.* 33. 3. *Joh.* 10. 28. (2) That whilſt Satan is ſifting and trying you on Earth, Chriſt is interceeding for you in Heaven, *Luke* 22. 31, 32. (3) That an eternal reward is laid up for thoſe that overcome,

*Luke* 22. 28, 29. *Rev.* 21. 7, 8. And now is this reward to be won or loſt.

Laſtly, Be content till God open a door out of your Temptations, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. The time of the Promiſe will come, *Acts* 7. 17. Wait for it, though it tarry, and ſeem to be deferred; in the end it will ſpeak, and not lie, *Hab.* 3. There was a ſecret door in the Ark, though it could not be ſeen whilſt the Waters prevailed: And ſo there is in all your Temptations, though at preſent it be not diſcernable by you.

And thus I have brought you one ſtep nearer to *Paul*'s bleſſed Frame. O give diligence to make your ſelves ready for ſufferings.

## CHAP. XII.

*Sheweth that a choice part of our preparation and readineſs for Sufferings conſiſts in the improvement of our praying abilities, and keeping cloſe with God in that Heavenly and Excellent Duty in days of Suffering; wherein alſo of the nature, and means of its improvement.*

Prayer is ſaid to be amongſt Duties, as Faith is amongſt the Graces. Doubtleſs it is of ſpecial uſe and ſervice at all times to a Chriſtian: But yet in ſuffering days it is of more than ordinary uſe and neceſſity, *Heb.* 4. 16. *Jam.* 5. 13. And therefore it is reckoned among thoſe choice pieces of Armour which ſuffering Saints are to put on, *Eph.* 6. 18. I will here briefly diſcover the neceſſity of it, and then ſhew you that a Chriſtian may improve himſelf to an excellent degree in it; and laſtly preſcribe ſome means for an improvement.

The neceſſity of it to a ſuffering Saint will demonſtratively appear, if you conſider;

1. That this duty is the out-let of troubles, and the beſt way the poor Chriſtian hath to eaſe his Heart when ſurcharged with Sorrow. Griefs are eaſed by Groans. Such Evaporations disburthen and cool the heart, as the opening of a Vein in ſome caſes doth. Oh the ſenſible eaſe that comes in this way! When Grief in the Mind, like Vapours in the Air, are condenſed into black Clouds, that over-ſpread the Soul, and darken that beautiful Light that once ſhone there, then Prayer like the Sun diſpels and ſcatters them. 1 *Sam.* 1. 18. Many a Saint by Prayer have ſucked the breaſt of a Promiſe, and then fell aſleep by Divine Contentment in the Boſom of God. A time may come, when thy Heart is ready to break with Trouble, and not a Friend to whom thou canſt open and eaſe it, and then bleſſed be God for Prayer, *Micah* 7. 5, 6, 7. That which ſinks others is, That when troubles fill and overwhelm their Hearts, they try what reaſon, merry Company, or outward Comforts can do: But alas! this is to palliate a Cure, it returns again with the more violence: But Prayer gives ſenſible relief, *Pſal.* 102. *title Pſal.* 62. 8. For firſt this opens and gives a vent to troubles. *Jer.* 20. 12. (2) It gives our troubles a diverſion, and ſo a Cure, *Pſal.* 5. 1. and the laſt *Verſe* compared. Yea (3) by praying over them, they are not only diverted but Sanctified, and ſo ceaſe to be diſtracting, or deſtroying Troubles.

2. As it gives a vent to our Troubles, ſo an in-let to unſpeakable Comforts and Conſolations. See a pregnant Inſtance of this, *Act.* 16. 25. For (1.) hereby they obtain gracious Anſwers from the Lord concerning their Troubles, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. In this alſo they meet the gracious Smiles of God which ſwallowed up their Troubles, *Pſal.* 85. 8. And laſtly, hereby they prevail with God to open a ſeaſonable, and effectual door out of all their Troubles, *Pſal.* 34. 4, 6.

3. Prayer begets and maintains holy courage and magnanimity in evil times; when all things about you tend to diſcouragement: It is your being with Jeſus that makes you bold, *Acts* 4. 13. He that uſes to be before a great God, will not be afraid to look ſuch little things as Men are in the Face. The Woman cloathed with the Sun, had the Moon under her Feet. And what need you have of Courage in evil times, hath been already ſhewed.

4. This is a duty you may perform at any time, or in any condition: No Adverſary can cut you off from it. It cannot be ſaid ſo of many other Duties. None can hinder the Intercourſe betwixt Heaven and your Souls. You may perform it in a Priſon, *Acts* 16. 25. in a baniſhed condition, *Pſal.* 61. 2. And ſo is fitted for a Suffering Condition.

Laſtly, you muſt ſtrive to excel in this, foraſmuch as no Grace within, or Service without can thrive without it. God hath ordained the whole work of Grace to grow up to Perfection this way, *Jud.* 19. 20. He will have all Mercies fetched out this way, *Ezek.* 36. 37. *Jer.* 29. 11, 12, 13. All that comes from God to you, or to you from God, muſt come in this Channel. Be convinced then of the need you have to improve your ſelves herein, as ever you hope to ſtand in the evil day.

But how are theſe praying Abilities capable of Improvement in the People of God?

Praying Abilities are either external and common, or elſe internal and ſpecial: The external and common Ability is nothing elſe but that dexterity and skill Men get to expreſs themſelves to God in Prayer. Thus many can put their meaning into apt and decent Expreſſions, to which the Spirit ſometimes adds his common touches upon the Affections. And this Hypocrites reſt and glory in: Or elſe they are ſpecial and Internal, whereby Men are enabled to pour out their Souls to God in a gracious manner. And this may be conſidered either in the Habit or the Act. The Habit is given by the Spirit, when the Principles of Grace are firſt infuſed into the Soul, *Zech.* 12. 10. *Acts* 9. 11. By being ſanctified we are made near, and by acting thoſe principles in Prayer we are ſaid to draw near to our actual drawing near to God, the Spirit hath the chief and principal Hand: And his aſſiſtance therein is three-fold.

1. He excites the Heart to the duty; 'tis that whiſpers to the Soul to draw nigh to God, *Pſal.* 27. 8.

2. He ſuggeſts the matter of our Prayers and furniſheth us with the materials, *Rom.* 8. 26. Guiding us as to the matter, not only to what is lawful, but alſo to what is expedient for us.

3. He ſtirreth up ſuitable affections in Prayer, *Rom.* 8. 26. And hence thoſe Groans and Tears, thoſe gaſpings and vehement anhelations. But notwithſtanding all our Abilities, both Habitual and Actual, be from the Spirit, and not from your ſelves, yet are they capable of improvement by us: For though in reſpect of acquirement, there be a great difference betwixt natural and ſupernatural Habits, yet their improvement is in the ſame way and manner; and this improvement may be made divers ways. For,

Firſt, Though you have the Spirit and can pray, yet you may learn to pray more humbly than before: Though you riſe no higher as to words, yet you may learn to lay your ſelves lower before the Lord, as *Abraham* and *Ezra* did, *Gen.* 18. 27. *Ezra* 9. 6.

Secondly, You may learn to pray with more ſincerity than formerly: Ah! there is much *Hypocriſie* and *Formality* in our *Prayers*, much of Cuſtom, *&c.* Now, you may learn to pour out more *Cordial Prayers.* See *Pſal.* 17. 1. *Pſal.* 119. 10.

Thirdly, You may learn to pray with more zeal and earneſtneſs than before: Some Saints have excelled, and been remarkable for this, *Dan.* 9. 19. *Hoſ.* 12. 4. *Jam.* 5. 16.

Fourthly, with more aſſiduity and readineſs at all times for it, *Epheſ.* 6. 18. *Praying always*, with all Prayer. Hence Chriſt gives that Commendation to the Church, *Cant.* 4. 11. *Thy Lips, O my Spouſe, drop as the Hony Comb.* The *Hony Comb* often Drops, but always hangs full of drops ready to fall.

Fifthly, You may learn to pray with more Faith: Oh the qualms of Unbelief, that go over our Hearts in a Duty; Faith is the Soul of Prayer, and according to the Faith God finds in them, he accepts and values them. Now in all theſe things you may improve your ſelves abundantly.

1. By being more frequent in the duty, *Job.* 22. 21. acquaint thy ſelf with the Almighty; in the *Hebrew* it is, *accuſtom thy ſelf*: Thoſe that have been excellent, have alſo been abundant in it, *Pſal.* 15. 17.

2. By taking heed that you grieve not the Spirit, on whoſe influences and aſſiſtances, you ſo intirely depend: Even as much as a Ship doth upon the Gales of Wind for its motion.

3. By honouring the Spirit which enables you to pray, and that eſpecially two ways; (1) By dependance on him; go not forth in your own ſtrength to the duty, truſt not upon your promptneſs, or preparations. (2) By returning and with thankfulneſs aſcribing the Praiſe of all to him; Be humble under all Enlargements: Say, *Not I, but Grace.*

4. By ſearching your own Hearts, and examining your neceſſities and wants, when you draw nigh to God; this will be a Fountain of Matter, and give you a deep Reſentment of the worth of Mercies prayed for.

5. Laſtly, By looking more at the exerciſe of Graces, and leſs at the diſcovery of Parts; by labouring for impreſſions more, and pumping for expreſſions leſs. And thus I have briefly ſhewed you, how to furniſh your ſelves with this needful Qualification alſo.

## CHAP. XIII.

*Wherein is ſhewed the neceſſity of going out of our ſelves, even when our habitual and actual Preparations are at the greateſt height; and depending as conſtantly and intirely upon the Spirit, who is Lord of all gracious Influences, as if we had done nothing: Together with the means of Working the Heart to ſuch a Frame.*

THus you have ſeen your habitual and actual readineſs for Sufferings, and bleſſed is the Soul that gives diligence to this Work: But now, leſt all that I have ſaid, and you have wrought, ſhould be in vain; I muſt let you know, that all this will not ſecure you, unleſs you can by Humility, Faith, and Self-denial, go out of your ſelves to Chriſt, and live upon him daily for ſupply of Grace, as much as if you had none of all this Furniture and Proviſion for Sufferings. I confeſs, Grace is a very beautiful and lovely Creature, and it's hard for a Man to look upon his own Graces, and not dote upon them. But yet know, that if you had all theſe excellent preparations that have been mentioned, yea, and all Angelical Perfections ſuperadded, yet are you not complete without this dependance upon Chriſt, *Col.* 2. 10 When ever you go forth to ſuffer for Chriſt, you ſhould ſay in the Head of all your excellent Graces, Duties, and Preparations, as *Jehoſaphat* did, when in the Head of a Puiſant and Mighty Army, 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. *O Lord, I have no might nor ſtrength, but my eyes are unto thee.* This was one thing in which *Paul* excelled, and was a ſpecial part of his readineſs. See 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. What a poor Creature is the eminenteſt Saint, left to himſelf in an hour of trial, the *Hop*, the *Ivy* and the *Woodbind*, are taught by nature to cling about ſtronger Props and Supporters: What they do by Nature, we ſhould do by Grace.

The neceſſity and great Advantage of this, will appear upon divers Conſiderations.

1. *Conſid.* 1. The Chriſtians own imbecillity and inſufficiency even in the ſtrength and height of all his Acquirements and preparations: What are you, to grapple with ſuch an Adverſary? Certainly, you are no Match for him that conquered *Adam* hand to hand in his ſtate of Integrity. It is not your inherent ſtrength that enables you to ſtand, but what you receive, and daily derive from Jeſus Chriſt, *Joh.* 15. 5. *Without me*, or never ſo little ſeparated from me, *ye can do nothing, all your ſufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. 3. 5. Upon this very conſideration it was, that the Apoſtle exhorts the *Epheſians*, *to be ſtrong in the*

*Lord, and in the power of his might*, (i. e.) not to depend upon their own ſtock and furniture, but Divine Aſſiſtances, and daily Communications; *for we wreſtle not with fleſh and blood, but Principalities and Powers*, Epheſ. 6. 10, 12. In his own ſtrength ſhall no Man prevail.

2. *Conſid.* It is the great deſign of God in the Goſpel, to exalt his Son, and to have all glory attributed and aſcribed to him, *That in all things be might have the preheminence*, Col. 1. 13. That Chriſt *might be all in all*, Col. 3. 11. Hence, no Saint muſt have a ſelf-ſufficiency, or be truſted with a ſtock as *Adam* was, but Chriſt being filled with all the fulneſs of God, and made the πρῶτον δεκτικὸν, or firſt Receptacle of all Grace: *For it pleaſed the Father, that in him all fulneſs ſhould dwell*; all the Saints are therefore to go to him for ſupplies, and of his fulneſs to receive, *John.* 1. 16. This fulneſs being a *Miniſterial fulneſs*, like that of the Sun, or of a Fountain, intended to ſupply all our wants. And hence is it that Faith, a ſelf-emptying and denying Grace, is appointed to be the inſtrument of fetching our ſupplies from Chriſt. All muſt be derived from him, that all the Praiſe and Glory may be aſcribed to him, *Phil.* 4. 14. And this is a moſt wiſe and congruous Ordination of God, for hereby not only are his People the better ſecured, but by this alſo, the reproach that lay upon Chriſt is rolled away. He was reproached on Earth, as Barren, Empty, Weak; *Can any good come out of* Nazareth? He was looked upon as a *Root ſpringing out of a dry ground*, but by this ſhall his Reproach be wiped away: So that unleſs you will go about to croſs the great deſign of God, in the Exaltation of his Chriſt, you muſt go out of your ſelves, and humbly, and conſtantly rely upon ſupplies from Chriſt, and his grace, to help in the times of need.

3. *Conſid.* A Chriſtian is conſtantly to depend upon Chriſt, notwithſtanding all his own Preparations, and inherent qualifications, becauſe the activity even of inherent Grace depends upon him. Inherent Grace is beholding to exciting and aſſiſting Grace for all it is enabled to do. You cannot act a Grace without his Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. *John* 15. 5. It may be ſaid of Grace in us, as it was of the Land of *Canaan*, Deut. 11. 10, 11, 12. *It is not as the land of* Egypt *whence ye came out, where thou ſowedſt thy ſeed, and wateredſt it with thy foot, as a Garden of Herbs: But a Land of Hills and Vallies, drinking water of the Rain of Heaven, a Land which the Lord thy God cared for: his Eyes are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even to the end of the year.* As the life and fragrancy of Vegetables, depends on the Influences of Heaven, ſo do our Graces upon Chriſt. And hence, he is called, (1) A Root, *Iſa.* 11. 10. (2) An Head, *Col.* 1. 18. (3) A Sun, *Mal.* 4. 2. (4) A Fountain, *Zech.* 13. 1. all which Compariſons do fully carry this Truth in them.

4. *Conſid.* Laſtly in this life of dependance lies your ſecurity; And indeed this is the great difference, betwixt the two *Covenants*: In the firſt, *Adam's* ſtock was in his own hands, and ſo his Security or Miſery depended upon the unconſtrained choice of his own mutable and ſelf determining Will. But now in the New Covenant, all are to go to Chriſt, to depend upon him for ſupplies, and are ſo ſecured againſt all deſtructive dangers, *Jude* 1. 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. Should you go forth in your own ſtrength againſt a Temptation; either your grace would fail, and you fall in the Conflict: Or if you obtain any Victory over it by your own ſtrength, yet 'tis a thouſand to one but your Pride would conquer you, when you had conquered it: Like him that ſlew an *Elephant*, but was himſelf ſlain by the fall of that *Elephant* which he ſlew. But now, by this way, as God hath ſecured you againſt the Dangers without; ſo alſo the frame and conſtitution of this New Covenant is ſuch, as prevents the danger ariſing from our own Pride too. Not *Ego & Deus meus*; I and my God did this: as was once ſaid by a Prophane Mouth; *But ſelf is abaſed, and the Lord lifted up in his own ſtrength*, 1 Cor. 47. And thus I have briefly evinced the neceſſity of this daily Dependance.

But next it concerns you to know, what this dependance we ſpeak of is: This alſo I ſhall briefly open to you, laying down ſomewhat *negatively*, and ſomewhat *poſitively* about it.

1. *Neg.* It is not to deny the Grace wrought in us by the Spirit; this were both injuſtice and ingratitude: We may know our own graces ſo, as to be thankful for them, tho' not ſo as to be proud of them, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10.

2 *Neg.* It is not a lazy excuſe from our duty: You do not *depend*, but rather *diſhonour* Chriſt by ſo doing; you muſt not ſay, becauſe Chriſt muſt do all, therefore I muſt do nothing; but rather work out your Salvation, becauſe it's he that worketh both to will and to do, *Phil.* 2. 12, 13. Theſe are not *oppoſed*, but *ſubbordinated*.

But then poſitively, it lies in Three things.

1 *Poſit.* In ſeeing and acknowledging the infinite ſufficiency and fulneſs that is in Chriſt: To acknowledge him to be all in all; not only by way of *Impetration* procuring all, *Heb.* 9. 12. But alſo by way of *Application*, bringing home to the Soul all the Bleſſings purchaſed by his Blood, and ſettling us in the poſſeſſion of it, *John* 14. 3. And ſo from firſt to laſt to eye him as the Author and Finiſher of our Faith.

2 *Poſit.* In ſeeing the neceſſary dependance that all our Graces have upon him. That look as you ſee the Stream depending on the Fountain, the Beam upon the Sun, the Branch upon the Root, the building upon the Foundation, even ſo do our Graces upon Chriſt: On him they live, and cut off from him they die. *Our life is hid with Chriſt in God*, Col. 3. 3. When you ſee this, and alſo ſee that all your activity and ſtriving is but as the hoyſting up of the Sails, in order to the motion of the Ship, which can do nothing till there come a Gale: When you look upon your Grace as a Creature that muſt be upheld, fed, acted and preſerved by Chriſt, *Col.* 2. 19. Then you are prepared for this act of dependance: As for Inſtance, you can never depend upon Chriſt for the acting of that Grace of Hope,

until you ſee Chriſt to be the Prop and Foundation of it, and that it depends upon him as upon its cauſe; 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. as upon its object, *Heb.* 6. 19. and as upon its *foundation* and ground Work, *Col.* 1. 27.

You can never depend upon Chriſt for your joy and comfort, until you ſee what a neceſſary dependance this alſo hath upon him, *Phil.* 3. 3. And that both as to its being and acting, *John* 16. 22.

You can never depend upon him for ſtrength in any Duty, until you ſee how your Duties depend upon Chriſt, not only for the *ſtrength* by which they are performed, *John* 15. 4, 5. But alſo for *Acceptation* when they are performed, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. It were eaſie to inſtance in any other Grace.

(3.) It lies in * looking off from your own Grace when ever you are put upon the acting of it, (I mean in regard of any dependance upon it) and looking by an eye of Faith for acceptation to Chriſt, *Heb.* 12. 2. To the putting forth of which acts of Dependance upon Chriſt, holy Ejaculations in our on-ſets upon duty, or thoſe quick and vigorous lifting up of our Souls to God that way, are of ſpecial uſe, it being a Duty fitted for the purpoſe, when there is no room for ſet and ſolemn Prayer, and thus briefly of its nature.

* Ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν, Looking off to the Author of our Faith.

And to urge you to this Duty, I ſhall offer theſe Seven Conſiderations; which, Oh, that they might prevail upon your Hearts, and make you for ever to claſp and cling about Chriſt more than ever you have done.

1 *Conſid.* You have little reaſon to rely upon the ſtrength of your own Graces, for you may eaſily be deceived in that matter, and think you have much more Grace than you have. How often are the common Gifts of the Spirit miſtaken for his ſpecial Graces! The Sixth Chapter to the *Hebrews* is able to make a Man Tremble in this thing.

2 *Conſid.* Suppoſe you have much Grace, yet have you not ſtrong Corruptions, and may you not meet with ſtrong Temptations alſo? He that hath leſs of other Graces than you, may have more Humility and Self-denial than you, and ſo may ſtand when you fall. Great inlargements are often attended with great Temptations of Pride. *&c.*

3 *Conſid.* Whatever meaſures of Grace you have arrived at, yet all is not able to ſecure you from falling, if God with-hold or withdraw his Aids and Influences. *Abraham* had more Faith than you, and yet he fell into a ſin contrary to that very Grace wherein he ſo excelled others, *Gen.* 20. 2. *Job* had more Patience than you; which of you could behave your ſelves as he did, had you been in the like circumſtances as he was, *Chap.* 1. 2. He is renowned for it in the Scripture, *Jam.* 5. 11. yet he fell into that ſin which was contrary to this Grace alſo, *Chap.* 3. *Moſes* had more *meekneſs* than you: *Now the Man* Moſes *was the meekeſt Man upon the Earth.* If you be but reproved, and that juſtly for your faults, how Waſpiſh are you? Yet ſee how this Grace failed even in him, in an eminent trial of it, *Numb.* 11. 13, 14, 15. *Adam* was much more advantaged in this reſpect than you, being made upright, and no corruption inherent in him, yet he fell: The *Angels* more again, yet they fell. Oh when will you learn the vanity of ſelf-dependance!

4 *Conſid.* Nothing more provoketh the Lord to withdraw his Spirit, and let you fall, than this ſin of ſelf-confidence doth, *Luke* 14. 29, 30, 31. God will teach you by ſad experience your own weakneſs, and what frail and vain things you be, if you will learn it by no other means.

5 *Conſid.* If God permit you to fall (as doubtleſs he will if you be ſelf-conceited) then the more eminent you have been, or are for Grace, the more will the Name of God be Reproached by your fall. This will furniſh the Triumphs of the Uncircumciſed, and the Lamentations of your Brethren, and make them ſay, *How are the mighty fallen*! What diſmal conſequents will attend your fall!

6 *Conſid.* Have you not ſad experience of your own weakneſs from day to day in your leſſer trials? Have you not ſaid in ſome ſmaller conflicts, as *David* once did? *My Feet were well nigh ſlipt.* O methinks this ſhould teach you to look more to *God*, and leſs to ſelf. *If you have run with Footmen, and they have wearied you in the Land of peace,* think ſadly how *you ſhould contend with Horſes in the ſwellings of* Jordan. Do not you ſee that you are but Feathers in the Wind of Temptation? Conſult your former experiences, and they will tell you what weaklings you are.

7 *Conſid.* Laſtly, Hath Chriſt given you more Grace than others, then how much more hath he obliged you to honour him thereby? And is this your Requital of his love? What to take the Crown from his Head, and put it upon your own! Certainly a greater injury cannot be done to Chriſt than this.

Well then, by all this be perſwaded to ceaſe from your ſelves, yea from your Religious ſelves; and to all other your preparations, add this as a choice one; If you do theſe things, you ſhall never fall: And thus you ſee the compleat Chriſtian in his Equipage for Sufferings.

## CHAP. XIV.

*Containing the firſt uſe of the point by way of conviction, diſcovering the unreadineſs of multitudes of Profeſſors for ſuffering-work.*

YOU have ſeen by all that hath been ſpoken, what the neceſſary perquiſites unto a ſuffering condition are; and what manner of perſons you muſt be (both for habitual and actual readineſs) if ever you honour Chriſt by Bonds or Death for him. And I doubt not but your Judgments and Conſciences yield to the evident neceſſity of theſe things, wherein I have placed the Chriſtians readineſs. But alas! Where ſhall we find among the throngs and crowds of Profeſſors, any conſiderable numbers thus qualified and prepared? To ſuffer for Chriſt, is a gift that few have received. We are fall'n into the dregs of time. Oh how little of the Primitive zeal and ſimplicity remains among the Profeſſors of this Age! Latter times have produced a ſort of Profeſſors of another ſtamp and Spirit. Theſe have the *Light*, but they had the *love* : theſe *ſee* more, but they *did* and *ſuffered* more. How many that are no ornament to religion, do adorn themſelves with the name of it!

Now according to this account given of a ready Chriſtian, divers profeſſing perſons will be convicted of their unreadineſs and inability to manage ſuffering work : As firſt,

1. The politick and hypocritical Profeſſors, whoſe hearts were never *ſet right* at firſt, and therefore cannot be *ſtedfaſt* when trials come, *Pſal.* 78. 8. Their hearts were never *ſound in Gods ſtatutes*, and therefore no wonder if they be not only a *ſhame to*, but *aſhamed of* their profeſſion, *Pſal.* 119. 80. Never wonder if you ſee that profeſſion which began in *hypocriſie*, to end in *apoſtacy*. Theſe want their habitual readineſs for ſufferings, and ſo cannot drink of that Cup : Needs muſt they fall when tried ; and when they fall, they fall dreadfully, and often irrecoverably, for they neither have the *ſeed of God in them*, nor any *promiſe* of God made to them.

And are there not many ſuch to be found in every place? For (1) how difficult is it to perſwade many of you to any duty that hath loſs or hazard attending on it. Doth not the ſincere heart ſtand inclinable and diſpoſed to all the known will of God? *Pſal.* 119. 6. Do Chriſtians uſe to enquire more what is cheap, eaſie, and ſafe for them, or what is their duty? *Gal.* 1. 16. Speak Conſcience, for to thee do I appeal ; Art thou not conſcious of ſome reſerves, limitations, and exceptions? Doth not the man like *Naaman* deſire the Lord to excuſe and pardon him in this or that thing? 2 *Kings* 5. 17. And thinkeſt thou that this is conſiſtent with ſincere obedience which excepts no duty, nor quarrels with any command, becauſe they all flow equally from the Soveraignty of God? *Jam.* 2. 11. And ſo doth what it doth *intuitu voluntatis*, upon the ſight of Gods Will. Say Conſcience, are there not great ſtruglings, diſputes and conteſts betwixt thee, and fleſhly intereſts in ſuch caſes? And art thou not frequently over-born? Oh ſearch your hearts in this particular.

Yea, ſecondly, I appeal to you, whether there be not many among you that chooſe ſin rather than affliction? This is always the Hypocrites option and choice : He judges ſufferings the greateſt evils, and ſo orders himſelf in his election. It was meerly to avoid perſecution that thoſe Hypocrites, *Gal.* 6. 12. conſtrained others to be circumciſed, only to gratifie the *Jews* ; that ſo by a ſinful compliance with them, the offence of the Croſs might ceaſe. If *Paul* would have done ſo, he might have avoided it too, but he durſt not whatever he ſuffered, *Gal.* 5. 11. Oh this is a ſhrewd ſign of a falſe heart, *Job.* 36. 21. And the contrary diſpoſition is always found in the upright heart, *Heb.* 11. 25.

Nay, are there not ſome that have, and others that are ready to throw up their Profeſſion, when they ſee into what difficulties it involves them? Whilſt they could live upon the Profeſſion of Truth, they entertained it ; but when Truth comes to live upon them, they thruſt it out, and cry, Away with this Profeſſion, it will beggar and undo us : They then repent of their forwardneſs, and ſecretly wiſh they had never ingaged in it. O examine whether your hearts be not thus turned back, and your ſteps declined. If ſo, it's manifeſt you are hypocritical Profeſſors, and that it was ſome outward ſelf-reſpect that firſt ingaged you in your Profeſſion, but can never enable you to hold out when difficult days come. I ſay it's manifeſt by this departure from your profeſſion, that ſome outward ſelf-reſpect at firſt allured you to it. As now, when I behold the artificial motions of the Wheels in a *Watch*, and ſee how regularly the Needle marks the journal hours of the Sun upon the flat of the *Quadrant*, and ſee nothing that moves or guides it ; It would cauſe admiration if I had never ſeen it before, or did not underſtand the cauſe of that motion : but when I look upon the other ſide, and there find Wheels, Reſſorts, and Counterpoiſes, and a Spring that cauſes all thoſe motions, I ceaſe to wonder ; certainly ſome Luſt or other was the Spring of all thy religious motions ; ſtop or take off that, and motion ceaſes : And if it be ſo, this *Scab* of Hypocriſie will at laſt break out into the *Botch* of Apoſtacy. Thou canſt never hold out long under Trials, *Matth.* 13. 21. Oh how many ſuch ſad ſights may we live to ſee as Trials come! Difficult times are coming on, 2 *Tim.* 3. 1. And wo to ſuch then as want ſincerity at the bottom of their Profeſſion.

2. And as theſe have no habitual readineſs for ſufferings, and conſequently muſt be ruin'd by them, ſo there are others that may be truly godly, and have the root of the matter in them, who are yet far from an actual readineſs, and ſo continuing, are like to be a reproach to Religion when their trial come. For it is not a little Grace in the ſleepy habit that will ſecure you from falling ſcandalouſly by the hand of temptation : And although that Seed of God which is in you, will recover you again, and prevent total and final Apoſtacy, yet, oh, conſider what a ſad thing it is to enter into, and be conquered by temptation, to be led away in triumph by the Tempter, and made a reproach to Chriſt. O it's a ſad conſideration to think how many there be amongſt the People of God, that diſcover little or no actual preparation for ſufferings, As firſt ;

1. Upon how many of the Saints is the Spirit of ſlumber poured out : Even the wiſe as well as fooliſh ſeem now to be a ſleep. There is a twofold ſpiritual ſleep ; the firſt is *total*, upon wicked men : and it's one of Gods ſoreſt and dreadfulleſt ſtrokes upon their Soul, *Iſa.* 29. 10. The Hebrew word there is the ſame with that which is uſed of *Adam*, when God caſt him into a deep ſleep whilſt he took out his rib. And in 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. It ſignifies ſuch a ſleep as that which is occaſioned by drunkenneſs ; out of ſuch a ſleep doth the Lord awaken all that are ſaved, and they never fall into it any more. The other is *partial*, *Cant.* 5. 2. and is incident to the People of God, *Matth.* 25. 5. This is nothing

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thing elſe but that torpor or ſluggiſhneſs of ſpirit which ſeizeth upon the Saints, and never did it prevail, I fear among them, more then now. For where is their activity for God? Where is he that *ſtirreth up* himſelf to take hold of God? *Iſa.* 64. 7. Where is there ſuch a Generation as that, *Pſal.* 24. 6. we pray, confer, and hear for the moſt part, but as men ſpeak betwixt ſleeping and waking. Where you can find, except here and there one, that hath a quick and lively ſenſe of Gods indignation upon him, or that trembles at his judgments? Is not that the very caſe of the moſt which God deſcribes? *Iſa.* 42. *ult.*

2. How many are ſeized by a private and worldly Spirit, every man turning to his own houſe, and eagerly purſuing the *world*? *Hab.* 1. 9. *Jer.* 45. 4. Oh! how are we intangled in the Wilderneſs? How doth the world eat up our time, and eat out our Zeal, cowardice and ſoften our ſpirits, and render us utterly unfit for the Yoke and Burden of Chriſt? You that ſee ſo much Beauty, and taſte ſo much ſweetneſs in the Creature, will you have an hard Tugg when call'd to deny it: You are not yet prepared to drink of the Cup, or take up the Croſs of Chriſt.

3. How many poor Chriſtians are of a low and timerous ſpirit, ready to tremble at the ſhaking of a leaf: Ah poor hearts! how unfit are you for Bonds or Death? This paſſion of fear that ſo predominates in you, is the very paſſion which Satan aſſaults,and lays ſiege to in the hour of temptation, as was before noted: And commonly it's occaſioned (where it flows not from the *Natural Conſtitution*,from an exceſſive love to the world, or from ſome guilt upon the ſpirit. Its true, the Lord can ſo aſſiſt weak Faith, and ſo ſubdue ſtrong fears, as that you may be enabled to ſtand the ſhock when it comes: (For, as I noted formerly, our ſtrength lies not in any thing inherent in us, but we are ſtrong or weak, according to the divine preſence and aſſiſtances that we enjoy) but yet if you labour not to mortifie this Evil, and ſtir not up your ſelves in the uſe of all appointed means, to rouze your Zeal and Courage for God, I know no Warrant you have to expect ſuch aſſiſtances.

Laſtly, how many poor Chriſtians among us are to this day dark and cloudy in their Evidences for Heaven? Had they walked cloſely with God, been laborious in the diſquiſition and ſearch of their own hearts, they had long ſince obtained a clearneſs and ſatiſfaction about the ſtate of their own hearts: But as the caſe ſtands with them, how unfit are they for Bonds or Death. Oh! 'tis a ſad caſe, when inward and outward Troubles meet together, as you may ſee, *Gen.* 42: 21, 22. when there ſhall be *fightings without*, and *fears within*: When ſuch a pang as that, *Lam.* 3. 17, 18. ſhall come over thy heart, what wilt thou do?

By all that hath been ſaid, it appears, that the moſt of Profeſſors are in a very unready poſture for ſufferings; So that as Troubles come to an height, we are like to ſee many ſad Spectacles: Many offences will come; Religion is like to be wounded in the houſe of it's friends. Oh! what a day of Mercy have we enjoyed? What helps and choice advantages, above any precedent Age, and yet unready? How ſad and inexcuſable is this?

## CHAP. XV.

*Containing another uſe of the Point, by way of Exhortation, perſwading all the People of God, Whilſt the Lord reſpites, and graciouſly delays their trials, to anſwer the end of God therein, and prepare themſelves for greater trials; where ſeveral Motives are propounded, to excite to the Duty.*

UP then from your beds of ſloth, awake from your ſecurity, O ye Saints; get upon your Watch-Towers, tremble in your ſelves, that ye may reſt in the Day of Evil, *Hab.* 2. 1, 3, 16. Put on the whole Armour of God, *that ye may be able to ſtand in the evil day, and when you have done all to ſtand*, Eph. 6. O let it never be ſaid of your Dwellings as it is of the Tabernacles of the wicked, *Job.* 21. 9. *Their Houſes are ſafe from fear.*

*Auguſtus* hearing of one that was deeply in debt, who yet ſlept heartily, ſent for his Pillow, ſuppoſing there was ſome ſtrange vertue in that Pillow. I wonder what Pillow you have gotten, O ye drowſie Saints, that you can ſleep ſo quietly upon it, now that all things about you are conſpiring trouble, and threatning danger. Can you ſleep like *Jonah*, when Seas of wrath are tumbling and roaring round about you, and threaten to entomb you and all your enjoyments? Behold, *The Stork in the Heavens knows her appointed time*, Jer. 7. 8. and hath not God made you *wiſer than the Fowls of the Air*, *Job.* 35. 11. It may be the ſound of ſome preſent Judgment may a little ſtartle you, like a ſudden clap of Thunder in the Air; but how ſoon doth Sloth and Security prevail and overcome you again. They ſay Poyſon by being habituated, may be made innocent: We are ſo uſed to, or rather hardned under calamities, that nothing moves or effectually awakens us. Lord what will the end of theſe things be? Wilt thou ſurprize thy people at unawares? Shall thy judgments find them *ſecure*, and leave them *deſperate*? O that God would perſwade you *to gather your ſelves together, yea to gather together*, (not in an unlawful and ſeditious way) but in the way of duty, *before the decree bring forth, and the day paſs as the chaff*, Zeph. 2. 1, 2. O prepare to meet your God, *Amos.* 4 12. Prepare your *faith*, *love*, *courage*, &c. before God call you to the exerciſe of them.

And to excite you to this duty, beſides all the fore-mentioned benefits of a prepared Spirit, conſider theſe following particulars by way of motive.

1 *Mot.* The many Calls which God hath given you to this work. The Lord hath uttered his voice, and called from Heaven unto you; will you be deaf to his Calls? He hath called upon you (1) By the Word: God would have it cry to you firſt, becauſe he would give the firſt honour to his Word. He hath given all his Prophets *one mouth*, *Luk.* 1. 70. and they have warned you faithfully.

(2) By the *Rod*: This alſo hath a loud voice, *Micah* 6. 9. *Pſal.* 2. 5. Men of underſtanding will hear this voice; and thoſe that will not hear it, ſhall be laſhed by it even till they are ſick with ſmiting, *verſe* 13. (3) By prodigious and portentious ſigns in the Heavens and Earth, ſuch as no Age can parallel, theſe have a loud voice to all that regard the works of the Lord, or the operations of his hands. *Euſebius* calls them *Gods Sermons to the World.* Oh that we were wiſe to conſider what Gods ends are in theſe things! One obſerves, *That as they are the plaineſt and moſt obvious to ſenſe, ſo they are commonly the laſt Sermons which God intends to preach to Nations, before he inflicts his puniſhment on them, if they repent not.* O let not God, ſpeaking in ordinary and extraordinary ways to you, ſtill ſpeak in vain.

τὰ τȣ̃ θεȣ̃ κηρύγματα. Euſeb. *Hiſt. lib.* 3. *cap.* 8.

Your preparation for ſufferings, is the moſt probable means of preventing your fall and ruine by thoſe ſufferings. 2. *Mot.* Sufferings prove fatal and deſtructive to ſome; but it is to ſecure and careleſs ones: Such as are diligent and faithful in the uſe of Gods means, are ſecured from the danger. Chriſt lays our conſtancy and perſeverance very much upon our fore-caſting the worſt that may fall out, *Luke* 14. 28. *Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand, Epheſ.* 6. He that hath firſt ſevered Chriſt in his thoughts from all worldly advantages, and put the caſe thus to his own Soul, O my Soul, canſt thou embrace or love a naked Chriſt? Canſt thou be content to be impoveriſhed, impriſoned, and ſuffer the loſs of all for him? He is moſt likely to cleave faithfully to him, when the caſe is really preſented to him indeed. And can it ſeem a light thing in your eyes, to be enabled to ſtand in ſuch an evil day? If you fall away from Chriſt, then all that you have wrought is loſt, *Ezek.* 33. 13. *Gideons* one *Baſtard* deſtroyed all his ſeventy Sons. This act renders all former actions and profeſſions vain. If you fall, you ſhall thereby be brought into a more perfect bondage to the Devil than ever, *Matth.* 12. 23. Yea, ordinarily Apoſtates are judicially given up to be Perſecutors, *Hoſ.* 5. 12. 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. and are ſeldom or never recovered again by Grace, *Heb.* 6. 4, 6. They that lick up their vomit, ſeldom caſt it up any more. It is a fall, within a little as low as the unpardonable ſin, whence never any riſe again. In ſome caſes the *Judge* will not allow the *Offender* his book. And is it not then a choice and deſirable mercy to eſcape and prevent ſuch a fall as this: O good Souls, ply your preparation-work cloſe then; prepare, or you periſh.

3. This will beſt anſwer the Grace of God, in affording you ſuch choice helps and advantages as you have enjoyed. How long have you enjoyed the free liberty of the Goſpel, ſhining in its luſtre among you? This Sun which to ſome other nations hath not riſen, and to divers on whom it hath ſhined, yet it is but as a Winters Sun, remote, and its Beams but feeble: But you have lived as it were under the *Line*, it hath been over your Heads, and ſhed its richeſt influences upon you. Yea, Gods Miniſters, who are not only appointed to be *Watchmen*, *Ezek.* 3. 16. but *Trumpeters* to diſcover danger, *Numb.* 10. 8. Theſe have faithfully warned you of a day of trouble, and given you their beſt aſſiſtance to make you ready for it. And is not their joy, yea life bound up in your ſtability in ſuch a day of Trial? Doth not every one of them call upon you in the words of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 4. 1. *Therefore my Brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and Crown, ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord my dearly Beloved.* Will it not cut them to the very heart, if after all their ſpending labours among you, they ſtill leave you unready? Enemies ſtill to the Croſs of Chriſt, impoſſible to be reconciled and perſwaded to ſuffering-work for Chriſt.

I remember I have read of the *Athenian Codrus*, who being informed by the *Oracle*, that the People whoſe King ſhould be ſlain in Battle ſhould be Conquerors: He thereupon diſrobed himſelf, and in a diſguiſe went into the Enemies Quarters, that he might ſteal a death to make his People victorious.

Oh! how glad would your Miniſters be, if you might conquer, and overcome in the day of temptation, whatever become of their lives and liberties! *Yea, and if they be offered up upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your Faith, they can rejoyce, and joy with you all.* Such is their zeal and longing after your ſecurity and welfare. But if ſtill you remain an unready People, and do become a prey to temptation, Oh how inexcuſable will you be!

4. Remember how ready the Lord Jeſus was to ſuffer the hardeſt and vileſt things for you. He had a bitter Cup put into his hands to drink for you, into which the wrath both of God and man was ſqueezed out. Never had man ſuch ſufferings to undergo as Chriſt, whether you conſider (1) the dignity of his Perſon, who was in the form of God, and might have ſtood upon his *Peerage* and Equality with him, he is the *Sparkling Diamond of Heaven, Acts* 7. 56. The *Darling* of the Fathers Soul, *Iſa.* 42. 1. *Glorious* as the Only begotten of the Father, *John* 1. 14. yea, glory it ſelf, *James* 2. 1. yea, the very *brightneſs of glory, Heb.* 1. 3. He is the *deliciæ Chriſtiani orbis, fairer than the Sons of men*: And for him to be ſo debaſed, below ſo many thouſands of his own Creatures, become a Worm, and no man; this was a wonderful humiliation. It was *Jeremiah*'s lamentation, that ſuch as were brought up in Scarlet, imbraced Dung-hills; that Princes were hanged up by the Hands, and the faces of Elders were not reverenced. But what was that to the Humiliation of the Lord of Glory? Or (2) that he ſuffered in the prime and flower of his years; when full of life and ſenſe, and more capable of exquiſite ſenſe of pain than others: For he was *optime complexionatus*, of a ſingular Conſtitution; and all the while he hanged on the Tree, his ſenſe of pain not at all blunted or decayed, *Mark* 15. 37, 39. Or (3) the manner of his death. It was the death of the Croſs, which was a *Rack* to Chriſt: for in reference to the diſtention of his members upon the Croſs is that ſpoken, *Pſal.* 22. 17. *I may tell all my Bones* Or (4)

Dolor Chriſti it ma omnib dolori *Aquin.*

*Aquin.*

That all this while God hid his face from him. When *Stephen* ſuffered, he ſaw the Heavens opened. The *Martyrs* were many of them raviſhed and tranſported with extaſies of joy in their ſufferings; but Chriſt in the dark. He ſuffered in his Soul as well as in his Body; and the ſufferings of his Soul, were the very Soul of his ſufferings. It was the Fathers wrath that lay ſo heavy on him, as to put him into ſuch an Agony that an inſtance was never given of the like nature: For he ſweat θρόμβοι great drops, or clodders of Blood, which fell from his Body to the grouud, *Luke* 22. 24. *It amazed him, and made him very heavy.* See *Mark* 14. 33. yea, *ſorrowful even to death, Matth.* 26. 38.

And yet as bitter as the Cup was, he freely and willingly drank it up, *John* 18. 11. Prepared himſelf to be offered up a ſacriſice, *Pſal.* 40. 6, 7. *Gave his back to the ſmiters, Iſa.* 50. 6. yea longed exceedingly for the time till it came, *Luke* 12. 50.

Now, if Chriſt ſo chearfully prepared and addreſt himſelf to ſuch ſufferings as theſe for you, ſhould you not prepare your ſelves to encounter any difficulty or hardſhip for him? O my Brethren, Doth not this ſeem a juſt and fair inference to you, from the ſufferings of Chriſt for you? 1 *Pet.* 4. 1. *Foraſmuch then as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the fleſh, arm your ſelves likewiſe with the ſame mind.*

Oh trifle no longer, feed not your ſelves with fancies and groundleſs preſumptions of immunity and peace, but fore-ſee difficulties, and fit your ſelves to bear them.

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## CHAP. XVI.

*Containing the laſt uſe of the point, by way of ſupport and comfort to poor trembling Souls, who do take pains to make themſelves ready for Sufferings; but yet finding ſuch ſtrength in Satan's Temptations, and their own Corruptions, fear that all their labour is in vain, and that they ſhall faint, and utterly Apoſtatize, when their Troubles and Tryals come to an height.*

IN the laſt place, if it be ſuch a bleſſed thing to be ready for Bonds, or Death for Chriſt, this may miniſter much Comfort to ſuch Souls, who though they cannot ſay as *Paul* here did, that they are ready; yet are at work daily upon their own hearts to make them ready, and ſtrive in the uſe of all means to *conquer* thoſe Corruptions that hinder it, and improve thoſe Graces in which it mainly conſiſteth. O poor Soul, what ever preſent unreadineſs or indiſpoſition thou findeſt, and complaineſt of in thine heart, yet thy condition is ſafe.

*Ob.* Oh! but I cannot be ſatisfied in that: I fear I ſhall be over-born by Temptations, when they come to an height. I have ſuch experience of the Deceits and Treacherouſneſs of my own heart, that it ſeems impoſſible to me to do as theſe bleſſed Souls did, when I come to the like Tryals.

*Sol.* It's well thou ſuſpecteſt thine own heart, and trembleſt in thy ſelf; this fear will keep thee waking, when others are ſecurely ſleeping. It was a good ſaying of a reverend Miniſter, now with God, *He that fears to flinch, ſhall never flinch for fear.* It's true, ſeeming Grace may be totally loſt, *Luke* 8. 18. *Heb.* 6. 4, 5. 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. It's granted alſo, that the ſins of Believers deſerve that God ſhould forſake them, and that he may ſuffer Grace in them to be ſadly re-bated, and they may fall before a Temptation, as *Peter*, and all the Diſciples did: But that thou ſhalt never be ſeparated from Chriſt, or fall *Totus, a toto, in totum*, utterly away from God, thou mayeſt be abundantly ſatisfied upon theſe five or ſix grounds. M. A. H.

1. From God's Eternal Electing Love, wherewithal gracious Souls are beloved and imbraced, be their Graces never ſo weak, or their Corruptions never ſo ſtrong. This is immutable, *Heb.* 6. 18. and hence it's ſaid, *Mark* 13. 22. *They ſhall deceive* (*if it were poſſible*) *the very Elect.* Now this immutable purpoſe of God, is not founded upon any mutable ground or reaſon in thee, *Rom* 9. 11. Yea, when he, *Rom.* 8. 29. Elected thee, he ſaw what thou wouldſt be, and yet that hindred him not.

2. From the Covenant of Grace, in the Boſom of which thou art wrapped up: This is all thy ſalvation, and all thy hope; it will afford thee abundant ſatisfaction, if thou do but weigh particularly theſe three things about it. 1. That the *Author* of this Covenant is not a *fickle* Creature, but a *faithful* God, with whom there is not *yea* and *nay*: With whom there is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning; whoſe Gifts and Callings are without Repentance; ſo that once within the claſp of this bleſſed Covenant, and in it for ever. 2. That God hath eſtabliſhed the Covenant with you in the Blood of Chriſt; therefore the *Sacramental Cup*, is called the *Cup of the new Teſtament in his Blood, Luke* 22. 20. The everlaſting Merit and efficacy whereof, gives the Soul of a Believer the higheſt ſatisfaction imaginable. Laſtly, add to this, that in this Covenant God hath undertaken for us, as well as for himſelf: So that what is a *Condition* in one Scripture, is the matter of a *Promiſe* in another Scripture, *Jer.* 32. 40.

3. From that ſtrict and intimate union that is betwixt Chriſt and thee. And hence it's impoſſible thou ſhouldſt be loſt: For 1. Thy union with his Perſon, draws intereſt in his Properties with it. What ever he is, or hath, it is for thee; his Eye of Knowledge, Arm of Power, Bowels of Pity, it's all for thee.

2. This union with his Perſon, ſecures thy feeble Graces from periſhing, *John* 4. 14 Thy Graces have an everlaſting Spring. Whilſt there is Sap in this Root, it will aſcend into the Branches.

3. It implies the Perſeverance, becauſe by this union thou becomeſt an integral part of Chriſt's Body, which would be mutilate and defective, ſhouldſt thou be *cut* off and loſt.

4. From the prevalent interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt in the Heavens, for all his Saints, in all their Tryals here on Earth. From hence the Apoſtle infers the certainty of our Perſeverance, *Rom.* 8. 34. and a pregnant inſtance of it you have in *Peters* caſe, *Luke* 22. 32. So *Heb.* 7. 25. ſpeaks fully to the caſe. To

ſtrengthen this, Conſider 1. Who it is that intercedes: It's Chriſt whoſe Perſon is moſt dear and ingratiated with the Father, *John* 11. 42. 2. What he intercedes for: Surely for nothing but what is moſt ſuitable to his Father's Will. The Will of Chriſt, and his Fathers, do not claſh, *John* 16. 26, 27. yea, what he prays for, he prays not for *gratis*, or asks upon any diſhonourable terms to the juſtice of his Father; but they are all mercies purchaſed and paid for; and therefore fear the failing of your Graces.

5. From the Spirit of Chriſt which dwelleth and abideth in thee, and hath begun his ſaving work upon thee. I ſay *ſaving*, for elſe it would afford no argument: His common works on Hypocrites come to nothing, but in thee they cannot fail. For 1. His Honour is pawned and engaged to perfect it. That reproach of the fooliſh Builder ſhall never lie upon him, that he began to build, but could not finiſh. Beſides, this would irritate, and void all that the Father and the Son have done for thee; both their works are compleat and perfect in their kinds, and the Spirit is the laſt efficient in order of working. 2. Beſides the Grace he hath already wrought in thee, may give thee yet further and fuller aſſurance of its preſervation, inasmuch as it hath the nature of a *Seal*, *Pledge*, and *Earneſt* of the whole, *Rom.* 8. 23. 2 *Cor.* 1. 22. So that it cannot fail.

6. From thoſe multitudes of *Aſſertory*, *Promiſſory*, and *Comparative* Scriptures, the Rich veins whereof run through the Book of God, as ſo many ſtreams to refreſt thy Soul. Of *Aſſertory* Scriptures, ſee *John* 6. 39. *John* 10. 28. 1 *John* 2. 19. Of *Promiſſory* Scriptures, ſee *Iſa.* 54. 10. *Jer.* 34. 40. 1 *Cor.* 1. 8. *&c.* Of *Comparative* Scriptures, ſee *Pſal.* 1. 3. *Pſal.* 125. 1. *John* 4. 14. *&c.* The principal ſcope of all which, is to ſhew the indefectible Nature of true Grace in the Saints.

And now, how ſhould this refreſh thy drooping Soul, make thee gird up the loyns of thy mind! ſince thou doſt *not run as one uncertain*, neither *fighteſt as one that beats the Air*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 26. But art ſo ſecured from total Apoſtacy, as thou ſeeſt thou art by all theſe things. O bleſs ye the Lord.

*Ob.* 2. But the Lord ſeems to be departed from my Soul; God is afar off from me, and troubles are near. I ſeem to be in ſuch a caſe as *Saul* was when the *Philiſtines* made war upon him, and God was *departed* from him; and therefore I ſhall fall.

*Sol.* Not ſo; for there are two ſorts of Divine deſertions; The one is *abſolute*, when the Lord utterly forſakes his Creatures, ſo that they ſhall never behold his Face more: The other is *limited* and *reſpective*, and ſo he forſook his own Son, and often does his own *Elect*: and of this kind, ſome are only *Cautional*, to prevent ſin; ſome are meerly *Probational*, to try Grace; and others *Caſtigatory*, to chaſtiſe our negligence and careleſneſs. Now though I have not a word of comfort to ſpeak in the caſe of total and abſolute Deſertions; yet of the latter (which doubtleſs is thy caſe) much may be ſaid by way of ſupport, be it of which of the three ſorts it will, or in what degree it will. For 1. This hath been the caſe of many precious Souls, *Pſal.* 22. 1, 2. *Pſal.* 77. 2. *Pſal.* 88. 9. *Job* 13. 24, 25, 26. This was poor Mr. *Glovers* caſe, as you will find in his Story, and it continued till he came within ſight of the Stake; therefore no new or ſtrange thing hath happened to you.

2. The Lord by this will advantage thee for perſeverance, not only as they are cautional againſt ſin, but as they make thee hold Chriſt the faſter, and prize his* Preſence at an higher rate, when he ſhall pleaſe graciouſly to manifeſt himſelf to thee again.

* Cant. 3. 4.

3. This ſhall not abide for ever; it's but a little Cloud, and will blow over. It is but for a *moment*, and that moments darkneſs uſhers in everlaſting light, *Iſa.* 54. 7.

Yea, laſtly, the light of God's countenance ſhall not only be reſtored *Certainly*, but it ſhall be reſtored *Seaſonably*; when the Darkneſs is *greateſt*, thy troubles at the *higheſt*, and thy hopes *loweſt*. He is a God of Judgment, and knows how to time his own Mercies, *Pſal.* 138. 3.

*Ob.* 3. But I am a weak Woman, or a young Perſon, how ſhall I be able to confeſs Chriſt before *Rulers*, and look great ones in the Face?

*Sol.* Chriſt delights to make his Power known in ſuch, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. For he affects not Social Glory.

2. *Thou ſhalt be holden up, for God is able to make thee ſtand*, *Rom.* 14. 4. Thou that art ſenſible of thine own infirmity, mayeſt run to that Promiſe.

3. Such poor weak Creatures ſhall endure when ſtronger (if Self-confident) fall, *Iſa.* 40. 30, 31. *Even the youths ſhall faint, and be weary, and the young men utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength, they ſhall mount up with wings as Eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint.*

Youths and young men are bold, daring, and confident perſons, that truſt to their own ſtrength! to whom ſuch as wait upon the Lord ſtand here oppoſed; they ſhall faint, but theſe ſhall renew their ſtrength.

Art thou one that waiteſt and dependeſt upon an All-ſufficient God, in the ſenſe of thine own weakneſs? This Promiſe then is for thee.

4. You may furniſh your ſelves at pleaſure, with Examples of the mighty Power of God reſting upon ſuch as you are, out of our own Martyrology.

*Thomas Drowry* the poor Blind Boy, *Fox* Vol. 3. *p.* 703. What a preſence of Spirit was with him, when examined by the *Chancellor*!

*Eulalia* a Virgin, of about 12 years of age, ſee how ſhe was acted above thoſe years, yea, above the power of Nature. *Fox.* Vol. 1. *p.* 120. Tender Women, yea Children act above themſelves, when aſſiſted by a ſtrong God.

And thus you have ſome help offered you by a weak hand, in your preſent and moſt important work.

The Lord carry home all with power upon your hearts, (that if God call you to ſuffer for him) you may ſay as *Paul* did, *I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which God the Righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to them alſo which love his appearing*, 2 Tim. 4. 6. And as you expect ſo to finiſh your courſe with joy; be diligent in the uſe of all means, to prepare and make your ſelves ready to follow the Call of God, whether it be to Bonds, or to Death, for the Name of the Lord Jeſus.

THE

# THE
# Balm of the Covenant
# Applied to the
# BLEEDING WOUNDS
# OF
# Afflicted Saints.

To which is added, a Sermon Preached for the Funeral of that Excellent and Religious Gentleman *John Upton* of *Lupton*, Eſq;

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## To the Vertuous and much Honoured Madam *Urſula Upton* of *Lupton* in *DEVON*.

Madam,

*IF I find it an hard Task to write on ſuch a doleful Subject, it cannot be imagined but your part muſt be abundantly harder, who feel over and over what is here written. Could I tell how to adminiſter Counſels and Comforts to you, without exaſperating your Sorrows, I would certainly take that way; but ſeeing the one (in this caſe) cannot be done without the other, 'tis our duty to ſubmit to the Method Providence hath preſcribed to us.*

*The deſign of the enſuing Diſcourſe, is to evince the Truth of what ſeems a very great* Paradox *to moſt Men, namely, that the Afflictions of the Saints can do them no hurt, and that the wiſdom of Men and Angels cannot lay one Circumſtance of their Condition (how uneaſie ſoever it ſeems to be) better, or more to their advantage than God hath laid it. I attempt not by a flouriſh of Rhetorick to perſwade you againſt the Demonſtrations you can fetch from ſenſe and feeling to the contrary, but to overthrow the falſe Reaſonings of Fleſh and Senſe, by the allowed Rules of Scripture, and ſure Principles of Religion.*

*And methinks you, and every Chriſtian ſhould gladly entertain that comfortable concluſion, when you ſhall find the Foundation of it as* ſtrong, *as the influences thereof are* ſweet *and comfortable.*

*Certainly,* Madam, *the intent of the Redeemer's undertaking was not to purchaſe for his People Riches, Eaſe, and Pleaſures on Earth; but to mortifie their Luſts, heal their Natures, and ſpiritualize their Affections, and thereby to fit them for the Eternal Fruition of God. Upon this ſuppoſition the truth of this Concluſion (how ſtrange ſoever it ſeems) is firmly built.*

*It was not without Divine direction, that the Subject of the enſuing Diſcourſe was as pertinently, as ſeaſonably, recommended to me by your dear Husband, in the day of your Sorrows for your only Son. He took, I hope, his portion of Comfort out of it before he died, and it is now left as a Spring of Comfort to you, who then mourned with him, and now for him.*

*Heavy Preſſures call for ſtrong ſupport, and fainting ſeaſons for rich Cordials. Your Burthen is indeed heavy, yet I muſt ſay it is much our own Fault they are ſo heavy as we feel them to be: For according to the meaſure of our delight in, and expectation from the Creature, is our ſorrow and diſappointment when we part from it. The higheſt* Tides *are always followed with the loweſt* Ebbs. *We find Temperance and Patience knit together in the ſame* Precept, *and Intemperance and Impatience as inſeparably connected in our own* Experience. *It may be we did not ſuſpect our ſelves of any ſinful exceſs in the time of their Enjoyment, but it now appears the Creature was gotten deeper into our Hearts than we imagined by the pain we feel at parting: Did we not lean too hard upon it, there would not be ſuch ſhakings as we feel when it is ſlipt from us.*

*But* Madam, *'tis high time to recal your Thoughts, and bound your Sorrows, which the following Conſiderations would greatly aſſiſt you in.*

1. *What is the very ground and reaſon of our exceſſive ſorrows for the loſs of Earthly Comforts? Is it not this, that they are* periſhing *and* tranſitory? *That is, that you find them to be as God made them. And can you expect that God ſhould alter the Laws of Nature to pleaſe and humour us? It is as natural to our Relations to die, as it is for* Flowers *to wither, or the* Moon *to* wane.

2. *That there is no ſuch neceſſary Connexion betwixt theſe things and our Comfort, that whenever God removes the one, he muſt needs remove the other with it. Chriſt and Comfort are indeed ſo united, but nothing beſide him is or can be ſo. I hope you will ſhortly experience the truth of this concluſion, by the comforts God will give you in the abſence of thoſe comforts you have loſt. Can you not now have as free acceſs to God as before? Yea, do not theſe very Afflictions ſend you oftener into his Preſence? And if God meet you in thoſe duties (as in days of diſtreſs he uſes to meet his People) then it will be evident to you that your joy and comfort lives, though your Husband and Children be laid in their Graves.*

3. *That the removing of your Earthly Comforts, hinders not but that you may ſtill purſue the great end and buſineſs of your life, and carry on all your deſigns for Heaven as ſucceſsfully as ever. Indeed,* Madam, *had we been ſent into this World to raiſe Eſtates, contract Relations, and then ſit down in the midſt of them, as our Portion, then our deſign had been utterly daſhed and diſappointed; but you know this is not your main end, or great buſineſs upon Earth, but to Honour God by an holy fruitful life here, and make ready for the full enjoyment of him hereafter. And what hinders, but you may as proſperouſly manage and carry on this your Deſign as ever? You do not think the Traveller is diſabled for his Journey, becauſe he hath fewer clogs and hindrances than before. I think few Chriſtians find much furtherance Heavenward by their multiplicity of Engagements or Enjoyments in this World. Your cares and fears about theſe things, will now lie in a narrower compaſs, than they did before, and thereby you may have your thoughts more about you, to attend the great concerns of God's Glory, and you own Salvation.*

4. *But above all, you will certainly find your relief and conſolation to lie in the everlaſting Covenant of God. Thence it was that* David *fetched his ſupport under a much heavier Burthen and ſmarter Rod than yours: For your Relations were ſuch as gave you comfort in their lives, and left you many grounds of hope in their Deaths; but his were taken away in their ſins. But though the grounds of his ſorrow (bleſſed be God) are not yours, yet I hope the grounds of his Comfort in the Text are fully yours.*

*I confeſs I have prepared theſe things in too much haſte and diſtraction of thoughts, which in this juncture was unavoidable; nor have I beſtowed much of Art or Language upon them: And if I had, they would have been never the more effectual to your relief for that. But ſuch as they are, I humbly preſent them to you, with my hearty Prayers, That God would make them a* Soveraign Balm, *by the Bleſſing of his Spirit on them to your wounded ſpirit, and to all other Godly Families groaning under the like ſtrokes of God with you, and remain,*

MADAM,

*Your moſt Faithful, ſympathizing Friend and Servant,*

Jo. Flavell.

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## *TEXT.* 2 Sam. XXIII. v. 5.

*Although my Houſe be not ſo with God, yet hath he made with me an Everlaſting Covenant; ordered in all things, and ſure: For this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire, although he make it not grow.*

THeſe are part of *David*'s laſt Words. The laſt words of dying *Saints*, but eſpecially of dying *Prophets*, are ponderous, memorable, and extraordinarily remarkable; and ſuch are theſe acknowledged to be, by all Expoſitors: 'Tis a golden Sentence, a divine Oracle, fit to be the laſt words of every dying Saint, as well as of *David*.

They are called his *laſt words*, not ſimply, and abſolutely, as though he breathed them forth with his laſt Breath; (for he ſpake many things afterwards) but either they are the laſt he ſpake as a *Prophet*, by divine inſpiration, or becauſe he had them often in his Mouth, to his laſt and dying day. They were his *Epicedium*, his ſweet *Swan*-like Song, in which his Soul found ſingular Refreſhment, and ſtrong Support, amidſt the manifold Afflictions of his Life, and againſt the Fears of his approaching Death.

The whole Chapter is deſigned for a *Coronis* or honourable cloſe of the Life of *David*, and gives us an account both of the worthy Expreſſions that dropt from him, and of the renowned Worthies that were employed by him: But all the Heroick Atchievements recorded to the honour of their Memories, in the following part of the Chapter, are trivial and inglorious things, compared with this one divine Sentence recorded in my Text; in which we have two things to conſider, *viz.*

1. The Preface, which is exceeding ſolemn.
2. The Speech it ſelf, which is exceeding weighty.

1. In the Preface, we have both the inſtrumental and principal efficient Cauſe of this divine Sentence, diſtinctly ſet down, *ver.* 1. and the Efficient, or Author of it. *ver.* 2.

The Inſtrument or Organ of its conveyance to us, was *David*; deſcribed by his deſcent or lineage, *the Son of Jeſſe*; by his eminent Station, *the Man that was raiſed up on high*, even to the top and culminating point of Civil and Spiritual Dignity and Honour, both as *King*, and as a *Prophet*; by this *Divine Unction. The anointed of the God of Jacob*; and laſtly, by the flowing ſweetneſs of his Spirit, and ſtile in the Divine Pſalms that were penned by him, whence he here gets the Title of *The ſweet Pſalmiſt of* Iſrael, *the pleaſant one, in the Pſalms of* Iſrael, as ſome read it.

The *principal efficient Cauſe* of this excellent paſſage, is here likewiſe noted, and all to commend it the more to our ſpecial obſervation and acceptance: *The Spirit of God ſpake by me, and his Word was in my Tongue.* This ſtamps my Text expreſly with divine Authority. The Spirit of God ſpake by *David*, he was not the *Author*, but only the *Scribe* of it. Thus the enſuing Diſcourſe is prefaced. Let us next ſee,

2. The matter or Speech it ſelf, wherein we ſhall find the Maxims, and general *Rules* of Government preſcribed, and the *Felicity* of ſuch a Government elegantly deſcribed. *He that ruleth over Men muſt be juſt, ruling in the Fear of God.* Princes being in God's Place, muſt exalt the Righteouſneſs of God, in the government of Men; and when they do ſo, they ſhall be as the Light of the Morning when the Sun riſeth, even a Morning without Clouds, *&c.* What Halcyon days ſhall that happy People ſee, whoſe Lot is caſt into ſuch times and places! All this is typically ſpoken of *David*, and thoſe pious Princes who ſucceeded him; but myſtically and eminently points at Chriſt, who was to riſe out of *David*'s Seed, *Rom.* 1. 3. And to ſit upon his Throne, *Acts* 2. 30. So that in this he was raiſed on high, to an Eminency of Glory and Dignity indeed; He was ſo in his ordinary natural Seed; a Royal Race, deriving it ſelf from him, and ſitting upon his Throne in a Lineal Succeſſion, till the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, which was about four hundred and thirty Years. And after that, the *Jews* had Governours of his Line, at leaſt rightful Heirs to that Crown, till the promiſed *Meſſiah* came. But that which was the top of *David*'s Honour, the moſt ſparkling Jewel in his Crown, was this, that the *Lord Jeſus* was to deſcend from him, according to the Fleſh, in whom all the glorious Characters before given, ſhould not only be exactly anſwered, but abundantly exceeded. And thus you find the natural Line of the *Meſſiah* is drawn down by *Matthew*, from *David* to the Virgin *Mary*, *Matth.* 1. And his Legal Line by *Luke*, from *David* to *Joſeph*, his ſuppoſed Father, *Luke* 2. 23.

Now though the Illuſtrious Marks and Characters of ſuch a righteous, ſerene, and happy Government, did not fully agree to his day, nor would do ſo in the Reigns of his ordinary natural Succeſſors, his day was not without many Clouds both of Sin and Trouble; yet ſuch a bleſſed day he foreſaw and rejoiced in, when Chriſt, the extraordinary Seed of *David*, ſhould ariſe, and ſet up his Kingdom in the World, and with the expectation hereof, he greatly chears and encourages himſelf: *Although my Houſe be not ſo with God, yet hath he made with me an everlaſting Covenant*, &c. In which words four things are eminently remarkable.

1. Here is a ſad Conceſſion of Domeſtick Evils.
2. A ſingular Relief from God's Covenant with him.
3. The glorious Properties of this Covenant diſplayed.
4. The high eſteem and dear regard his houſe had unto it.

1. Here is *David*'s ſad and mournful Conceſſion of the Evils of his Houſe, both *moral* and *penal*. *Although my Houſe be not ſo with God*, i.e. Neither ſo holy, nor ſo happy, as this deſcription of a righteous and flouriſhing Government imports; alas, it anſwers not to it: For though he was eminent for Godlineſs himſelf, and had ſolemnly dedicated his Houſe to God, as ſoon as it was built, yea, though he piouſly reſolved to walk in the midſt of it with a perfect Heart, and not to ſuffer an immoral Perſon within his Walls; yet great miſcarriages were found even in *David*'s Houſe, and Perſon, which God chaſtiſed him for, by a thick ſucceſſion of ſharp and ſore Affiictions. *Tamar* was defiled by her Brother *Amnon*, 2 *Sam* 13. 13. *Amnon* was barbarouſly murthered thereupon, by the advice of *Abſalom*, 2 *Sam.* 13. 28. *Abſalom* unnaturally rebels againſt his Father *David*, and drives him out out of the Royal City, and periſhes in that Rebellion, 2 *Sam.* 15. 1. Then *Adonijah*, another darling-Son, graſps at the Crown ſettled by *David* upon *Solomon*, and periſhes for that his Uſurpation. 1 *King* 2. 25. O what a heap of Miſchiefs and Calamities did this good Man live to ſee within his own walls! Beſides the many foreign Troubles that came from other hands. How many flouriſhing Branches did God lop off from him, and that in their Sins too? So that his day was a day of Clouds, even from the Morning unto the Evening of it; *Pſal.* 132. 1. *Lord, remember* David, *and all his Afflictions.* Well might he ſay, *His Houſe was not ſo with God.* But what then, doth he faint and deſpond under theſe manifold Calamities? Doth he refuſe to be comforted, becauſe his Children are gone, and all things involved in trouble? No, but you find,

Pſal. 30.

Pſal. 101. 2,3,4,5,6, 7.

2. He relieves himſelf by the *Covenant* God had made with him: *Yet hath he made with me a Covenant.* He looks to *Chriſt*, there is more in the Covenant than this my Houſe before God, as the *Chaldee* turns it. This little word *yet*, wraps up a great and Soveraign Cordial in it. Though *Ammon*, *Abſalom*, and *Adonijah* be gone, and gone with many ſmarting aggravations too; *yet hath he made with me a Covenant*, yet I have this Sheet-Anchor left to ſecure me. God's Covenant with me, in relation to Chriſt, this under-props and ſhores up my Heart.

*Plus eſt quam hæc domus mea ante Deum.* Jon.

This Covenant was, without Controverſie, a Goſpel-Covenant. It was *David*'s Goſpel: For all his Salvation and all his deſire were in it; which could never be, except Chriſt had been in it, who is the Salvation of all the ends of the Earth, and the deſire of all Nations.

'Tis true, it was a more obſcure and imperfect Edition of the *Covenant of Faith*, yet clearer than thoſe that were made before it, it came not up to the fullneſs and clearneſs of the diſcoveries made by *Jeremy* and *Ezekial*: But yet in this Covenant with *David*, God revealed more of Chriſt, than had been ever revealed before; for the Light of Chriſt, like that of the Morning, encreaſed ſtill more and more, till it came to a perfect day. It is worthy our Obſervation, how God made a gradual diſcovery of Chriſt from *Adam*, down along to New-Teſtament times. It was revealed to *Adam*, that he ſhould be the *Seed of the Woman*, but not of what Nation, till *Abraham*'s time; nor of what *Tribe*, till *Jacob*; nor of what *Sex* and *Family*, till *David*; nor that he ſhould be born of a Virgin, till *Iſaiah*; nor in what *Town*, till *Micah*. The firſt Revelation of this Covenant with *David*, was by *Nathan* the Prophet; afterwards enlarged and confirmed, *Pſal.* 89. By it he knew much of Chriſt, and wrote much of him. He ſpake of his *Perſon*, *Pſal.* 45. 6, 11. *Pſal.* 8. 4, 5, 6. of his Offices, both *Prophetical*, *Pſal.* 40. 8, 9, 10. *Prieſtly*, *Pſal.* 110. 4. and *Kingly*, *Pſal.* 2. 6. of his Incarnation, *Pſal.* 8. 5. of his Death on the Croſs, *Pſal.* 22. 16, 17. of his Burial, *Pſal.* 16. 8, 9, 10. Reſurrection, *Pſal.* 2. 7. and triumphant Aſcenſion, *Pſal.* 68. 18. there was the ſum of the Goſpel diſcovered, though in dark and typical terms and forms of Expreſſion; but if out of this Covenant, as obſcure as its Revelation was, ~~*David*~~ fetcht ſuch ſtrong Support and Conſolation, amidſt ſuch an heap of Troubles, then the Argument is good, *à fortiori*: What Support and Comfort may not we draw thence, who live under the moſt full and perfect diſplay of it, in all its Riches and Glory? Enough hath been ſaid to prove it a Goſpel-Covenant; but if any doubt ſhould remain of that, it will be fully removed, by conſidering,

2 Sam. 7. 12, 13, 14.

3. The eximious Properties and Characters of the Covenant, as we find them placed in the Text; and they are three, *viz.*

(1.) Everlaſting.
(2.) Ordered in all things, and
(3.) Sure.

(1.) It is an *Everlaſting Covenant*, or a perpetual Covenant, a Covenant of Eternity; not in the moſt ſtrict, proper, and abſolute ſence: For that is the incommunicable property of God himſelf, who neither hath beginning, nor end; but the meaning is, that the Benefits and Mercies of the Covenant are durable and endleſs to the People of God: For Chriſt being the principal Matter and Subſtance of the Covenant, there muſt be in it an everlaſting Righteouſneſs, as it is called, *Dan.* 9. 24. everlaſting Kindneſs, *Iſai.* 54. 8. everlaſting Forgiveneſs, *Jer.* 31. 34. and in conſequence to all theſe, everlaſting Conſolation, *Iſai* 51. 11. In all which, the riches and bounty of Free Grace ſhine forth in their greateſt glory and ſplendor.

(2.) It is a Covenant *order'd in all things*, or orderly prepared, diſpoſed, and ſet, as the word imports. Every thing being here diſpoſed and placed in the moſt comely order, both perſons and things here keep their proper place: God the Father keeps the place of the moſt wiſe Contriver and bountiful Donor of the invaluable Mercies of the Covenant; and *Chriſt* keeps the proper place both of the Purchaſer and Surety of the Covenant, and all the Mercies in it; and Believers keep their place, as the unworthy Receivers of all the gratuitous Mercies and rich Benefits thereof, and the moſt obliged Creatures in all the World to Free Grace, ſaying, Although my houſe, yea, although my heart and my life be not ſo with God, yet hath he made with me an everlaſting Covenant. And as *Perſons*, ſo *Things*, all things in this Covenant ſtand in the moſt exquiſite order, and exact correſpondence to each other. O 'tis a raviſhing ſight to behold the habitude and reſpect of the Mercies in the Covenant, to the ſins and wants of all that are in it! Here are found full and ſuitable ſupplies to the wants of all Gods People. Here you may ſee *Pardon* in the Covenant, for *guilt* in the Soul; *Joy* in the Covenant, for ſorrow in the *Heart*; *Strength* in the Covenant, for all defects and weakneſſes in the Creature; *Stability* in the Covenant, for the mutability in the Creature. Never did the Wiſdom of God ſhine forth more in any contrivance in the World, (except that of *Chriſt*, the Surety and principal Matter of the Covenant) than it doth in the orderly diſpoſe of all things in their beautiful order, and comely proportions in this Covenant of Grace.

(3.) It is *a ſure Covenant*, or a Covenant ſafely laid up and kept, as the word imports; and upon this account the Mercies of it are called, *The ſure mercies of David*, *Iſai.* 55. 3. And ſo *Pſal.* 89. 28. ſpeaking of this very Covenant, God ſaith, *My Covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him*, there ſhall be no vacillancy, no ſhaking in this Covenant: and *ver.* 34. *My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips* Every thing is as its foundation is. Now, Gods Covenant being founded in his unchangeable counſel and purpoſe, wherein there can be no lubricity, and Chriſt being the Surety of it, it muſt needs be, as the Text calls it, a ſure Covenant, wherein the faithfulneſs of God is as illuſtriouſly diſplay'd, as his Bounty and Wiſdom are in the two former properties of it. And ſuch a Covenant as this ſo everlaſting, aptly diſpoſed, and ſure, muſt needs deſerve that precious Reſpect and high Eſteem from every believing Soul, which *David* here doth pay it, in

à שמר *cuſtodivit ſervavit.*

4. The ſingular and high valuation he had of it, when he ſaith, *This is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire*, or as ſome tranſlate, *all my delight*, or pleaſure; (*i. e.*) here I find all repaired with an infinite overplus, that I have loſt in the Creature: Here is life in death, fulneſs in wants, ſecurity in dangers, peace in troubles. It is *all my ſalvation*, for it leaves nothing in hazard that is eſſential to my happineſs; and *all my deſire*, for it repairs whatever I have loſt, or can loſe: It is ſo full and compleat a Covenant, that it leaves nothing to be deſired out of it. O it is a full Fountain! Here I repoſe my weary Soul with full ſatisfaction, and feed my hungry deſires with ſweeteſt delights; ſo that my very Soul is at reſt and eaſe, in the boſom of this bleſſed Covenant. Thus you have the parts and ſence of the Text. The Notes from it are three.

וכל חפצ

*Obſerv.* I. *That Gods Covenant People may be exerciſed with many ſharp Afflictions in their Perſons and Families.* Eccl. 9. 9.

Even *David's* Houſe was the Houſe of Mourning. *Although my houſe be not ſo with God, though he make it not to grow.* All ſorts of outward Afflictions are incident to all ſorts of men. *All things* (ſaith *Solomon*) *come alike to all: There is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the clean, and unclean; to him that ſacrificeth, and to him that ſacrificeth not.*

The Providences ſeem one and the ſame, though the ſubject on whom they fall be vaſtly different. Eſtates and Children, Health and Liberty, will ſtill be like themſelves, vaniſhing Comforts, whoever be the Owners of them. No mans ſpiritual Eſtate can be known by the view of his temporal Eſtate. A godly Family cannot be a *miſerable*, but it may be a *mournful* Family. Religion ſecures us from the *Wrath*, but it does not ſecure us from the *Rod* of God The Lord hath choſen another way of expreſſing his love to his people, than by temporal and external things: Therefore *all things come alike to all.* The Covenant excludes the *Curſe*, but includes the *Croſs. If his children forſake my Law*, &c. *then will I viſit their iniquity with the rod, and their ſin with ſtripes: nevertheleſs my loving kindneſs will I not utterly take away.*

Nor ineeed would it be the priviledge of Gods Covenanted People, to be exempt from the Rod; a mark of *Baſtardy* can be no mans felicity: *Heb.* 12. 8. to go without the chaſtiſing diſcipline of the Rod, were to go without the needful inſtructions and bleſſed fruits that accompany and reſult from the Rod, *Pſal.* 94. 12.

Let us not therefore ſay, as thoſe irreligigious perſons did in *Mal.* 3. 14. *It is in vain to ſerve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and walked mournfully before him?* Surely none ſerve him *in vain*, but thoſe that ſerve him *vainly.* Godlineſs cannot ſecure you from Affliction, but it can and will ſecure you from Hell, and ſanctifie your Afflictions to help you to Heaven. But I ſtay not here.

*Obſerv.* II. *A declining Family is a ſore ſtroke from the hand of God, and ſo to be acknowledged, wherever it falls.*

It was a growing ſorrow to *David*, that his Houſe did not grow; and he eyed the hand of God in it, *He made it not to grow*, as he ſpeaks in the Text. He felt as many Deaths as he had dead Children. It is God that *build* and deſtroys Families; he enlargeth and ſtraitneth them again. A Family may decline two ways, *viz.* either,

1. By the Death: or,
2. By the Degeneracy of its Off-ſpring.

1. By their Death, when God lops off the hopeful ſpringing Branches thereof; eſpecially the laſt and only Prop of it, in whom not only all the care and love, but all the hope and expectation of the Parents is contracted and bound up. For,

Virgil. *Omnis in Aſcanio ſtat chari cura parentis.*

The Hearts of tender Parents are uſually bound up in the life of an only Son As a Man's Wife is but himſelf divided, ſo his Children are but himſelf multiplied; and when all love and delight, hope and expectation, is reduced to one, the affection is ſtrong, and that makes the affliction ſo to. If it were not an unparalell'd Grief among all Earthly Griefs and Sorrows, the Spirit of God would never have choſen and ſingled it out from among all other Sorrows, to illuſtrate Sorrow for Sin by it, yea, Sorrows for that ſpecial Sin of piercing Chriſt, as he doth. *They ſhall look upon him whom they have pierced, and ſhall mourn for him, as one that mourneth for an only Son.* Zach. 12. 10. How naked are thoſe Walls, and how unfurniſhed is that Houſe, where the Children (its beſt Ornaments) are taken down and removed by Death! It is natural to all Men, to deſire the continuance of their Names and Families in the Earth; and therefore when God cuts off their Expectations in that kind, they look upon themſelves as dry Trees, or as the withering Stalks in the Fields, when the Flowers are fallen off, and blown away from them.

2. Or which is yet much worſe, a Family may decline by the degeneracy of its off-ſpring When the Piety, Probity, and vertues of Anceſtors deſcend not with their Lands to their Poſterity, here the true Line of Honour is cut off, and the glory of a Family dies, though its Children live; the Family is ruined, though there be a numerous Off-ſping. Surely it were better mourn for ten dead Children, than for one ſuch living Child.

How many ſuch wretched Families can *England* ſhew this day! How hath Atheiſm and Debauchery ruined and ſubverted many great and once famous Families! O it were better the *Arms* of thoſe Families had been reverſed, and their Lands alienated, yea, better had it been a ſucceſſion had failed, and that their Names had been blotted out, than that Satan ſhould rule by Prophaneneſs in the Places where God was once ſo ſeriouſly and ſweetly worſhipped.

Whenſoever therefore God ſhall either of theſe ways ſubvert a Family, it becomes them that are concerned in the Stroke, not only to own and acknowledge the Hand of God in it, but to ſearch their Hearts and Houſes to find out the Sins which have ſo provoked him; yet not ſo as to fall into an unbecoming deſpondency of Spirit, but withal to relieve themſelves, as *David* here doth from the Covenant of God; *Yet hath he made with me an everlaſting Covenant.* Which brings us to the third and principal point I inſiſt on.

*Obſer.* III. *That the Everlaſting, well-ordered, and ſure Covenant of Grace, affords everlaſting, well-ordered, and ſure Relief to all that are within the bond of it, how many or how great ſoever their perſonal or domeſtick Tryals and Afflictions are.*

This point will be cleared to your Underſtandings, and prepared for your uſe, by clearing and opening three Propoſitions, which orderly take up the ſum and ſubſtance of it, *viz.*

Prop. I. *That the Minds of Men, yea, the beſt Men, are weak and feeble things under the heavy preſſures of Affliction, and will reel and ſink under them, except they be ſtrongly relieved and underprop'd.*

A bowing Wall doth not more need a ſtrong Shore or *Butteresſ*, than the Mind of Man needs a ſtrong ſupport and ſtay from Heaven, when the weight of Affliction makes it incline and lean all one way. *Unleſs thy Law had been my delights: I ſhould then have periſhed in my Affliction. q. d.* Pſal. 119. 92. What ſhift other

ther Men make to ſtand the ſhock of their Afflictions, I know not; but this I know, that if God had not ſeaſonably ſent me the relief of a Promiſe, I had certainly gone away in a faint fit of deſpondency. O how ſeaſonably did God adminiſter the Cordials of his Word to my drooping ſinking Soul!

This weakneſs in the Mind, to ſupport the burthens of Affliction, proceeds from a double cauſe, *viz.*

1. From the ſinking weight of the Affliction.
2. From the irregular and inordinate workings of the Thoughts of it.

1. From the ſinking weight that is in Affliction, eſpecially in ſome ſorts of Afflictions: They are heavy preſſures, ponderous Burthens in themſelves. So *Job* ſpeaks, *O that my Grief were throughly weighed, and my Calamity laid in the ballances together: For now it would be heavier than the Sand of the Sea, therefore my words are ſwallowed up. q. d.* If all the Sand that lies upon all the Shores in the World, were ſhovelled up into one heap, and caſt into one Scale, and my Sorrows into the other, my Grief would weigh it all up. How heavy are the Hearts of the Afflicted! What inſupportable Sorrows do they feel, and groan under, eſpecially when God ſmites them in the deareſt and neareſt concerns they have in the World! b. 6. 2,

2. But eſpecially the reelings and ſtaggerings of the Mind, are occaſioned by the inordinate and irregular workings of its own Thoughts. Were it but poſſible to keep the Mind in a ſerene, ſedate, and ordinate frame, our Burthens would be comparatively light to what we now feel them to be; but the falling of the Thoughts into Confuſions, and great Diſtractions, ſpoils all. Upon this account it is, that Afflictions are compared to a ſtupifying Doſe, which caſts the Soul into amazement. *Thou haſt ſhewed thy People hard things; thou haſt made us to drink the Wine of Aſtoniſhment.* Afflictions are called the Wine of Aſtoniſhment, from their effects upon the Mind: For under a great and ſudden ſtroke of God, it is like a *Watch* wound up above its due height, ſo that for a time it ſtands ſtill, neither Grace nor Reaſon move at all: And when it begins to move again, O how confuſed and irregular are its Motions! It is full of Murmurs, diſputes, and Quarrels: Theſe aggravate both our Sin and Miſery. 'Tis our own Thoughts which take the Arrow God ſhot at us, (which did but ſtick before in our Cloaths, and was never intended to hurt us, but only to warn us) and thruſt it into our very Hearts. 60. 3.

For Thoughts, as well as *Poniards*, can pierce and wound the Hearts of Men. *Luke* 2. 35. *A Sword ſhall pierce through thine own Soul*; (*i. e.*) Thy Thoughts ſhall pierce thee. They can ſhake the whole Fabrick of the Body, and looſe the beſt compacted and ſtrongly jointed parts of the Body. *Dan.* 5. 6. *His Thoughts troubled him, and the joints of his Loins were looſed.* And thus a Man's own Mind becomes a Rack of Torment to him; a miſery which no Creatures, except Men and Devils, are ſubjected to. O how many Bodies have been deſtroyed by the Paſſions of the Soul! They cut through it, as a keen Knife through a narrow Sheath. *Worldly Sorrow works Death*, 2 Cor 7. 10.

Prop. II. *The Merciful God, in condeſcenſion to the weakneſs of his People, hath provided the beſt ſupports and reliefs for their feeble and afflicted Spirits.*

*In the multitude of the thoughts I had within me, thy comforts delights my Soul.* Carnal Men ſeek their relief under trouble, from carnal things; when one Creature forſakes them, they retreat to another which is yet left them, till they are beaten out of all, and then their Hearts fail, having no acquaintance with God, or ſpecial Intereſt in him: For the Creatures will quickly ſpend all that allowance of Comfort they have to ſpend upon us. Some try what relief the Rules of *Philoſophy* can yield them, ſuppoſing a neat Sentence of *Seneca* may be as good a remedy as a Text of *David* or *Paul*; but alas, it will not do: Submiſſion from fatal neceſſity, will never eaſe the afflicted Mind, as Chriſtian Reſignation will do. It is not the eradicating, but regulating of the Affections, that compoſes a burthened and diſtracted Soul. One Word of God will ſignifie more to our Peace, than all the famed and admired Precepts of Men. Pſal. 94. 19.

To neglect God, and ſeek relief from the Creature, is to forſake the Fountain of living Waters, and go to the broken Ciſterns, which can hold no Water. The beſt Creature is but a Ciſtern, not a Fountain; and our dependance on it makes it a broken Ciſtern, ſtrikes a hole through the bottom of it, ſo that it can hold no Water. *I, even I* (ſaith God) *am he that comforted thee.* The ſame Hand that wounds you, muſt heal you, or you can never be healed. Our compaſſionate Saviour, to aſſwage our Sorrows, hath promiſed *he will not leave us comfortleſs.* Our God will not contend for ever, leſt the Spirit fail before him, *Iſai.* 57. 16. He knew how ineffectual all other Comforts and Comforters would be, even Phyſicians of no value, and therefore hath graciouſly prepared comforts for his diſtreſſed ones, that will reach their end. Jer. 2. 13. Iſa. 57. 12. Joh. 14. 18.

Prop. III. *God hath gathered all the materials and principals of our relief into the Covenant of Grace, and expects that we betake our ſelves unto it, in times of diſtreſs, as to our ſure, ſufficient, and only Remedy.*

As all the Rivers run unto Sea, and there is the Congregation of all the Waters; ſo all the Promiſes and Comforts of the Goſpel, are gathered into the Covenant of Grace, and there is the Congregation of all the ſweet ſtreams of Refreſhment that are diſperſed throughout the Scriptures. The Covenant is the Store-houſe of Promiſes, the Shop of Cordials and rare *Elixers*, to revive us in all our faintings; though, alas, moſt Men know no more what are their Virtues, or where to find them, than an illiterate Ruſtick, put into an *Apothecary's ſhop.*

What was the Cordial God prepared to to revive the Hearts of his poor Captives groaning under hard and grievous Bondage both in *Egypt* and in *Babylon*? Was it not his Covenant with *Abraham*? And why did he give it the ſolemn confirmation by Heb. 6.17, 18. an Oath, but that it might yield to him, and all his believing Seed, *ſtrong conſolation*, the very Spirit Joy amidſt all their Sorrows?

And what was the Relief God gave to the believing *Eunuchs* that kept his Sabbaths, took hold of his Covenant, and choſe the Iſai. 56 4. things in which he delighted. *To them* (ſaith he) *will I give in my Houſe, and within my Walls, a place, and a name better than that of Sons or of Daughters.* Though they were deprived of thoſe comforts other Men have in their Poſterity, yet he would not have them look upon themſelves as dry Trees; a Covenant-Intereſt would anſwer all, and recompence abundantly the want of Children, or any other Earthly Comfort.

Certainly therefore, *David* was at the right door of relief and comfort, when he repairs to the Covenant, as here in the Text, *Yet hath he made with me an Everlaſting Covenant.* There, or no where, the Relief of God's Afflicted is to be found.

Now, to make any thing become a compleat and perfect relief to an afflicted Spirit, theſe three Properties muſt concur and meet in it, elſe it can never effectually relieve any Man.

I. It muſt be able to remove all the cauſes and grounds of Troubles.

II. It muſt be able to do ſo at all times.

III. It muſt be capable of a good perſonal ſecurity to us.

For if it only divert our Troubles, (as Creature-Comforts uſe to do) and do not remove the ground and cauſe of our Trouble, 'tis but an *Anodine*, not a *Cure* or *Remedy*. And if it can remove the very ground and cauſe of our Trouble for a time, but not for ever, then 'tis but a temporary relief; our Troubles may return again, and we left in as bad caſe as we were before. And if it be in it ſelf able to remove all the cauſes and grounds of our Trouble, and that at all times, but not capable of a perſonal Security to us, or our well-eſtabliſhed Intereſt in it, all ſignifies nothing to our relief.

But open your Eyes and behold, O ye afflicted Saints, all theſe Properties of a compleat relief meeting together in the Covenant, as it is diſplayed in the Text. Here is a Covenant able to remove all the grounds and cauſes of your Trouble; for it is *ORDERED in all things*, or aptly diſpoſed by the wiſdom and contrivance of God, to anſwer every cauſe and ground of trouble and ſorrow in our Hearts. It is able to do this at all times; as well in our day, as in *David*'s or *Abraham*'s day: For it is an *Everlaſting Covenant*; its Vertue and Efficacy is not decayed by time. And laſtly, it is capable of a good perſonal Security or Aſſurance to all God's afflicted People; for it is a *ſure covenant*. The concurrence of theſe three Properties in the covenant makes it a compleat relief, perfect Remedy, to which nothing is wanting in the kind and nature of a Remedy. Theſe three glorious Properties of the Covenant are my proper Province to open and confirm, for your ſupport and comfort in this day of Trouble.

I. *That the Covenant of Grace is able to remove all the cauſes and grounds of a Believer's Trouble, be they never ſo great or many.* This I doubt not will be convincingly evidenced and demonſtrated by the following Arguments, or undeniable Reaſons.

*Arg* I. Whatſoever diſarms Afflictions of the only ſting whereby they wound us, muſt needs be a compleat Relief and Remedy to the Afflicted Soul.

But ſo doth the Covenant of Grace, it diſarms Afflictions of the only Sting by which they wound us.

Therefore the Covenant of Grace muſt needs be a compleat Relief and Remedy to the afflicted Soul.

The ſting of all Afflictions, is the guilt of Sin; when God ſmites, Conſcience uſually ſmites too: and this is it that cauſes all that pain and anguiſh in the Afflicted. 'Tis plainly ſo in the Example of the Widow of *Zerephath*, when her Son, her only Son, and probably her only Child died, how did that Stroke of God revive guilt in her Conſcience, and made the Affliction piercing and intollerable! as appears by her paſſionate Expoſtulation with *Elijah*, who then ſojourned in her Houſe: *What have I to do with thee, O Man of God? art thou come unto me to call my ſin to Remembrance, and to ſlay my ſon?* q. d. What Injury have I done thee? Didſt thou come hither to obſerve my Sins, and pray down this Judgment upon my Child for them? The Death of her Son revived her guilt, and ſo it generally doth, even in the moſt Holy Men. 1 King. 17. 18.

When *Job* looked upon his waſted Body under Afflictions, every Wrinkle he ſaw upon it, ſeemed to him like like a Witneſs riſing up to teſtifie againſt him. *Thou haſt filled me with Wrinkles, which is a Witneſs againſt me, and my leanneſs riſing up in me, beareth Witneſs to my Face.* Job. 16.

Affliction is like a *Hue and Cry* after Sin in the Ears of Conſcience, and this is the envenomed poyſonous ſting of Affliction: Pluck out this, and the afflicted Man is preſently eaſed, though the matter of the Affliction ſtill abide with him, and lie upon him. He is afflicted ſtill, but not caſt down by Affliction; the anguiſh and burthen is gone, though the matter of Trouble remain.

This is plain both in Scripture, and in Experience. Suitable hereunto is that ſtrange, but ſweet Expreſſion, *The Inhabitant ſhall not ſay I am ſick, the People that dwell therein ſhall be forgiven their Iniquities.* It's not to be imagined theſe People had found ſuch a fortunate *Iſland*, or happy *Climate*, where no Diſeaſe could touch or invade their Bodies; no, ſickneſs will find out the Bodies of the beſt Men, wherever they live; wherever Sin hath been, Sickneſs and Death will follow it. Heaven is the only priviledged Place from theſe Miſeries: But the meaning is, though they be Sick, they ſhall not feel the Pains and Burthens of Sickneſs; *they ſhall not ſay they are ſick*: And why ſo? becauſe their Iniquities are forgiven. Plainly confirming what was before aſſerted, that the anguiſh of an Affliction is gone, as ſoon as ever the ſting of Guilt is plucked out. And hence pardoning Iſai. 33.

ing of the Soul, and healing of the Body, are put together as *conjugate Mercies* : *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy Diſeaſes.* When the Soul is at eaſe, the pains of the Body are next to nothing: Sickneſs can cloud all natural Joys, but not the joy of a Pardon.

ál. 103. 3.

Nay, which is yet more ; pluck out but the ſting of Sin, and there is no horrour in Death, the King of Terrours, and worſt of all outward Evils. See how the pardoned Believer triumphs over it : *O Death where is thy ſting? O Grave where is thy victory? The ſting of Death is Sin.* They are words of defiance, as Men uſe to deride and ſcorn a boaſting inſulting Enemy, when they ſee him caſt upon his back, and his Sword broken over his Head.

Cor. 15. 55.

vid. *Heus! ubi nunc faſtus, altaq; verba jacent?*

Where are your boaſts and menaces now? O Death thou haſt loſt thy ſting and terrour together, Thus the pardoned Believer, with an Holy gallantry of Spirit, derides and contemns his diſarm'd Enemy Death : So then it is manifeſt, that whatever plucks out the poyſonous ſting of Affliction, muſt needs be an effectual Remedy and Cure to the afflicted Perſon.

But this the Covenant of Grace doth, it reveals and applies Goſpel-remiſſion to them that are within the bleſſed bond of it. *This ſhall be the Covenant that I will make with the Houſe of* Iſrael; *I will forgive their Iniquity, and I will remember their Sin no more.* Behold here a gracious, full, and irrevocable Pardon! I will forgive, or be propitiouſly Merciful, as that word imports; pointing plainly to Chriſt our Propitiation, our Sins are forgiven us for his Names ſake. And a Pardon as *full* as it is *free*; iniquity and ſin, ſmaller and greater, are here forgiven : For God, in the remiſſion of his Peoples Sins, having reſpect to the propitiating Blood of Chriſt, he pardons all, as well as ſome, that Blood deſerving and purchaſing the moſt full and compleat Pardons for his People, 1 Joh. 1. 7. *The Blood of Chriſt cleanſeth us from all Sin.*

31. 33,

And this Covenant-pardon is as *firm*, as it is *free* and full. So run the expreſſions in the Grant, *I will remember their Sin no more*: Or in the Apoſtles words, *Heb.* 8. 13. οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι. I will not remember them again. That is, not ſo remember, as to impute them, or condemn my pardoned ones for them : For the pardoned Perſons come no more into Condemnation, *Job* 5. 24. Their Sins are caſt into the depths of the Sea, *Mica.* 7. 19. Sooner ſhall the *Eaſt* and the *Weſt*, the two oppoſite points of Heaven, meet, than the pardoned Soul and its ſins meet again in Condemnation, *Pſal.* 103. 12.

Now, the caſe ſtanding thus with all God's Covenant-People, all their Sins being graciouſly, fully, and irrevocably forgiven them, how convincingly and ſweetly doth this concluſion follow, that the Covenant is a compleat Remedy to all afflicted Believers? As nothing can befal us before Chriſt and Pardon be ours, which is ſufficient to raiſe us, ſo nothing can befal us afterwards, which ſhould deject and ſink us. This is the firſt benefit afflicted Believers receive from the Covenant, and this alone is enough to heal all our Sorrows.

*Arg.* II. As the Covenant of Grace diſarms all the Afflictions of Believers of the only ſting by which they wound them! ſo it alters the very nature and property of their Afflictions, and turns them from a *Curſe* into a *Bleſſing* to them : And in ſo doing it becomes more than a *Remedy*, even a choice Benefit and Advantage to them.

All Afflictions in their own nature, are a part of the *Curſe*; they are the Conſequence and Puniſhments of Sin; they work naturally againſt our Good : But when once they are taken into the Covenant, their nature and property is altered. As Waters in their ſubterranean Paſſages meeting ſome vertuous Mineral in their courſe, are thereby impregnated and endowed with a rare healing property to the Body; ſo Afflictions paſſing through the Covenant, receive from it an healing Vertue to our Souls. They are in themſelves ſour and harſh, as wild Hedge-Fruits; but being ingrafted into this ſtock, they yield the pleaſant Fruits of Righteouſneſs. *If his Children break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, then will I viſit their Iniquity with the Rod, and their Sins with ſtripes: Nevertheleſs my Loving Kindneſs will I not utterly take away, nor ſuffer my Faithfulneſs to fail.* Here you may ſee all the Rods of Affliction put into the Covenant, as *Aaron's* Rod was into the Ark. And hence two things neceſſarily follow.

Pſal. 89. 30, 31.

(1.) That ſuch Afflictions can do the Children of God no hurt. They may affright, but cannot hurt them : We may meet them with Fear, but ſhall part from them with Joy : An unſanctified Rod never did any Man good, and a ſanctified Rod never did any Man hurt : He may afflict our Bodies with Sickneſs, deny, or cut off our Comfort in Children, impoveriſh our Eſtates, let looſe Perſecutors upon us; but in all this he really doth us no hurt, as he ſpeaks in *Jer.* 25. 6. No more hurt than a skillful *Chirurgeon* doth in ſaving his Patient's Life, by cutting off a mortified gangreen'd Member : No more hurt than Froſts and Snow do the Earth in killing the rank Weeds that exhauſted the ſap and ſtrength of it, and preparing and mellowing it to produce a fruitful crop of Corn. By theſe he recals our Minds from Vanity, weans our fond and enſnaring affections from the World, diſcovers and mortifies thoſe Luſts, which gentler methods and eſſays could not do : And is this for our hurt?

I confeſs Gods Thoughts and ours often differ upon this caſe. We meaſure the good and evil of Providences by their reſpect to the eaſe and pleaſure of our Fleſh, but God ſees this is the way to caſt our Spirits into a dead formality, and in removing them, he doth but deprive us of the occaſions and inſtruments of Spiritual Miſchiefs and Miſeries, in which certainly he doth us no hurt.

(2.) But that is not all. Afflictions once put into the Covenant, muſt promote the good of the Saints; they are beneficial, as well as harmleſs things. *We know* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *that all things work together for good to them that love God.* This Promiſe is the *Compaſs* which ſets the courſe, and directs the motion of all the Afflictions of the People of God; and no Ship at Sea obeys the *Rudder* ſo exactly, as the troubles of the Righteous do the direction of this Promiſe. Poſſibly he cannot diſcern this at preſent, but rather prejudge the Works of God, and ſay all theſe things are againſt us; but hereafter we ſhall ſee, and with Joy aaknowledge them to be the happy Inſtruments of our Salvation.

How often hath Affliction ſent the People of God to their Knees, with ſuch Language as this! ‘O my God, how vain and ſenſual ‘hath this Heart of mine been under proſperity! How did the love of the Creature, like ‘a ſluce cut in the Bank of a River, draw away the ſtream of my Affections from thee! ‘I had gotten a ſoft Pillow of Creature-comforts under my Head, and I eaſily fell aſleep, ‘and dreamed of nothing but reſt and pleaſure, in a ſtate of abſence from thee; but ‘now thy Rod hath awakened me, and reduced me to a right Senſe of my Condition. ‘I was negligent or dead-hearted in the ‘courſe of my Duty, but now I can pray more ‘fervently, feelingly, and frequently than ‘before. O it was good for me, that I have ‘been afflicted. O, ſaith God, how well was ‘this Rod beſtowed, which hath done my ‘poor Child ſo much good! Now I have ‘more of his Heart, and more of his time ‘and Company than ever. Now I hear the ‘voice, and ſee the gracious workings of the ‘Spirit of my Child after me again, as in ‘the days of his firſt love. The ſum of all this you may ſee in the ingenuous meltings of *Ephraim* under a ſanctified Rod, *Jer.* 31. 19, 20. and the ſounding of the Bowels of Mercy over him. ‘*Epraim* mourns at God's Feet, ‘and God falls upon *Ephraim*'s Neck. I have ‘been as a Beaſt, ſaith *Ephraim*: Thou art a ‘dear Son, a pleaſant Child, ſaith God. My ‘Bowels are troubled and pained for Sin, ſaith ‘*Ephraim*: And my Bowels are troubled for ‘thee, and my Compaſſions rolled together; ‘ſaith God. O bleſſed Fruits of Sanctified Rods! Such precious effects as theſe richly repay you for all the pain and anguiſh you feel. And thus as the wound of a *Scorpion* is healed by applying its own Oil, ſo the Evil of Affliction is cured by the Sanctified Fruits that it produceth when it is once put into the Covenant.

*Arg.* III. The Covenant doth not only alter the nature and property of the Saints Afflictions, but it alſo *orderly diſpoſes*, and aptly places them in the frame of Providence, among the other means and inſtruments of our Salvation; ſo that a Council of Angels could never place them, or the leaſt circumſtance belonging to them, more aptly and advantageouſly than it hath done. The knowledge of this muſt needs quiet and fully relieve the afflicted Soul: And who can doubt it, that believes it to be a Covenant *ordered in all things*, as the Text ſpeaks? Here all things, yea, the moſt minute Circumſtances that befal you, are reduced to their proper Claſs, and place of Service; ſo exactly ordered, that all the Wiſdom of Men and Angels knows not how to mend or alter any thing to your advantage.

If a ſmall Pin be taken out of the Frame of a Watch, and placed any where elſe, the motion is either preſently ſtopped, or made irregular. And as *Galen* obſerves of the curious Fabrick of an humane Body, that if the greateſt Naturaliſt ſhould ſtudy an hundred years to find out a more commodious Scituation, or configuration of any part thereof, it could never be done. 'Tis ſo here: No Man can come after God, and ſay, this or that had been better placed or timed, than it is, if this Affliction had been ſpared, and ſuch an Enjoyment ſtood in the room of it, it had been better. All God's Providences are the reſult and iſſues of his Infinite Wiſdom: For *he works all things according to the Counſel of his own will*, Eph. 1. 11. The *Wheels*, i. e. The motions and revolutions of Providence, are full of Eyes; they are well Ezek. 1. 18. adviſed, and judicious motions, *Non cæco impetu volvuntur rotæ*; they run not at random. The moſt regular and excellent working, muſt deeds follow the moſt deep and perfect Counſel. Iſa. 28. 29. *He is deep in Counſel, and excellent in working.*

Now every Affliction that befals God's Covenanted People, being placed by the moſt wiſe and infinite Counſel of God, in that very order, time, and manner in which they befal them, this very Affliction, and not that, at this very time, and not at another, (it being always a time of need, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6.) and uſhered in by ſuch forerunning occaſions and circumſtances; it muſt follow, that they all take the proper places, and nick exactly the fitteſt Seaſons; and if one of them were wanting, ſomething would be defective in the frame of your Happineſs. As they now ſtand, they work together for your good, which diſplaced, they would not do.

It's ſaid, *Jer.* 18. 11. *Behold I frame Evil, and I deviſe a device.* It's ſpoken of the contrivance and frame of Afflictions, as the proper works of God. The Project of it is laid for his Glory, and the eternal good of his People. It turns to their ſalvation, 1 *Phil.* 19. But O how fain would we have this or that Affliction ſcrued out of the frame of Providence, conceiving it would be far better out than in. O if God had ſpared my Child, or my Health, it had been better for me than now it is. But this is no other than a preſumptuous correcting, and controlling of the Wiſdom of God; and ſo he interprets it, *Job.* 40. 2. *He that reproveth God, let him anſwer it.* God hath put every Affliction upon your Perſons Eſtates, Relations, juſt where you find and feel it; and that whole Frame he hath put into the Covenant, in the Vertue whereof it works for your Salvation: And therefore let all diſputings and reaſonings, all murmurs and diſcontents ceaſe, nothing can be better for you, than as God hath laid it; and this one would think ſhould heal and quiet all. You your ſelves would marr all, by preſuming to mend Iſa. any thing. *Who hath directed the Spirit of the* 14. *Lord*,

*Lord, or being his counſellour, hath taught him? With whom took he counſel, and who inſtructed him, amd taught him the path of Judgment? and taught him knowledge, and ſhewed him the way of underſtanding?* Well then, be ſatisfied 'tis beſt as it is; and nothing can be ſo advantageous to you, as God's project and contrivance, which you are ſo uneaſie under, and diſſatisfied about.

*Arg.* IV. As the Covenant ſorts and ranks all your troubles into their proper Claſſes and places of ſervice, ſo it ſecures the ſpecial gracious preſence of God with you, in the deepeſt plunges of diſtreſs that can befal you; which preſence is a full relief to all your troubles, or elſe nothing in the World is, or can be ſo.

The very Heathens thought themſelves well ſecured againſt all evils and dangers, if they had their petty houſhold Gods with them in their Journeys: but the great God of Heaven and Earth hath engaged to be with his People, in all their afflictions and diſtreſſes. As a tender Father ſits up himſelf with his ſick Child, and will not leave him to the care of a Servant only; ſo God thinks it not enough to leave his Children to the tutelage and charge of Angels, but will be with them himſelf, and that in a ſpecial and peculiar way: ſo run the expreſs words of the Covenant, *I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear into their hearts; and they ſhall not depart from me.* e. 32. 40. Here he undertakes for both parts, himſelf and them. *I will not,* and *they ſhall not.*

Here is the Saints ſecurity for the gracious preſence of God with them, a preſence which diſpels all the Clouds of affliction and ſorrow, as the Sun ſcatters the morning Miſts. The God of all conſolation is with you, O poor dejected Believers, and will not ſuch a preſence turn the darkneſs into light round about you? There is a threefold preſence of God with his Creatures.

1. Eſſential, which is common and neceſſary to all.
2. Gracious, which is peculiar to ſome on Earth.
3. Glorious, which is the felicity of Heaven.

The firſt is not the priviledge here ſecured; for it is neceſſary to all, good and bad: In him we all live, and move, and have our being. The vileſt *Men* on Earth, yea the *Beaſts* of the Field, and the very *Devils* in Hell are always in this preſence of God, but it is their torment, rather than their priviledge. The laſt is proper to the glorified Saints and Angels. Such a preſence imbodied, Saints cannot now bear; but it is his ſpecial gracious preſence which is made over and ſecured to them in the Covenant of Grace: and this preſence of God is manifeſted to them two ways.

1. Internally, by the Spirit.
2. Externally, by Providence.

1. Internally, by the Spirit of Grace dwelling and acting in them, this is a choice priviledge to them in the day of affliction: for hereby they are inſtructed and taught the meaning of the Rod. Pſal. 94. 12. *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, and teacheſt him out of thy law.* O 'tis a bleſſed thing to be taught ſo many Leſſons by the Rod, as the Spirit teacheth them! Surely they reckon it an abundant recompence of all that they ſuffer. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy ſtatutes.* Pſal. 119. 71. Yea, he refreſhes as well as teaches, and no Cordials revive like his. *In the multitude of the thoughts I had within me, thy comforts delight my ſoul.* Pſal. 94. 19.

Yea, by the preſence and bleſſing of his Spirit, our Afflictions are ſanctified to ſubdue and purge out our corruptions. *By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away ſin.* Iſa. 27. 9. Now if a man be inſtructed in the ends and deſigns of the Rod, refreſhed and comforted under every ſtripe of the Rod, and have his ſins mortified and purged by the ſanctification of the Spirit upon his Afflictions; then both the burthenſomneſs and bitterneſs of his Afflictions are removed and healed by the internal preſence of the Spirit of God with his afflicted ones. But,

2. Beſides this, God is providentially preſent with his People, in all their troubles, in a more external way; ordering all the circumſtances of their troubles to their advantage. He orders the degree and extent of our Afflictions, ſtill leaving us ſome mercies and comforts to ſupport and refreſh us, when others are cut off. In meaſure doth he debate with his Covenant People, ſtaying the rough wind in the day of the Eaſt wind. Iſa. 27. 8. He might juſtly ſmite all our outward *Comforts* at once, ſo that Affliction ſhould not riſe up the ſecond time: for what comfort ſoever hath been abuſed by ſin, is thereby forfeited into the hand of Judgment. But the Lord knows our inability to ſuſtain ſuch ſtrokes, and therefore proportions them to our ſtrength. We have ſome living Relations to miniſter comfort to us when mourning over our dead: He makes not a full end of all at once. Yea, and his Providence ſupports our frail Bodies, enabling them to endure the ſhocks and ſtorms of ſo many Afflictions, without ruine. Surely there is as much of the care of Providence manifeſted in this, as there is in preſerving poor crazy leaking Barks, and weather-beaten Veſſels at Sea, when the Waves not only cover them, but break into them, and they are ready to founder in the midſt of them.

O what a ſingular mercy is the gracious preſence of God with men! even the ſpecial preſence of that God, *who is above all, and through all, and in you all,* as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks. Eph. 4. 6. *Above all,* in Majeſty and Dominion; *through all,* in his moſt efficacious Providence; and *in you all,* by his Grace and Spirit. As he is above all, ſo he is able to command any Mercy you want, with a word of his Mouth; as he is through all, ſo he muſt be intimately acquainted with all your wants, ſtraights, and fears; and as he is in you all, ſo he is engaged for your ſupport and ſupply, as you are the dear Members of Chriſt's myſtical Body.

*Object.* But methinks I here *Gideon*'s Objection rolled into the way of this ſovereign Conſolation. If God be with us, why is all this Evil befallen us?

*Sol.* All what? If it had been all this rebellion and rage againſt God, all this apoſtacy and revolting more and more, all this contumacy and hardneſs of heart under the Rod; then it had been a weighty and ſtumbling Objection indeed: but to ſay, If God be with us, why are all theſe chaſtening corrections and temporal croſſes befallen us? why doth he ſmite our Bodies, Children, or Eſtates? is an Objection no way fit to be urged by any that are acquainted with the Scriptures, or the nature and tenour of the Covenant of Grace. Is afflicting and forſaking, all one with you? muſt God needs hate, becauſe he ſcourgeth you? I queſtion whether Satan himſelf hath Impudence enough to ſet ſuch a Note or Comment upon *Heb.* 12. 6. *For whom the Lord loveth, he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth.*

No, no, Chriſtian, 'tis not a chaſtening Rod, but the denying of ſuch a favour, and ſuffering men to ſin with Impunity, and go on proſperouſly in the way of their own hearts, that ſpeaks a rejected man, as the next words, *ver.* 7. informs you. As he never loved you the better for your proſperity, ſo you may be confident he loves you never the leſs for your adverſity: and will not this cloſe and heal the wounds made by Affliction? What, not ſuch a Promiſe as this, *I will be with him in trouble*, Pſal. 91. 15. Will not ſuch a preſence revive thee? What then can do it? *Moſes* reckoned that a Wilderneſs with God, was better than a *Canaan* without him. *If thy* Exod. 33. 15. *preſence go not with me* (ſaith he) *then carry us not hence.* And if there be the Spirit of a Chriſtian in thee, and God ſhould give thee thine own choice, thou wouldſt rather chuſe to be in the midſt of all theſe Afflictions with thy God, than back again in all thy proſperity, and among thy Children and former Comforts, without him.

*Arg.* V. As this Covenant aſſures you of Gods gracious and ſpecial preſence, ſo it fully ſecures all the Eſſentials and Subſtantials of your Happineſs, againſt all hazards and contingencies; in which ſecurity lies your full Relief and compleat Remedy againſt all your troubles for the loſs of other things.

There be two ſorts of things belonging to all God's People, *viz.*

1. Eſſentials.
2. Accidentals.

1. They have ſome things which are eſſential to their Happineſs; ſuch are the loving kindneſs of God, the pardon of ſin, union with Chriſt, and eternal ſalvation. And they have other things which are Accidentals, that come and go, live and die, without affecting or altering their Happineſs; ſuch are Health, Eſtates, Children, and all ſorts of Relations and Earthly Comforts. Theſe are to our Happineſs, as Leaves are to the Tree which fade and fall away without endangering the Tree; but the other as the vital Sap, without which it withers and dies at the very root. Now if it can be made out that the Covenant fully ſecures the former; then it will ſtrongly follow, that it therein abundantly relieves us under all our ſorrows for the latter: and that it doth ſo, will evidently appear, by reviewing the Covenant, wherein you ſhall find all theſe ſubſtantial and eſſential Mercies of Believers, fully ſecured againſt all hazards and contingencies whatſoever.

There the loving kindneſs of God is ſecured to their Souls, whatever Afflictions he lays upon their Bodies. *Nevertheleſs my loving* Pſal. 89. 33. *kindneſs will I not take away.* And their pardon is as ſafe as the favour of God is; 'tis ſafely lock'd up in that Promiſe, *I will re-* Jer. 31. 34. *member their ſins no more.* Yea, Heaven, together with our perſeverance in the way to it, are both put out of hazard by that invaluable Promiſe, *They ſhall never periſh, neither* Joh. 10. 28. *ſhall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

Thus are all the Eſſentials of a Believers Happineſs ſecured in the Covenant; and theſe being ſafe, the loſs of other enjoyments ſhould not much affect or wound them, becauſe if he enjoy them, they add nothing to his Happineſs; and if he loſe them, he is ſtill happy in God without them. And this unriddles that Ænigmatical Expreſſion of the Apoſtle, *As having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things*; 2 Cor. 6. 10. (*i. e.*) the ſubſtraction of all external things cannot make us miſerable, who have Chriſt for our portion, and all our Happineſs intire in him.

If a man travelling on the Rode, fall into the hands of Thieves, who rob him of a few Shillings, why this doth not much affect him: for though he have loſt his ſpending Money, yet his ſtock is ſafe at home, and his Eſtate ſecure, which will yield him more. Or if a man have been at Court, and there obtain'd a Pardon for his Life, or a Grant of a Thouſand pound *per annum*, and returning home ſhould chance to loſe his Gloves or his Handkerchief, ſure if the man be in his wits, he will not take on or mourn for the loſs of theſe Trifles, whilſt the Pardon or Grant is ſafe. Surely theſe things are not worth the mentioning.

'Tis true, the loſs of outward earthly things, are to a Believer real *Tryals*, yet they are but ſeeming Loſſes: and therefore they are expreſſed in the Apoſtles phraſe, with a *Tanquam, ſicut*: *As chaſtened, and not killed*; *as ſorrowful, yet always rejoycing.* 2 Cor. 6. And if your loſſes be but as it were loſſes, your ſorrows ſhould be but as it were ſorrows: Much like a Phyſick-ſickneſs, which we do not call a proper ſickneſs, but as it were a ſickneſs, becauſe it conduceth to the *health*, and not to the *hurt* of the Perſon; as all God's medicinal Afflictions on his People alſo do.

Indeed, if the ſtroke of God were at our Souls, to cut them off from Chriſt and Heaven, to raze our Names out of the Covenant, or revoke the pardon of ſin; then we had cauſe enough to juſtifie the extremity of ſorrow; cauſe enough to weep out our Eyes, and break our Hearts for ſuch a diſmal blow as that would be. But bleſſed be God you ſtand out of the way of ſuch ſtrokes as theſe; let God ſtrike round about you, or lay his hand upon any other comforts you poſſeſs, he will never ſmite you in theſe eſſential things, which is certainly enough to allay and relieve all your other ſorrows.

My Name is blotted out of the Earth, but ſtill it is written in Heaven. God hath taken my only Son from me, but he hath given his only Son for me, and to me. He hath broken off my hopes and expectations as to this World, but my hopes of Heaven are fixed, Theſſ. 4. 14, 15, 17, 18.

ed, ſure, and immovable for ever. My houſe and heart are both in confuſion and great diſorder, but I have ſtill an everlaſting Covenant ordered in all things, and ſure. I cannot ſay my ſon liveth, but I can ſtill ſay, I know that my Redeemer liveth. *The graſs withereth, and the flower fadeth; but the word of the Lord abideth for ever*, Iſa. 40. 8.

*Argu.* 6. As God ſtrikes none of the ſubſtantial Mercies of his Covenant-People, ſo when he doth ſmite their external and accidental Comforts, the Covenant of Grace aſſures them, that even thoſe ſtrokes are the ſtrokes of Love, and not Wrath; the Wounds of a Friend and not of an Enemy: which is another ſingular relief to the afflicted Soul.

The moſt frightful thing in any Affliction, is the mark or character of God's Wrath which it ſeems to bear: take away that, and the Affliction is nothing. *O Lord, rebuke me*
Pſal. 6. 1. *not in thine anger, neither chaſten me in thy hot diſpleaſure.* He doth not deprecate the rebukes, but the anger of God; not his chaſtening, but his hot diſpleaſure. God's Anger is much more terrible than his rebuking, and his hot diſpleaſure than his chaſtening. Therefore he intreats, that whatever God did to him in the way of affliction, he would do nothing in the way of wrath; and then he could bear any thing from him. A mark of divine anger ingraven upon any Affliction, makes that Affliction dreadful to a gracious Soul.

But if a man be well ſatisfied that whatever anguiſh there be, yet there is no anger, but that the Rod is in the Hand of Love: O how it eaſes the ſoul, and lightens the burden! Now this deſirable point is abundantly cleared in the Covenant; where we find a clear *Conſiſtence*, yea, a neceſſary *Connection* betwixt the Love and the Rod of God, *Pſal.* 89. 31. and *Heb.* 12. 6. nay ſo far are the Afflictions of the Saints from being marks of his Wrath, that they are the Fruits and Evidences of his Fatherly Love.

Two men walking through the Streets, ſee a company of Boys fighting, one of them ſteps forth and ſingles out one of thoſe Boys, and carries him home to correct him; which of the two think you is that Childs Father? The caſe ſtanding thus with all God's People, ſurely there is no reaſon for their deſpondencies whatever their Afflictions be.

*Arg.* 7. Laſtly, the Covenant doth not only diſcover the conſiſtence and connection betwixt the Love and the Rod of God, but it alſo gives full ſatisfaction to the Saints, that whatſoever temporary Mercy they are deprived of, which was within the Bond of the Covenant when they enjoyed it, is not loſt, but ſhall certainly be reſtored to them again with a rich improvement, and that they ſhall enjoy it again to all eternity.

What a rare Model or Platform of Conſolatory Arguments hath the Apoſtle laid down to antidote our immoderate ſorrows, for the death of our dear Relatives which died inter-
1 Theſſ. 4. 14, 15, 17, 18. eſted in Chriſt and the Covenant! *I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are aſleep*, v. 13. They are not dead, but aſleep. Sleep is but a Perentheſis to the Labours and Travels of this Life; and it is but a partial privation, not of the habit, but acts of Reaſon, to which upon awaking the Soul returns again. Juſt ſuch a thing is that which in Believers is commonly called Death. And we do not uſe to bewail our Friends, becauſe they are fallen aſleep: And therefore it no way becomes us to ſorrow as thoſe that have no hope, nor to look upon them as loſt; for (as he ſtrongly argueth and concludeth, *v.* 14.) their reſtoration to their Bodies, yea, and to our enjoyment again, is fully ſecured both to them and us by the Reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead. The influence of his Reſurrection is by the Prophet *Iſaiah* compared to the Morning-dew, Iſa. 26. 19.
to ſhew that what vertue there is in the Morning-dew to cauſe the languiſhing Plants of the Earth to revive and flouriſh, that, and much more there is in the Reſurrection of Chriſt, to revive and quicken the dead bodies of theſe Saints, their Bodies ſhall be reſtored by vertue of the warm animating dew or influence of his Reſurrection.

*Obj.* But the marvellous change which the Reſurrection makes upon glorified Bodies, and the long ſeparation of many Ages betwixt us and them, ſeems to make it impoſſible for us to know them, as thoſe that were once related to us upon Earth; and if ſo, then that comfort which reſulted from them, as in relation to us, is periſhed with them at death.

*Sol.* Whatever change the Reſurrection ſhall make on their Bodies, and the length of time betwixt our parting with them on Earth, and meeting them again in Heaven, ſhall be; neither the one or other ſeem ſufficient to inform the grounds of our hope, that we ſhall know them to be the very perſons that were once ſo dear to us upon Earth. There may remain ſome lineament or property of individuation whereby the acute glorified eye may poſſibly diſcover who they were; or if not, yet none can doubt but it may be diſcovered to us by Revelation from God: and that one way or other it will be diſcovered, is highly probable, becauſe nothing will be denied to that perfect State which may contribute to, or compleat the joy and happineſs thereof, as we cannot but think this knowledge will do. If *Adam* knew *Eve* to be fleſh of his fleſh, and bone of his bone, in the ſtate of Innocence; and if the Apoſtles knew *Moſes* and *Elias* upon the Mount; yea, if *Dives* in Hell knew *Abraham* and *Lazarus* in Heaven: ſure we may well allow that knowledge to the glorified Saints in Heaven, which we find in the ſtate of Innocence, or in the ſinful ſtate on Earth, or in the ſtate of the Damned in Hell.

And if ſo, then the Covenanted Parents ſhall be able to ſay in that day, This was our Child for whom we prayed and travelled again, till Chriſt was formed in him; this is he whom we educated for God, and trained up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; and now we ſee the fruit of our Prayers, Counſels, Catechiſings; a Child of ſo many Prayers periſhed not. And the Covenanted Child ſhall ſay, This was my pious Father, who took ſuch care for my Soul; and this my tender Mother, who, like another *Monica*, was zealouſly concerned for my Eternal Happineſs Theſe are they that ſowed ſo many Prayers, which God gave them not time to reap the Fruits of on Earth, but now they ſhall reap the fruit and comfort of them for ever. O joyful meeting in the Kingdom of God! The joy of ſuch a meeting abundantly recompences for all the Tears and Groans of a dolorous parting.

Now, put all this together, and value the Arguments produced to make good the firſt thing propounded, namely, the ſufficiency of the Covenant to relieve and remedy all the ſorrows and loſſes of Believers, be they never ſo many, or ſo great; this cannot be doubted, ſince it hath been proved, that it *Diſarms* all their Afflictions of the only ſting by which they wound; *Alters* the very nature and property of their Afflictions, turning them from Curſes into Bleſſings; *Ranks* and *diſpoſes* them into their proper Claſs and place of ſervice, ſo as the counſel of Men and Angels could never lay them better to our advantage; *Engages* the gracious and ſpecial Preſence of God with you in all your Troubles; *ſecures* all your eſſential and ſubſtantial Mercies from all hazards and contingencies; *Diſcovers* a conſiſtency, yea, a connection betwixt the Rod and the Love of God; and *Aſſures* you, that whatever Temporal Mercy you ever enjoyed, in and by vertue of the Covenant, ſhall be reſtored to you again with an admirable improvement, and ſingular advantage. It is by all this, I ſay, abundantly proved, that the Covenant is a ſoveraign and effectual Remedy to all the ſorrows of God's People; and that it was no *Hyperbole* in *David's Encomium*, when he called it his Salvation, and all his Deſire. But then: as I hinted before,

II. It muſt be able to do theſe things at all times, and in all Ages, or elſe it will be be but a temporary relief to ſome only, and not to all. Now that the Covenant hath this ability in all Ages, and is as able to relieve us now, as it was to relieve *David* in his day, fully appears by the *Epithet* given it in the Text, it is an *EVERLASTING COVENANT. Yet hath he made with me an Everlaſting Covenant.*

Time is the meaſure of other things; but Everlaſtingneſs is the meaſure of the Covenant. When the Lord eſpouſeth a People to himſelf in Covenant, *he betroths them to himſelf for ever*, Hoſ. 2. 19. And from that day forward they may ſay on good grounds, *This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto Death*, as it is in Pſal. 48. 14. Nothing in Nature is ſo firmly eſtabliſhed as the Covenant is. Hills and Mountains ſhall ſooner ſtart from their Baſis and Centre, and fly like wandring Atomes up and down in the Air, than this Covenant ſhall ſtart from its ſure and ſtedfaſt Foundation, *Iſa.* 54. 10.

The Cauſes and Reaſons of the immutability of the new Covenant, are

1. The unchangeable purpoſe of God, which is a ſure and ſtedfaſt Foundation. 2 Tim. 2. 19. *Nevertheleſs, the Foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this Seal, the Lord knoweth who are his.* The firſt act of God's Love to the Creature, is that by which he chuſeth ſuch a one to be his, and is therefore called the Foundation of God, as being that on which he lays the ſuperſtructure of all other Mercies. And this ſtands ſure, there can be no vacillancy or ſlipperineſs in ſuch a Foundation: For he knows who are his; he knows them as his Creatures, and as his new Creatures in Covenant with him; as his by Election, and his by Covenant, Tranſaction and Compact. The purpoſe of his Grace before time, gave being to the Covenant of Grace in time, and is the Foundation of it.

2. The Free Grace of God in Chriſt, is that which gives Immutability to this Covenant. It is not built upon Works, but Grace: *Therefore it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace; to the end the Promiſe might be ſure to all the Seed.* This Covenant is not founded as the firſt was, upon the variable and inconſtant obedience of Man, but upon Grace which is a ſteddy and firm Foundation.

Rom. 4. 16.

3. The ſuretiſhip of Chriſt gives everlaſting ſtability to this Covenant. *Heb.* 7 22. *He was made the ſurety of a better Teſtament*, or Covenant: For διαθήκη, ſignifies both, he ſtruck Hands, or engaged himſelf for the whole Covenant, and every Condition in it, and that both on God's Part and ours; to undergo all our Puniſhments, to pay all our Debts, and to work in us all that God required of us in the Covenant of Grace: And all this under the penalty that lay upon us to have undergone. And this not as other Sureties, who enter into one and the ſame Bond with the Principal, ſo that the Creditor may come upon which he will; but he lays all upon Chriſt, and relies wholly upon him for ſatisfaction, knowing he was able to perform it; and ſo under the Type of God's Covenant with *David*, Chriſt is brought in, Pſal. 89. 19. *Thou ſpakeſt in viſion to thy holy one, and ſaidſt, I have laid help on one who is mighty. q. d.* I know thy ability, my Son, thou art able to pay me, and therefore I lay all upon thee.

Ἔγγυος ab *ἐγγυάω promittere quaſi ἐν γυίοις, in manibus.*

It follows ſtrongly from what hath been ſaid, that the vertue of the Covenant decays not by time, as other things do, but it is at this day, and will be to the end of the World, as potent and efficacious a Relief to all God's People, as ever it was to *David*, or any of the Believers of the firſt Ages.

And if ſo, certainly nothing can be more ſtrongly ſupporting, or ſweetly relieving in ſuch a changeable World, than this, he hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant. What *David* ſpeaks of the natural Heavens, will be found true, of things over ſpread and covered by them. *They ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure, and all of them ſhall wax old like a Garment: And as a Veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be changed. But thou art the ſame, and thy Years ſhall have no end.* The Creature was, and is not; but my Covenant God is the ſame; his Name is *I am*, and his Covenant is the ſame that ever it was; which is the ſecond Property or Ingredient of this compleat Remedy to the Saints Afflictions. The Covenant hath not only all Power, Vertue, and Efficacy in it ſelf to relieve a diſtreſſed Chriſtian, but it hath it in all Ages, as well

Pſal. 10 26, 2

well for one as for another. The third and laſt follows, namely,

III. That it is a *ſure Covenant*. So *David* ſtiles it in my Text. The certainty of the Covenant, is the glory of the Covenant, and the comfort of all that are in it, The certainty of it in it ſelf is paſt all doubt by what hath been ſaid before. It is certain God did make ſuch an Everlaſting Covenant with his People in Chriſt, and it muſt remain an Eternal Truth, that ſuch a Covenant there is betwixt God and them. It is as impoſſible that this everlaſting Covenant ſhould not be made with them, as it is impoſſible for God to lye, *Heb.* 6. 18. If he might make himſelf not to have covenanted Everlaſtingly with them, when once he had ſo Covenanted, ſuch a ſuppoſition would turn up the foundation of all Faith and Certainty, and overthrow the Apoſtles conſequence on which the Faith and Comfort of Believers is built. Nor is it any infringement of the Almighty Power, to ſay, God himſelf cannot do that which implies a plain Contradiction, as *factum infectum reddere*, to make that which was done, not to be done.

But of this there is no doubt; it is a ſure Covenant in it ſelf: That which makes to my purpoſe here, is to prove it capable of Perſonal Security and certainty to us. *David* had, and all the Federates, as well as he, may have a ſubjective or perſonal certainty alſo. He ſpeaks Categorically and poſitively in the Text, *Yet hath he made [with me] an Everlaſting Covenant*.

*Object*. If it be ſaid, he might have a perſonal certainty of it, becauſe it was revealed to him in an extraordinary way by the Prophet *Nathan*, 2 Sam. 7. 12, 13, 14. And *extraordinaria non currunt in exemplum*, this was a peculiar favour, which we may not expect

*Sol.* I reply, And why may not we know it with as full a certainty to whom God is pleaſed to make it known in his ordinary way? Think you his Word and Spirit cannot ratifie it as fully and firmly to our Souls, as *Nathan*'s diſcovery of it did to *David*'s Soul? God give me but ſuch a Seal of it in his ordinary method and way of Confirmation, and I will deſire no more of him in this World for my relief and comfort, whatever Afflictions it ſhall pleaſe him to lay upon me.

And thus you ſee all the properties of a compleat Remedy in the Covenant, and of it every Believer may ſay, *This is all my Salvation, and all my Deſire, though he make not my Houſe to grow*. And now what hinders, but that all God's Afflicted ſhould ſay from henceforth, *Return unto thy Reſt, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.* I have all the deſires of my Heart in the Covenant of God, though he take away the deſire of mine Eyes upon Earth with his ſtroke. In this Covenant my Soul is at reſt, and my very Heart is centred. No Affliction can be great enough to make the Conſolations of the Almighty ſeem ſmall in mine Eyes. Worldly Sorrows may ſwallow up worldly Comforts, but no Sorrows upon Earth can ſwallow up the conſolations of the Covenant.

I know many Chriſtians droop and are dejected under the Rod, notwithſtanding ſuch Soveraign Cordials are prepared for them in the Covenant; but this is not for want of Efficacy in the Covenant, but for want of Faith to clear their Intereſt, and draw forth the Vertue of it to their relief. Some are ignorant of their priviledges, and others diffident about their Intereſt. It is with many of God's Children, as it is with our Children in their Infancy, they know not their Father, nor the Inheritance they are born unto.

That which remains, is the improvement of this Truth to our actual comfort and relief in the day of Trouble. And this I ſhall aſſiſt you in as God ſhall aſſiſt me, by way of,

1. Information.
2. Exhortation.
3. Examination, and
4. Conſolation.

USE I *For information, in three Corolaries.*

*Corolary* I. By what hath been diſcourſed from this Text, it appears, *That God governs the ſpiritual part of the World by Faith, and not by Senſe. He will have them live upon his Covenant and Promiſes, and fetch their relief and comforts thence, under all their Sorrows and diſtreſſes in this Life.*

God never intended temporal things for his Peoples Portion, therefore from them they muſt not expect their relief in times of trouble. He will have us read his love to us by things within us, not by things without us. He hath other ways of expreſſing his love to his People, than by the ſmiles of his Providence upon them. How would Earthly things be over-valued and idolized, if beſides their conveniency to our Bodies, they ſhould be the marks and evidences of God's Love to our Souls! A Chriſtian is to value himſelf as the *Merchant*, or the *Husbandman* doth. The *Merchant* values himſelf by his Bills and Goods abroad, not by the ready Caſh that lies by him. And the *Husbandman* by his Deeds and Leaſes, and ſo many Acres of Corn he hath in the Ground, and knows he hath a good Eſtate, though ſometimes he be not able to command twenty Shillings. Chriſtian, thy Eſtate alſo lies in good Promiſes, and new Covenant-Securities, whether thou haſt more or leſs of Earthly comforts in thy hands.

Every Creature feeds according to its nature; the ſame Plant affords Food to ſeveral ſorts of Creatures: The *Bee* feeds upon the Flower, the *Sheep* upon the Branch, the *Bird* upon the Seed, and the *Swine* upon the Root. One cannot live upon what the other doth. So it is here: A Chriſtian can feed upon the Promiſes, and make a ſweet meal upon the Covenant, which the carnal Mind cannot reliſh. *The Life that I now live, I live by the Faith of the Son of God*, ſaith the Apoſtle. Gal. 2. 21.

This is that myſterious and excellent life of Faith, and the Teſt of true Chriſtianity, to relieve our ſelves by our hopes of things to come, againſt preſent Evils; to ballance the Sorrows and Loſſes of this Life, with the promiſes and expectations of the next. Thus did the renowned Believers of the firſt Age; whenever they felt a faint pang or qualm upon their Hearts, under their Tryals or Sorrows from the World, they would preſently run to their Cordial, the Promiſes, and a ſip of Faith from that Bottle would refreſh and invigorate their Souls with new Life and Powers. *We faint not whilſt we look not at the things which are ſeen, for they are temporal; but at the things which are not ſeen, for they are Eternal.* And truly ſo muſt we alſo, when our Hearts are faint within us in days of Affliction, or our Spirits will fail, and we ſhall go away in a faint fit of deſpondency.

2 Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18.

Corol. II. *Learn hence the ſoveraign efficacy of the Word, and what a choice priviledge it is to have theſe lively Oracles of God in our hands, in a day of diſtreſs and trouble.*

'Tis no ordinary Mercy to be born in a Land of Bibles and Miniſters; to have theſe choice ſupports and reliefs at hand, in all our fainting Hours. *This is my comfort in my Affliction, for thy Word hath quickned me.* It was no ſmall Mercy gained by the Reformation, that it put the Oracles of God into our Hands. It opened a Shop of Cordials for the ſupport of our Souls. For this, among other great and excellent uſes, the Scriptures were written, *That we, through Patience, and Comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.* In other parts of the World it is a Sealed Book; bleſs God it is not ſo to you. All Creature-Comforts have a double defect, they are neither ſuitable nor durable; but the Word is ſo. Compare the Arguments that have been urged from the Covenant, with ſuch as theſe. It's in vain to trouble our ſelves about what we cannot help: We are not alone in Trouble, others have their Loſſes and Afflictions as well as we. Alas, what dry and ineffectual Comforts are theſe! They penetrate not the Heart, as pardon of Sin, peace with God, and ſanctification of Troubles to our Salvation do.

Pſal. 119. 50.

Rom. 15. 4.

And no leſs is the Mercy of an able New-Teſtament Miniſtry, to open, apply, and inculcate the conſolations of the Scriptures to be eſteemed. It is no common favour to the afflicted Soul, to have with or near him, an *INTERPRETER, one among a thouſand, to ſhew unto him his uprightneſs.* O *England*, prize and improve theſe Mercies, and provoke not thy God to bereave thee of them.

Job. 33. 23.

I can find no ſuch ſettlement made of the Goſpel and Miniſtry upon any Place or People, but that God may remove both, upon their abuſe of them; and if he do, ſad will the caſe of ſuch a People be, eſpecially when a day of diſtreſs and trouble ſhall be upon them. 'Tis ſad to be in a ſtorm at Sea, without a *Compaſs* or *Pilot* to direct and adviſe the diſtreſſed Paſſengers. Much ſo is the caſe of the Afflicted, when deprived of the Word and Miniſtry.

Let it therefore be your Care to hide the Word in your Hearts, and get the Teachings of the Spirit; that whatever changes of Providence be upon the World, you may have the light and Comfort of the Scriptures to direct and chear your Souls. Sanctification is the writing of God's Law in your hearts; and what is written there, is ſecure and ſafe. The Word within you is more ſecure, ſweet and effectual, than the Word without you. *Jerom* ſaith of *Nepotianus*, that by long and aſſiduous meditation of the Scriptures, his Breaſt was at laſt become the Library of Chriſt. O that the Breaſt of every Chriſtian were ſo too.

Corol. III. *How ſad and deplorably miſerable is their condition, who have no title to, nor comfort from the Covenant of God, when a day of affliction and great diſtreſs is upon them!*

Unrelieved Miſeries are the moſt intolerable Miſeries. To be over-weighed with troubles on Earth, and want ſupport and comfort from Heaven, is a diſmal ſtate indeed; yet this is the caſe of Multitudes in the World. If a Believer be in trouble, his God bears his burthen for him, yea, he bears up him and his burthen to; but he that hath no Covenant-intereſt in God, muſt ſay as it is, *Jer.* 10. 19. *This is my Affliction, and I alone muſt bear it.*

There are but two ways they can take for Relief, either to divert their troubles by that which will *inflame* them, or reſt their burthened Spirits upon that which will *fail* them. To run to the *Tavern* or *Ale-houſe*, inſtead of the *Cloſet*, is to quench the Fire, by pouring on Oil; and to run from one Creature which is ſmitten and withered, to another which ſtill continues with us, is to lean upon a broken Reed, which not only deceives us, but wounds and pierceth us. What a miſerable plight was *Saul* in, and how doleful was his cry and complaint to *Samuel*, 1 Sam. 28. 15. *I am ſore diſtreſſed, for the* Philiſtines *make War againſt me, and God is departed from me, and anſwereth me no more.* Heaven and Earth forſook him at once.

Reader, If this be thy caſe, I adviſe thee to reſt no longer in ſo miſerable a condition. Thy very diſtreſs ſeems by an happy neceſſity to put thee upon God, and drive thee to him for Refuge: And it ſeems to be the very aim and deſign of God in blaſting all thy Earthly Comforts, to neceſſitate thee to come to him, which thou wouldeſt never be perſwaded to do, whilſt thou hadſt any Creature-prop to ſtay and reſt upon. And think not that thou ſhalt be rejected, becauſe thou art brought by a plain neceſſity to him; come ſincerely, and thou ſhalt not be upbraided, becauſe a neceſſity threw thee upon him.

*USE* II. Seeing then that the Covenant of God is the great relief and ſupport of all the afflicted People, let the afflicted Soul go to this Bleſſed Covenant; ſtudy and apply it in all diſtreſſes. It is in it ſelf a Soverain Cordial, able to revive a gracious Spirit at the loweſt Ebb; but then it muſt be ſtudied and applied, or it will never give forth its Conſolations to our refreſhment. Extream Sorrows are apt to deafen our Ears to all voices of Comfort. The loud cries of Affliction too often drown the ſweet ſtill voice of Spiritual Conſolation; but either here or no where our Redreſs is to be found. Why ſeek we the living among the dead? Comfort from things that cannot yield it? The Covenant can diſcover two things which are able to pacifie the moſt diſcompoſed heart, *viz.*

1. The good } of Affliction.
2. The end }

1. It will diſcover to us the good of Affliction, and ſo rectifie our miſtaken judgments about it. God is not undoing, but conſulting our intereſt and happineſs in all theſe diſpenſations. It will ſatisfie us, that in all theſe things he doth no more than what we our ſelves allow and approve in other caſes. It is not meerly from his pleaſure, but for our profit, that theſe breaches are made upon our Families, and Comforts, *Heb.* 12. 10. Who blames the *Mariner* for caſting the Goods over-board to ſave Ship and life in a ſtorm? or the *Chirurgeon* for lancing, yea, or cutting off a Leg or Arm to preſerve the life of his Patient? or *Souldiers* for burning or beating down the Suburbs, to ſave the City in a Siege? And why muſt God only be cenſured, for cutting off thoſe things from us which he knows will hazard us in the day of Temptation? He ſees the leſs we have of entanglement, the more promptneſs and fitneſs we ſhall have to go through the tryals that are coming upon us; and that all the Comforts he cuts off from our Bodies, goes to the profit and advantage of our Souls.

2. Here you gain a ſight not only of the good of Affliction, but alſo of the comfortable end and iſſue of Affliction. This cloudy and ſtormy Morning will wind up in a ſerene and pleaſant Evening. There's a vaſt difference betwixt our meeting with Afflictions, and our parting from them. *You have heard of the patience of* Job, *and have ſeen the end of the Lord.* O get but *Job*'s Spirit under Affliction, and you may ſee as happy an end of them as he did.

Had *Naomy* ſeen the end of the Lord in taking away her Husband, and ſtarving her out of *Moab*, ſhe would not have changed her name, or ſaid the Lord had dealt bitterly with her, in grafting her Daughter by that Providence into the Noble Line, out of which the Saviour of the World was to riſe; and could you but ſee that good in order to which all this train of Troubles is laid, you would not murmur or deſpond as you do.

*Object.* 1. O but this is a grievous Stroke; God hath ſmitten me in the apple of mine Eye, and written bitter things againſt me. No ſorrow is like my ſorrow; 'tis a mourning for an only Son; I have loſt all in one.

*Sol.* 1. You can never loſe all in one, except that one be *Chriſt*; and he being yours in Covenant, can never be loſt. But your meaning is, you have loſt all of that kind in one, no more Sons to build up you Houſe, and continue your Name.

2. But yet Religion will not allow you to ſay that your dead Children are a loſt Generation. *Præmittuntur, non amittuntur*: They are ſent before, but not loſt. For they are a Covenant-ſeed, by you dedicated to the Lord: They were Children of many Prayers; a great ſtock of Prayers was laid up for them; in them alſo you, and all that knew them, diſcerned a teachable Spirit, pious inclinations, and Conſcience of ſecret duties, ſome good things towards the Lord God of *Iſrael*, as was ſaid of young *Abijah*, 1 *Kings* 14. 13. So that you parted from them upon far eaſier terms than good *David* parted from his *Amnon*, *Abſolom*, or *Adonijah*, who died in their ſins and open rebellions. There was a ſting in his troubles which you feel not; and if he comforted himſelf notwithſtanding in the Covenant of his God, in this reſpect may you much more.

*Object.* 2. O but my Son was cut off in the very Bud, juſt when the Fruits of Education were ready to diſcloſe and open.

*Sol.* Let not that conſideration ſo incenſe your ſorrows: God knows the fitteſt time both to give and to take our comforts; and ſeeing you have good grounds to hope your Child died intereſted in the Covenant of God, you have the leſs reaſon to inſiſt upon that afflicting circumſtance of an immature death. He that dies in Chriſt, hath lived long enough both for himſelf and us. That *Marriner* hath ſailed long enough, that hath gained his Port; and that Souldier fought long enough, that hath won the Victory: And that Child lived long enough, that hath won Heaven, how early ſoever he died.

Beſide, the ſooner he died, the leſs ſin he hath committed, and the leſs miſery he ſaw and felt in this wretched World, which we are left to behold and feel. And it is but a vanity to imagine that the parting pull with him would have been eaſier, if the enjoyment of him had been longer: For the long enjoyment of deſirable Comforts, doth not uſe to weaken, but abundantly to ſtrengthen and faſten the tyes of affection.

Submit your Reaſon therefore, as is meet, to the Wiſdom of God, who certainly choſe the fitteſt ſeaſon for this Affliction.

O but, ——— No more Buts and Objections, I beſeech you. Enough hath been offer'd from the Covenant of your God, to ſilence all your Objections, and to give you the eaſe and pleaſure of a reſigned Will. And what are all our Buts and Objections, but a ſpurning at Divine Soveraignity, and the thruſting in the Affliction deeper into your own hearts, which are wounded but too deep already?

I perſwade you not to put off, but to regulate natural Affections: To be without them, would deſervedly rank us among the worſt of Heathens; but rightly to bound and manage them, would ſet you among the beſt of Chriſtians.

I cannot imagine what eaſe or advantage holy *Baſil* gained by ſuch a particular and heart-piercing account, as he gave of a like Affliction with this; nor to what purpoſe it can be to you, to recal and recount thoſe things which only incenſe and aggravate your troubles: Doubtleſs your better way were to turn your thoughts from ſuch ſubjects as theſe, to your God in Covenant, as *David* in the Text did, and to recount the many great and ineſtimable mercies that are ſecured to you therein; which death ſhall never ſmite, or cut off from you, as it doth your other enjoyments.

*Filius mihi erat Adoleſcens, ſolus vitæ ſucceſſor, ſolatium ſenectæ, gloria generis, flos æqualium, fulcrum domus, ætatem gratioſiſſimam agebat, &c.*

*Queſt*. But yet unleſs we can in ſome meaſure clear our Covenant-intereſt, all theſe excellent Cordials prepared, will ſignifie no more to our relief, than water ſpilt upon the ground: help us therefore to do that, or elſe all that hath been ſaid is in vain? How may a perſon diſcern his Covenant-right and intereſt?

*Anſ*. This indeed is worthy of all conſideration, and deſerves a ſerious anſwer, foraſmuch as it is fundamental to your comfort, and all actual refreſhment in times of trouble; and will bring us to the next Uſe, which is for tryal of our Covenant-intereſt.

*Uſe* III. The great Queſtion to be decided, is, Whether God be our Covenant-God, and we his People? A Queſtion of the moſt ſolemn nature, and ſuch as requires awful attention.

We cannot expect ſatisfaction in this matter by ſuch an extraordinary way as *David* had it, but we may know it by,

*Firſt*, Our Covenant-Engagements.
*Secondly*, Our Covenant Impreſſions.
*Thirdly*, Our Covenant-Converſations.

*Firſt*, By our Covenant-Engagements, or Dedications of our ſelves to God; ſometimes called our *joyning our ſelves to the Lord*, *Zech*. 2. 11. our yielding our ſelves to him, *Rom*. 6. 19. our giving our ſelves to him, 2 *Cor*. 8. 5. The Soul that freely and deliberately conſents to take or chuſe the Lord to be his God, may warrantably conclude the Lord hath taken or choſen him: for our choice of God is but the reſult of his choice of us. John 15. 16. *You have not choſen me, but I have choſen you*; (*i. e.* you could never have choſen me, but in conſequence to, and by vertue of my firſt choice of you.

Well then, let it be ſeriouſly conſidered, whether you have duly conſented to take the Lord for your God, and Chriſt for your Redeemer. This includes two things in it.

1. Your relinquiſhing of all things inconſiſtent with him.
2. Your acceptation of all that promotes the glory and enjoyment of him.

1. Your relinquiſhing of all things that are inconſiſtent with an Intereſt in him. Except we let theſe go, God cannot be our God, nor Chriſt our Redeemer. The things to be relinquiſhed for Chriſt are in ſhort, both our *ſinful*, and our *righteous ſelf*. Sinful-ſelf muſt be diſclaimed and renounced: For we cannot be the Servants of Sin, and the Servants of Chriſt too, *Rom*. 6. 14. 18. And righteous ſelf muſt be renounced alſo, or we can have no part or intereſt in his Righteouſneſs, *Rom*. 10. 3. Theſe are two difficult points of ſelf-denial to part with every beloved Luſt, and to give up our own righteouſneſs. Thouſands chuſe rather to be damned for ever, than to do either of theſe.

2. Your acceptance and embracing of all things that promote his Glory, and further the enjoyment of him. As all the painful ways of Duty, hearing, praying, meditating, and all this with the intention of the Inner Man, and offering up of the Soul to God in theſe duties; and the more painful ways of ſuffering for God, and enduring all loſſes, reproaches, torments, and death for him, if his glory require it, and you may be thereunto called. All this is included in your chuſing God to be your God. And upon our underſtanding, and free conſent, and ſealing to theſe Articles, we have right to call him our God. *Mat*. 16. 24. *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me.* Now have you conſidered the terms of the Covenant, weighed and ballanced all the conveniences and inconveniences of Godlineſs, and then determined for Chriſt and Holineſs, let the coſt be what it will; then you have choſen him aright for your God. Many think they have choſen God for their God, that never underſtood or deliberated theſe terms. But *Non conſentit, qui non ſentit*: He that neither knows nor ponders them, is not capable of giving a due conſent.

*Secondly*, We may diſcern our Covenant-Intereſt, in the Covenant-Impreſſions that are made upon our Souls. All God's Covenant People have a double mark or impreſſion made upon them, *viz*

1. Upon their Minds.
2. Upon their Hearts

1. Upon their Minds in a more ſpiritual and efficacious knowledge of God. Jer. 31. 33. *They ſhall all know me, from the greateſt of them, even to the leaſt of them.* This knowledge is ſaid to be given, not acquired by meer ſtrength of natural abilities and human aids; and *given us in the Face of Chriſt*, not by the footſteps of the Creatures only, as he ſpeaks, 2 *Cor*. 4. 6. 'Tis the choice teaching of the anointing, 1 *Joh*. 2. 27. A knowledge ſpringing from inward Experience, and ſpiritual Senſe; as we know the ſweetneſs of Honey by taſting, better than by all the deſcriptions and reports that can be made of it.

2. Upon their Hearts, in that gracious tenderneſs and meltings of it for Sin, or the diſcoveries of Free Grace in the pardon of it. So you read in *Ezek*. 36. 26. *A new Heart alſo will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the ſtony Heart out of your Fleſh, and I will give you an Heart of Fleſh.*

It is as eaſie to melt the obdurate Rocks into ſweet Syrup, as it is to melt the natural Heart in a penitential and tender melting for Sin; but now there is a principle or habit of tenderneſs implanted in the Soul, whereby it is diſpoſed and inclined to relent and thaw ingeniouſly upon any juſt occaſion.

*Thirdly*, Our Covenant-Intereſt may be evidenced in and by our Covenant-*Converſations*. All the Knowledge which is communicated to our Minds, and all the tenderneſs given to our Hearts, do reſpect and tend to this: *Ezek*. 36. 27. *I will put my ſpirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes.* Habits and Principles are for action and practice: Grace in the heart is for Obedience and Holineſs of Life.

It is true, that as our Graces are imperfect, ſo is our obedience alſo. Perfect working is not to be expected from imperfect Creatures. God's own Covenanted People do often grieve him, and provoke him to bring them under the Rod of Affliction; but thoſe their Infirmities break not the Bond of the Covenant, *Pſal.* 89 30, 31, 32. Care and Watchfulneſs ordinarily goes before them, conflicts and reſiſtance accompanies them, and ſhame, grief, and renewed care uſually follows them, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. By theſe things (which deſerve a more copious diſcourſe than my preſent deſign can allow) we may be helped to clear our Intereſt in the Covenant of Grace: And that being done, it ſhould be out of the Power of all the Afflictions in the World to ſink your Spirits. Let me therefore in the laſt place add,

*Uſe* IV. A word of conſolation to your dejected and drooping hearts, upon this ſad and mournful occaſion. Why are you ſo troubled? And why do thoughts ariſe in your Hearts? Methinks there hath been ſo much of ſupport and comfort already diſcovered to you in this Bleſſed Covenant, that could your Faith but once fix upon it, and realize and apply it, I might lay down my Pen at this Period, and ſay the Work is done, there needs no more; but knowing how obſtinate deep Sorrows are, and how difficult a Task the comforting of an afflicted Mind is, I will for a cloſe, ſuperadd a few conſiderations more, to all that hath been urged and argued before.

*Conſid.* I. Conſider how ſmall and trivial the Comforts, whoſe loſs you bewail, are in compariſon with Jeſus Chriſt, who is ſtill your own under the Bond of a ſure Covenant. A Son, an only and a promiſing Son, is a great thing, when he ſtands in in compariſon with other Creature-comforts; but ſurely he will ſeem a ſmall thing, and next to nothing, when ſet by, or compared with Jeſus Chriſt. Behold the Father, Son, and Spirit! Pardon and eternal Salvation are this day preſented in the Covenant of Grace before your Souls, as your own. *God, even our own God ſhall bleſs us*, Pſal. 67. 6. When you feel your Hearts wounded with ſuch a thought as this, I cannot embrace my Children in my Arms, they are now out of my reach; then bleſs and admire God, that the arms of your Faith can embrace ſo great, ſo glorious a Saviour, and that you can ſay, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

*Conſid.* II. Conſider what evil days are coming on, and what a Mercy it is to your Dead, that God hath taken them away from the evil to come, *Iſa.* 57. 1. 2. There are two ſorts of Evils to come, *viz.* Evils of *Sin*, and Evils of *ſuffering*; and 'tis no ſmall favour to be ſet out of the way of both. The Grave is the hiding-place where God ſecures ſome from the dangers of both.

We are apt to promiſe our ſelves times of Tranquility, and then it cuts us to think that our dear ones ſhall not partake with us in that Felicity: But if we wiſely conſider the *ſins* or the ſigns of the times, we have more cauſe to rejoice that God hath ſet them out of harms way.

All things ſeem to conſpire and work towards a day of great Temptation and Tribulation Now as Chriſt told his Diſciples, who were ſo dejected, becauſe he was to leave them, *Joh.* 14. 28. *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go to the Father:* So truly you would much better expreſs and manifeſt your love to your Children, in your ſatisfaction in the Will and Appointment of God, in taking them into reſt and ſafety, than in your dejections and ſorrows for their removal. Surely they are better where they are than where they were, whom God hath houſed in Heaven out of the ſtorm and tempeſt. And could your dead Friends that are with Chriſt, have any more intercourſe with this World, and ſee your Tears, and hear your Sighs for them, they would ſay to you, as Chriſt did to thoſe that followed him wailing and mourning, Weep not for us, but for your ſelves, and ſuch as remain in the World with you, to ſee and feel the Calamities that are coming on it.

*Conſid.* III. Conſider how near you are to that bleſſed ſtate your ſelves, where *God ſhall be all in all*, and you ſhall feel no want of any Creature-comfort, 1 *Cor.* 15. 28.

Creature-comforts are only accommodated comforts to this animal life we now live, but ſhortly there will be no need of them; for *God will be all in all*: That is, all the Saints ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied in and with God alone. As there is water enough in one Sea to fill all the Rivers, Lakes, and Springs in the World: And light enough in one Sun to enlighten all the Inhabitants of the World: So there is enough in one God eternally to fill and ſatisfie all the Bleſſed Souls in Heaven, without the addition of any Creature-Comfort. God is compleat ſatisfaction to all the Saints, in the abſence (I cannot ſay want) of Wives and Children, Meats and Drinks, Eſtates and ſenſitive Pleaſures: There will be no more need of theſe things, than of Candles at Noon-day. You ſhall be as the Angels of God, who have no concernment for Relations.

Your fulneſs of Years, Infirmities of Body, and, I hope, I may add your improvements in Grace, ſpeak you not far ſhort of this bleſſed ſtate: And though you may ſeem to need theſe Comforts in the way, your God ſhall ſupply all your wants.

*Conſid* IV. To conclude, whatſoever your troubles, wants, fears, or dangers are, or may be in your paſſage to this bleſſed State, the Covenant of Grace is your ſecurity, and by vertue thereof your Troubles ſhall open and divide, as *Jordan* did, to give you a ſafe paſſage into your eternal Reſt.

Look as when the *Iſraelites* came near the Land of Promiſe, there was a ſwelling *Jordan* betwixt it and them, which ſeemed to forbid their farther paſſage and progreſs; but it's ſaid, *Joſh.* 3. 17. *The Prieſts that bore the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, ſtood firm on the ground in the midſt of* Jordan, *and all the* Iſraelites *paſſed over on dry ground, until all the People were paſſed clean over* Jordan. Juſt ſo it is here: The Covenant of grace ſtands on firm ground in the midſt of all the deep waters of tribulation you are to paſs through, to ſecure unto you a ſafe paſſage through them all. Rejoice therefore, and triumph in the fulneſs and firmneſs of this bleſſed Covenant, and whatſoever affliction your God ſhall pleaſe to lay upon you, or whatſoever comfort he ſhall pleaſe to remove from you, ſtill comfort and encourage your ſelves, as **David** here doth, *Yet hath he made with me an everlaſting Covenant, ordered in all things, and ſure: For this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire, although he make it not to grow.*

# A
# SERMON
## Preached for the
# FUNERAL
## OF THAT
## Excellent *and* Religious *Gentleman*,
## *John UPTON* of LUPTON, Eſq;

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## TEXT.

### 2 Chron. XXXV. xxiv, xv.

*His ſervants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the ſecond chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jeruſalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the ſepulchres of his fathers: and all Judah and Jeruſalem mourned for Joſiah.* Ver. 25. *And Jeremiah lamented for Joſiah, and all the ſinging-men, and the ſinging-women ſpake of Joſiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Iſrael: and behold they are written in the Lamentations.*

IN this Context we have the Hiſtory of the *Pious Life*, and *Tragical Death* of good King *Joſiah*. The Hiſtory of his Life gives us an account of both what he *was*, and what he *did*. As to his Perſonal Endowments and Qualifications, they were ſingular and eximious, as appears by the fourfold Character by which he is deſcribed in the Context: for,

*Firſt*, He eſpouſed the intereſt of Religon betimes, even in his Youth; *cap.* 34. *ver.* 3. *For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to ſeek after the God of David his father*: And that under the great diſadvantage of an ill Education, ſuch a Morning promiſed a glorious Day.

*Secondly*, He hated all corruptive mixtures in the Worſhip of God, and was anſwerably zealous for Reformation; ibid. *And in the twelfth year he began to purge Juda and Jeruſalem from the high places, and the groves*, &c. as knowing well he and his People might expect no more of God's bleſſing on the Ordinances, than there was of his preſence in them; and no more of his preſence can rationally be expected, than there is of his own Order and Inſtitution.

*Thirdly*, He was of a very tender impreſſive heart, mourning for publick ſins and dangers; *ver.* 26, 27. *Becauſe thy heart was tender, and thou didſt humble thy ſelf before God, when thou heardeſt his words againſt this place, and againſt the inhabitants thereof; and humbledſt thy ſelf before me, and didſt rend thy cloaths, and weep before me*, &c. He was not ſo intent upon his own pleaſures (tho' in the ſprightly vigour of Youth) nor on the weighty concerns of the Kingdom, as to forget the intereſt of God, and the greater concerns of his Glory.

*Fourthly*, He was exceeding careful to propagate the intereſt of Religion, and ſpread it far and wide among his People. Though he could not infuſe the *inward Principle*, (that was the work of God) yet he did enjoyn the *external practice* of it upon all his Subjects, which was his part and duty; *ver.* 33. *He made all that were preſent in Iſrael to ſerve, even to ſerve the Lord their God. And all his days they departed not from following the God of their Fathers.*

But yet good *Joſiah* had his miſtakes and failings. The beſt of men are but men at beſt: He was too raſh and haſty in reſolving, and too ſtiff and obſtinate when reſolved; and this was the occaſion of his ruin. The caſe was thus:

*Pharoah Necho* King of *Egypt*, was at that time making War upon *Charchemiſh*, a place that belonged to him, but was taken from him by the King of *Aſſyria*, ſo the War of *Necho* was a juſt War; and *Judah* lying between him and *Charchemiſh*, and being at peace with *Judah*, he requeſts leave of *Joſiah* to march his Army peaceably through his Country to the ſeat of the War: *Joſiah* takes an Alarm from this Meſſage, and Arms againſt him. Hereupon *Necho* ſent Embaſſadours to *Joſiah*, chap. 35. ver 21. *ſaying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not againſt thee this day, but againſt the houſe wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haſte; forbear thee from medling with God, who is with me, that he deſtroy thee not.*

*Jerom à lapide. Juſtin Martyr.*

Expoſitors conceive *Necho* had this diſcovery of the mind of God, from the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Per oraculum non ſcriptum, ſed viva voce editum:* even by word of mouth. If ſo, no doubt *Jeremiah* alſo diſſwaded *Joſiah* from going out againſt him: However, this is clear, *Joſiah* did not conſult the mind of God about that expedition, as he ought, and was too haſty and reſolute therein; *ver.* 22. *Nevertheleſs Joſiah would not turn his face from him*, &c. By this means this excellent man came to a tragical end, and that in the very flower of his days. He dies in that unhappy Expedition, from which he would not be diverted; is brought home to *Jeruſalem* in the ſecond Chariot; dies, and is buried in the Sepulchre of his Fathers, to the univerſal ſorrow of all good men in *Iſrael*, as you read in the Text; wherein we have theſe two parts to conſider.

I. The Nature and Quality of the Lamentation.

II. The Cauſe and Ground of it.

I. For the Lamentation here made, it was extraordinary; never ſuch cries heard before in *Iſrael* at any Funeral, whether we conſider it either.

1. Extenſively,
2. Intenſively, or
3. Protenſively.

1. *Extenſively*, all *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, that is, City and Country mourned that day; not every Individual, but all that had any ſenſe of the worth of the man, the good that he did, or the evils that followed upon his removal. No doubt the Prieſts of *Baal*, their Abettors, and Aſſociates, ſecretly rejoyced at his fall; but all good men mourned. But among all the Mourners, one only is ſpecified by name, and that is *Jeremiah* the Prophet, in whom all the faithful Miniſters of God were included. To them he was a true and faithful Friend; and in him they loſt a Father, and a famous Inſtrument of Reformation.

2. Conſider it *Intenſively*, as to the degree of the ſorrow, it was a bitter Lamentation: ſo pungent, intenſe, and deep, that the Mourning of the *Jews* for Chriſt, at the time of their converſion to him, is compared to this Mourning for *Joſiah*. Zach. 12. *ver.* 11. *In that day there ſhall be a great mourning in Jeruſalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.* This *Hadadrimmon* was a little Town in the Valley of *Megiddon* near the place of this fatal Battle, whoſe Inhabitants receiving the firſt tydings of the fall of *Joſiah*, made the Town ring with doleful Outcries and Lamentations.

3. Laſtly, Conſider, it *Protenſively*, in its continuance and duration, it was *made an Ordinance in Iſrael*; and accordingly *the ſinging-men and ſinging-women ſpake of Joſiah in their lamentations to this day: i. e.* Whenever any ſolemn Funeral or publick Calamity was ſolemnized in *Iſrael*, thoſe perſons that were skilful in Lamentations, brought in the ſtory of *Joſiah*'s death, as the burthen of that doleful Song or Funeral-Elegy.

II. Let us conſider the Cauſe and Ground of this Lamentation, which certainly was great and weighty enough to juſtifie that ſorrow, as great and bitter as it was: for in him they loſt a faithful, publick, uſeful, zealous, and tender-hearted Inſtrument, whoſe Life had been eminently uſeful to the Church of God, and whoſe Death opened the gap to all the following Calamities upon *Judah*.

Now conſidering *Joſiah*, here eſpecially in his Religious capacity, as ſo faithful, induſtrious, and uſeful an Inſtrument for the Church of God, rather than in his political capacity as a King, the Note from it will be this.

Doct. *That faithful, active, and publick ſpirited men in the Church of God, ſhould not be laid in their Graves, without great Lamentations.* Doct.

When *Jacob* was buried, a man famous for Religion, a great and ſore lamentation was made for him, *Gen.* 50. *ver.* 10. And when *Aaron* died, all the Houſe of *Iſrael* mourned for him thirty Days, *Numb.* 20. *ver.* 29. When *Stephen* the Proto-Martyr died, devout men carryed him to his Grave, with great lamentations, *Act.* 8. 2. and indeed for any good man to be laid in his Grave, without lamentation, is lamentable. The living Saints have ever paid this reſpect and honour to dead Saints, as men ſenſible of their worth, and how great a loſs the World ſuſtains by their removal.

I know the departed ſouls of Saints have no concernment in theſe things, yet reſpect is due to their very Bodies, as the Temples wherein God hath been ſerved and honoured, as they are related to Chriſt, who will one day put great glory and honour upon them.

In the Explication and Confirmation of this point, I will ſhew you,

1. *Negatively*, on what account the death of good men is not to be lamented.
2. *Poſitively*, on what account Tears and Lamentations are due to them, with the grounds and reaſons thereof.

1. *Negatively*, there is not a Tear or Sigh due to the death of any good man, upon the account of any real loſs or detriment that he ſuſtains thereby. No, no, in this caſe all Tears are reſtrained, all Sorrows prohibited, by the Principles and Rules of Chriſtianity, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 13, 14. Religion differences the ſorrows, as well as the joys, of its Profeſſors, from the common joys and ſorrows of the World. Dead Saints are better where they are, than where they were; to be with Chriſt is far better: Death to them is gain and infinite advantage, *Phil.* 1. 21, 23. This World is the worſt place that ever God deſigned his People to live in: for if a ſtate of perfect Holineſs and Purity, be better than a ſtate of Temptation and Corruption; if a ſtate of Reſt and Peace, be better than a ſtate of Labour and Sorrow; if it be better to be triumphing above, than ſighing and groaning beneath: then it's better for departed Chriſtians to be where they are, than where they

were. And could they now communicate their minds to us by words, as they lately did, they would ſay to us as Chriſt ſaid. *Luke* 23. 28. *Daughter of Jeruſalem, weep not for me, but weep for your ſelves, and for your children.* Or as he ſpake to his Diſciples under their ſad reſentments of his departure, *Joh.* 14. 28. *If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, becauſe I go to the Father.* So then no tears or ſorrows are due to them, or becoming us, upon the account of any real loſs or detriment they receive by death.

2. *Poſitively*, But the true grounds and cauſes of our Lamentations, are upon divers other weighty accounts: as,

1 *Reaſon.* *Firſt*, Becauſe ſo much of the Spirit of God as dwelt in them when amongſt us, is now re-called and gathered up from this lower World. Thoſe precious Graces which they exerciſed among us, in Prayer, Conference, and other beneficial Duties, are now gone with them to Heaven.

The Church had the benefit of them during their abode with men, but now no more, except only what the remembrance of their holy Words and inſtructive Examples (whereby they ſtill ſpeak to us, though dead) may afford unto us.

There are choice effuſions of the Spirit at the time of our Sanctification, of which the Church reapeth the benefit whilſt we live; but all theſe are recalled at our diſſolution, and thenceforth we can be no farther uſeful in this lower World: for as the Soul is the ſubject in which theſe precious Graces inhere, ſo they accompany and go along with the Soul into glory.

Now as it is a real loſs to a *Company* when any *Merchant* withdraws a great Stock, he had running in Trade, out of the Bank; ſo certainly it is a great loſs to the Church of God, when the precious gifts and graces of the Spirit, dwelling in the Saints, are drawn out by Death; ſo as the Church can have no farther benefit by them, their Prayers for us, and with us, are now ended; *Abraham* knoweth us not, and *Iſrael* is ignorant of us.

2 *Reaſon.* *Secondly*, The death of the Saints deſerves a bitter lamentation, becauſe thereby a breach is made, a gap opened, to let in the Judgments of God upon the Remnant that is left. It is ſaid of *Moſes*, Pſal. 106. 23. *Therefore he ſaid, that he would deſtroy them, had not Moſes his choſen ſtood before him in the breach, leſt he ſhould deſtroy them.* A Metaphor from a beſieged City, when a breach is made in the Walls, and an Enemy ready to Enter; but ſome *Champion* ſtands in the breach to defend the City. Such a Champion was *Moſes*, who by his conſtant and fervent Prayers, put a ſtop to the inundation of God's Judgments againſt *Iſrael.* And ſuch another was *Lot*, *Gen.* 19. 22. whoſe Prayers for that wicked place he lived in, bound up the hand of Judgment inſomuch as the Lord told him, *I can do nothing till thou art gone.* But when the Lord by death removes ſuch men, he thereby *makes a way to his anger*, as the expreſſion is, *Pſal.* 78. 50. Hence the death of eminent Saints, eſpecially when many are taken away at or near the ſame time, hath been ever look'd upon as a direful *Omen*, and dreadful Preſage of enſuing Judgments, and that not without good Scripture-authority, *Iſa.* 57. 1. *The righteous periſh, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none conſidering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.*

Thus *Methuſalah*, whoſe very Name ſignified *a Flood cometh*, died the year before the Flood. *Auguſtin*, a little before the ſacking of *Hyppo. Paræus*, a little before the taking of *Hydelberg.* And *Luther*, before the Wars brake out in *Germany.* Death as a *Pioneer*, clears the way to a Troop of Miſeries following after. This therefore is a juſt and weighty ground of our lamentations for the death of uſeful and godly men.

3 *Reaſon.* *Thirdly*, The beauty and ornaments of the places they lived in, is defaced and removed by their death; they look not like themſelves, when the godly are removed out of them: for as wicked men are the ſpots and blemiſhes, ſo good men are the beauty and ornaments of their Country. A good man was wont to ſay of Mr. *Barrington* of *Barrinton-Hall* in *Eſſex*, Methinks the Town is not at home, when Mr. *Barrington* is out of Town. How deſolate and diſmal doth a Family look (whatever other Ornaments be about it) when the Religious Governour of it is gone! Take away good men from their Families, and Country, and what are they but like a Vineyard when the Vintage is paſt? as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Micha.* 7. 1.

4 *Reaſon.* *Fourthly*, The death of good men deſerves a bitter Lamentation, becauſe thereby the paſſage of the Goſpel, and propagation of Religion, is obſtructed in the places from whence they are removed. Of how great uſe in a Country may one zealous publick-ſpirited man be? Hundreds may have cauſe to bleſs God for ſuch a man. It was the *Apoſtles* deſire to the *Theſſalonians*, *To pray that the word of the Lord may have its free courſe, that it might run and be glorified*, 2 Theſſ. 3. 1. The removal of ſuch a perſon as naturally took care for the Souls of thoſe that were about him, to provide food for them, is no ſmall loſs, nor lightly to be paſſed over.

5 *Reaſon.* *Fifthly*, The conſideration of the time in which good men die, aggravates the loſs, and juſtly incenſes the ſorrow of them that remain, and that upon a three-fold account. (1.) That it falls out in the declining ſtate of Religion, when the Spirit and power of Godlineſs is ſo much weakned and impoveriſhed. This is like the loſs of good Blood in a conſumptive Body, which muſt bring it very low. (2.) That it falls out alſo in a time when the numbers of the Godly are ſo much thinn'd and leſſen'd, not when the Churches Children ſay in her Ears, The place is too ſtraight, give place that we may dwell; but when they are every where lamenting, the paucity and ſcarcity of good men, as the Pſalmiſt did, *Pſal.* 12. 1. *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaſeth, for the righteous fail from among the children of men.* At a time when they are bewailing themſelves in the language of the Prophet, *Micha* 7. 1. *Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the ſummer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluſter to eat; my ſoul deſired the firſt ripe fruit.*

*fruit.* Alluding to a hungry man that goes into a Vineyard to refreſh his ſpirits with the fruit thereof; but alas, there is not one pleaſant bunch to be found, none but ſowre Grapes, to increaſe his Hunger, and ſet his Teeth on edge. (3.) And that which much more aggravates the loſs, is this: when it falls in a time wherein the ſpring and ſucceſſion of good men is obſtructed. In this caſe Death, like a ſtorm of Wind, overturns the faireſt, pleaſanteſt, and moſt fruitful Trees in the *Orchard*, when there is no *Nurſery* from whence others may be taken to plant in their rooms.

Reaſon. *Laſtly*, There is juſt cauſe to lament the removal of publick and pious men, when we conſider what influence our ſins and provocations have had upon thoſe Judgments and Calamities; our unworthineſs of them, unthankfulneſs for them, and non-improvements of ſuch mercies, have bereaved us of them. I look upon every good man, as a good Book, lent by its Owner to another to read and tranſcribe the excellent Notions and golden Paſſages that are in it, for his own benefit, that they may remain with him, when the Owner ſhall call for the Book again: but in caſe this excellent Book be thrown into a corner, and no uſe made of it, it juſtly provokes the Owner to take it away in diſpleaſure.

Thus you ſee upon what account our ſorrows for the death of good men are reſtrained, and upon what accounts and reaſons they are a due debt to the death of eminent and uſeful Inſtruments for God. What remains, is the *Application* of this point. And,

1 Uſe. *Firſt*, The Point before us juſtly reproves three ſorts of men.

1. The worſt of men, ſuch as ſecretly rejoyce, and are inwardly glad at the removal of ſuch men; they took no delight in them while they lived, and are glad they are rid of them when they are dead. Thoſe that perſecuted and hated them when alive, may be preſumed to be pleaſed and gratified with their death. But alas, poor Creatures, they know not what they do! The Innocent preſerve the Iſland. *Except the Lord of hoſts* (ſaith the Prophet) *had left us a ſmall remnant, we had been as Sodom, we had been like unto Gomorrah*, Iſa. 1. 9. It's a Proverb among the very Jews, *Sinè ſupplicationibus non ſtaret Mundus*: The World ſtands by the Prayers of the godly. Let the World think what they will of them. I tell you theſe men are a Screen, a Partition-wall, betwixt them and deſtruction.

2. It reproves the inſenſibleneſs of good men, who are apt too ſlightly to paſs over ſuch tremendous ſtrokes of God; for this it was that God reproved his own People, *Iſa.* 57. 1. *No Man layeth it to heart.* Where the want of *affection* is charged upon the want of *conſideration*, none conſidering their worth, their uſe, or the conſequences of their fall. Such rebukes of God do certainly call for a deeper ſenſe and ſorrow, than is found in moſt men.

3. It reproves the very beſt of men, who though they do bewail and lament the loſs of ſuch men, yet they do not lament it in the due manner. They lament it one to another, ſaying, Alas, alas, ſuch a Worthy is fallen, ſuch an eminent Inſtrument in the Church or State is dead; but they do not lament it in Prayer to the Lord, they mourn not over the matter to him, as *David* did, *Pſal.* 12. 1. *Crying, Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaſeth.* Help, Lord, the remnant that is left; help, Lord, to repair the breach made by their death; let the God of the Spirits of all fleſh raiſe up a Man to fill the room and ſupply the want. Alas, how inſignificant are the Lamentations of moſt men upon this account!

2 Uſe. *Secondly*, This point invites us all this day to bewail the ſtroke of God that is upon us. I could wiſh that he that looks upon this Text, and then upon the countenance of this Aſſembly might be able to diſcern the agreeableneſs of the one to the other, in ſuch a ſad and ſolemn occaſion.

O let all that love *Sion*, lament this day the fall of one of her true Friends and Lovers. I know Funeral *Panegyricks* are apt to be ſuſpected of flattery; but as I want a Rhetorical Tongue for ſuch a work, ſo if I had it, it ſhould never be ſaleable for ſo baſe a uſe and purpoſe. I am ſure by ſending the generality that die to Heaven, many are confirmed in the way to Hell. Nor can I but think of that ſerious Line in *Chryſoſtom*, *What a poor comfort is it, to be praiſed where a man is not, and to be tormented where he is. But yet the righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance*, Pſal. 112. 6. Expect nothing from me on this occaſion, but what may be ſpoken with greateſt aſſurance of truth, and that intended for the benefit and imitation of all that hear it. Some may think it a ſtrain too high, to compare a private Perſon with ſuch a glorious King as *Joſiah* was; but if Chriſt compared and preferred the very Graſs of the Field, to *Solomon* in all his glory, I know no reaſon why we may not compare and parallel the precious Graces of a private perſon with a royal Saint, eſpecially ſince the compariſon is only made in the *religious*, not in the *civil* capacity.

I am ſure the Graces, and gracious Performances of *David*, *Hezekiah*, and *Joſiah*, with all the other dignified Saints, were intended and propounded as Patterns for our imitation; and no doubt but private Chriſtians may meaſure by their Pattern. Beſide, it is abundantly more ſafe to relate the Vertues of the Saints when they are dead, than whilſt they were alive: for now there is no danger of provoking pride and vain-glory in them that are praiſed, but much hope of provoking an holy emulation and imitation in them that hear them.

Well then, *Abſit invidia verbis*: Suffer me this day to erect a Pillar to perpetuate the Memory of this deceaſed Worthy, to pay the tribute of my Tears due to that mournful *Hearſe*, and to engage you to imitate thoſe Excellencies of his, which I ſhall with equal truth and modeſty diſplay this day, that we alſo may be duly affected with the Rebuke of God upon us, and mourn over it before him.

If when an eminent *Commander* in any Army falls, the whole Army is affected and concerned with his death;

*The mourning Drum, the Lance and Enſignes*
*trail'd;*
*The Robes of Honour all in Sables vail'd.*

Let it not be thought much, Chriſtians ſhould expreſs their ſenſe and ſorrow in ſighs and tears, for ſo uſeful and worthy a man as God hath this day removed from among us, whoſe Character I ſhall give you in the following immitable particulars.

1. That worthy man whoſe fall we lament this day, was ſeaſoned with Religion in his Youth, by God's bleſſing upon his pious Education; in this he had the advantage of *Joſiah.* His Progenitors were men of Piety, and himſelf a Child of many Prayers: and, as *Monica* ſaid of her Son *Auſtin,* it was not likely that a Child of ſo many Prayers ſhould periſh. How importunately did they requeſt the fervent Prayers of their pious Friends for him, in the time of his Education? nor was it in vain, for they were manifeſtly anſwered in him. He ſoon diſcovered that *Probity* and *Piety* in his Youth, which juſtly raiſed great expectations from him in his riper years.

2. Nor did he fruſtrate thoſe hopes; for as ſoon as ever God had fixed him in a proper *Sphere* of Activity, (I mean, a Family of his own) thoſe Graces that were in him ſhone forth, to the comfort and benefit of all that were about him. *Joſhua*'s pious reſolution was his; *As for me, I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord.*

He kept up the Worſhip of God in his Cloſet, as well as in his Family. And truly if Religion languiſh in the Cloſet, it will quckly die in the Family. His Houſe was a *Temple* conſecrated to God; there the Morning and Evening-Sacrifices of Prayers and Praiſes were offered up. He called his Children and Servants to thoſe Duties, not rekoning that time loſt to him, which was ſpent for God. The Lord had endowed him with an excellent Spirit of Prayer himſelf: I have ſometimes accidentally heard him praying in his Family, with ſuch ſolidity of Judgment, pertinency of Expreſſion, and holy warmth of Affection, that hath at once edified, refreſhed, and reproved me in hearing him.

He conſtantly read the Scriptures in courſe before Prayer, and oft-times with a *Commentary* upon them, for his own and his Families Edification.

The Lords day he ſanctified not only in more publick attendance on the Ordinances, but in the Duties of Reading, Repeating, Singing, and Catechiſing all his Children and Servants about him. And all this before he allowed himſelf or them any bodily Refreſhments, leſt the edge of their Affections ſhould be blunted in Duty, by the clogging of Nature with Creature-repaſts. And thus did he, as *Job*, continually: to this courſe he was ſevere and conſtant, no incident occaſions, how great or many ſoever, could divert him from it.

3. Neither was his holy Zeal and Chriſtian care limited and circumſcribed within his own Family, but was extended to the Souls of all in his Neigbourhood, who deſired helps and means in the way of ſalvation.

His Houſe was ſeldom without a godly Miniſter in it, and loath he was to eat his pleaſant Morſels alone. It was the joy of his heart to ſee his houſe fill'd on this account: How many Witneſſes to the truth of this are here this day! Like another *Joſeph*, he provided food for your Souls; he loved, honoured, received, and incouraged the Miniſters of the Goſpel in their deepeſt ſufferings; gave them oppertunities of ſervice, when ſome durſt not own them, and others violently perſecuted them.

4. When God called him to publick Employments in the Common-wealth, he neither purchaſed nor abuſed that Truſt; but with a true Engliſh, rather a Chriſtian zeal and courage, he dedicated himſelf to the ſervice of God and his Country. Chearfully quitting all domeſtick concerns, ſpent his Eſtate, time, and pains, to heal the breaches of *England.* I know not a man whoſe zeal for the common good, would have carried him nearer to the Example of that noble *Roman*, who when a *Chaſm* was made by an Earthquake, and the *Oracle* had declared, that it could never be cloſed, except ſomething of value was thrown into it, caſt in himſelf to cloſe it.

I could truly have ſaid, had there been conveniency and oppertunity for it, when he was laid in his Grave, *Here lies a man thatn ever betrayed ner deſerted the Publick, for any private intereſt of his own.*

5. He was a man that came as near *Joſiah* in tenderneſs of Heart, as ever I had the happineſs to be acquainted with. The Churches troubles were his troubles, they all met in him as lines in a centre; he even liv'd and died with the intereſt of Religion: and of him I will ſay, as the Apoſtle ſaid of *Timothy*, 2 Phil. 20, 21. *I have no man like minded who will naturally care for your ſtate, for all ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſt's. Naturally*, in this place, is not oppoſed to *Spiritually*, but to *Artificially.* Many can *artificially* act the part of a Zealot, when their own Intereſt lies in it; but he *naturally*, and therefore freely, chearfully, and conſtantly.

6. But though theſe Excellencies were in him, he had his *Nævi*, blemiſhes, and imperfections. *Elias* was a man of like paſſions and weakneſſes of Spirit. All theſe I doubt not but God hath covered, and he is now perfectly freed from them all.

There is now no paſſion left within him to be ſtirred by temptation, no deſpondencies and ſinkings of Spirit under diſmal aſpects of Providence. His Graces are perfected, and his Corrurtions finally eradicated.

7. To conclude, he was a man of great *Afflictions*, as well as tender *Affections.* And as the Lord greatly honoured him in the courſe of *active obedience*, ſo he greatly proved and tryed him in a courſe of *paſſive obedience.* He not only gave the *Croſs* in his *Coat*, but bare it upon his *Shoulders*: for beſides thoſe troubles which were properly *ſympathetical*, he had his *Idiopathetical* ſufferings alſo, and that, both from the hands of men, and from the hand of God. His Piety made and marked him for an Object of Perſecution; the Archers ſhot at him, and ſorely grieved

him; he and his Family were hunted with a Net; The Lord lay it not to their charge: *Et hinc illæ lachrymæ.* The ſad effects thereof, I choſe rather at this time to paſs over with a ſigh, than in this place to commemorate

And as the hand of man was upon him, ſo the hand of his God alſo. Firſt, lopping off all the pleaſant Branches that ſprang from him, and that one after another; when come to the endearing age, opening and diſcloſing the Bud: And as the Complement and Iſſue of all, breaking his conſtitutional ſtrength with a long languiſhing Diſeaſe, which at laſt extinguiſhed this bright Lamp, and hath left his Family and Neighbourhood in darkneſs and ſorrow. His poor Heart was the *Anvil* on which many *Hammers* of Affliction had been a long time beating; and no wonder it appeared relaxed and tumified, when it was inſpected, having endured ſo many ſucceſſive ſtrokes of ſorrow.

And now what the Lord ſpake of *Iſrael* in *Jer.* 11. 16. is fulfilled upon this worthy perſon, *The Lord called thy name a green Olive-tree, fair and of goodly fruit, with the noiſe of a great tumult he hath kindled a fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken.*

Uſe. *Thirdly*, I ſhall wind up the whole in ſeveral ſeaſonable and neceſſary Counſels: Some more general, others more particular, and ſome moſt particularly and eſpecially.

*Firſt*, Counſel to all in general, to awaken themſelves, and recover a due ſenſe of ſuch ſore Rebukes of God as this is. When *Saul* fell, *David lamented it, ſaying, The beauty of Iſrael was ſlain on thy high places.*

God hath this day ſtript off an Ornament from this Country. Such diſpenſations of Providence ſpeak indignation coming on. It requires almoſt an Age to breed and furniſh a Man with due qualifications for the Service of the Church and Common Wealth. *England* doth not ſo abound with pious, zealous, and faithful Gentlemen at this time, but that it may ſenſibly feel the loſs of ſuch a Man.

*Secondly*, More particularly, let the *Miniſters* of Chriſt lament his fall, as *Jeremiah* did the fall of *Joſiah* in the Text. He was a true friend to Chriſt's faithful Miniſters, and had them in honour for their work ſake. 'Tis true, he hath no more need of us, he is now wiſer than his Teachers; but we greatly need him, and men of his Spirit, in ſuch a dull degenerate Age as we live in.

*Thirdly*, And moſt particularly, I ſhall apply and cloſe all with a few words of Counſel to the dear and now *deſolate Relict* of this Worthy Perſon, whoſe ſad lot it is this day to over-live the mercies and comforts ſhe once enjoyed in him.

*Madam*, God hath this day covered you with Sables, written bitter things againſt you, broken you with breach upon breach. Your ſorrows need not be excited, but regulated. 'Tis my trouble, that I cannot diſcharge my duty to the memory of your dear Husband, without exaſperating your Griefs, which alas were too accute before; but Rods have their voices: *Bleſſed is the man whom God correcteth and teacheth him out of his Law.* Hear you the Rod, and who hath appointed it; and oh that your Soul may this day take in theſe neceſſary Counſels and Cautions, without which your Afflictions cannot be ſanctified to the advantage of your Soul. And,

1. Learn from hence the vanity of the Creature, the emptineſs and nothingneſs of the beſt things here below. How hath God made your beſt comforts on Earth to ſhrink up and vaniſh into nothing? How do our fancies varniſh and guild over theſe empty Bubbles? What great expectations are we apt to raiſe from them? How apt to fall aſleep in the boſoms or laps of earthly Enjoyments? and ſay with *Job, I ſhall die in my neſt, and multiply my days as the ſand.* When loe, in a moment the projects and expectations of many years are over-turned. Oh what a difference will you find betwixt hope founded in Chriſt, Comforts drawn out of the Promiſes, and the flattering Comforts and vain hopes founded in the Creature whoſe breath is in its Noſtrils?

'Tis time for you and for us all to wean off from this vain World; mortifie our Fancies and Affections to it, and place them where they ſhall not be capable of diſappointment.

2. Guard carefully, I beſeech you, againſt thoſe Temptations which probably may accompany this Affliction. It may be Satan will ſuggeſt to your heart, what he once put into their lips, *Mal.* 3. 14. *What profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and walked mourfully before him?* Where is the fruit of Prayer? What good have I ſeen of Faſting? What hath Religion availed? Do not prayerleſs and ungodly Families thrive and proſper? Beware of this *Madam*, I doubt not but you will acknowledge there have been ſins and provocations within your walls, yea within your heart, for which God may as juſtly and ſeverely judge your houſe as he did *Ely's*. Remember the rewards of Religion are not in this World; and ſhould we ſpeak thus, we ſhall offend againſt the generation of his Children. All we muſt expect from Religion, is to ſave our Souls by it.

3. Call not the love of God into queſtion to your ſelf, or yours, becauſe of theſe ſevere ſtrokes of God upon you and them: You know *Joſiah* was dear to God, yet he died in the prime of his days, by a violent hand, remote from his own home, and was brought home in the *ſecond Chariot* to *Jeruſalem*, a Spectacle of far greater ſorrow, than your dear Husband was; and yet notwithſtanding all theſe ſad circumſtances of his death, the Promiſe of his God was punctually performed to him, that he ſhould die in peace, and not behold the Evil that was to come. *There is a vanity*, ſaith *Solomon*, *which is done upon the earth, that there be juſt men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: again, there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous*, Eccleſ. 8 14. But then remember, that it is but in the Earth; here, or no where, God muſt chaſtiſe his Children.

4. See that you maintain that holy courſe of Religious Exerciſes in your Family, and in your Cloſet, wherein he walked ſo exemplary before you. Let Religion live, tho' he be dead; and convince the World, I pray you, that it was God's influence, and not your Husband's only, which was the Spring and Principle of this holy Courſe.

5. Strive not with your Maker, nor fret againſt the Lord, under this irkſome and painful Diſpenſation. Remember there is a *Woe* hanging over this Sin: Iſai. 45. 9 10. *Woe to him that ſtriveth with his Maker.* There is a twofold ſtriving of Men with God, one lawful and commendable, when we ſtrive with him upon the knee of Importunity in Prayer, thus *Jacob* wreſtled with God, and prevailed, *Hoſ.* 12. 4. The other is highly ſinful and dangerous, when we preſume to cenſure or accuſe any of his Works as defective in Wiſdom or Goodneſs. He that reproveth God, let him anſwer it, (*i. e.*) At his peril be it. This ſinful ſtriving with God is twofold, either *Vocal* or *Mental.*

1. *Vocal,* When Men in bold blaſphemous Language, arraign the Wiſdom, Power, Goodneſs or Faithfulneſs of the Lord at the bar of their own Reaſon, and there condemn them, ſetting their Mouths againſt the Heavens, *Pſal.* 73. 8, 9. This is the ſin of the Wicked, yea of the firſt-born Sons of Wickedneſs.

2. *Mental,* In inward frets, murmurs, repinings againſt God; *Prov.* 19. 3. *The fooliſhneſs of Man perverts his way, and his Heart fretteth againſt the Lord.* The Heart may cry out impatiently againſt God, when the Tongue is ſilent: And if the frets and murmurs of the Heart be (as indeed they are) interpretatively no better than a ſtriving with our Maker, then this Sin will be found more common among good Men in the *Paroxiſms* of Affliction, than we imagine. It will be neceſſary therefore, for your ſake, and for the ſakes of many more in a like ſtate of affliction with you. to ſtay a while upon this Head, and conſider theſe following Queries.

*Query* 1. How far we may enquire, expoſtulate, and complain in times of affliction, without Sin?

*Query.* 2 Wherein lies the ſinfulneſs and danger of exceeding theſe bounds?

*Query* 3. What Conſiderations are moſt proper and powerful to reſtrain the afflicted Soul from this ſinful exceſs?

*Query* 1. How far we may enquire of God, expoſtulate with him, and complain to him in time of Affliction, without Sin?

1. We may humbly enquire into the cauſes and reaſons of God's diſpleaſure againſt us, not to ſeek matter for our *Juſtification,* but *Direction* in the work of our *Humiliation.* So *David* enquired about the three Years Famine, and the Lord informed him for whoſe ſake and for what Sin it was, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1. And thus *Job* addreſſed to him in the day of his affliction, Job. 10.2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me;* (*i. e.*) convince me what ſpecial ſin it is for which I am thus afflicted. This is ſo far from being our ſin, that it is both our duty, and the excellency of our Spirits; 'tis a Child-like temper, willing to know, that we may be particularly humbled for that Sin, and for ever the more careful to ſhun it. *That which I ſee not, teach thou me; if I have done Iniquity, I will do ſo no more,* Job 34 32. Thus far we are ſafe.

2. We may plead by Prayer, and put him in mind of his Mercies, Relations, and Promiſes, in order to the change of his Providential Diſpenſations towards us: We may ſay to him under the ſmarteſt Rod, as the Church did, *Doubtleſs thou art our Father,* Pſal. 74. 20. Have reſpect to the Covenant, or as *Jacob,* Gen. 32. 9, 12. *Thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good.*

We may complain to God under our Sufferings, and ſpread them before him in all their Circumſtances and Aggravations, as *Job, Heman, Aſaph, Hezekiah,* and *David* did. He allows his Children to complain to him, but not of him. *I poured out my Complaint before him, I ſhewed before him my Trouble,* Pſal. 142. 2. To whom ſhould a Child made his complaint, but to his Father? So far we are ſafe.

4. We may ſubmiſſively pray for the removal of his Hand from us, and entreat that his Anger may ceaſe; that he will turn again and heal us and our Families, and not draw forth his Anger for ever. So did *David,* Pſal. 39. 10. *Remove thy ſtroke away from me, I am conſumed by the blow of thine Hand.* q. d. Ah Lord, I am not able to endure another ſtroke. All this while we are ſafe, within the bounds of our duty. But then,

*Query* 2. Wherein lies our Sin and Danger, in exceeding theſe bounds? I anſwer,

*Sol.* When forgetting God's Soveraignty, and the deſert of our Iniquities, we arrogantly cenſure his effecting, or permitting Providences, as if they had no conducency to his own Glory, or our good. This is both ſinful and dangerous: For,

1. This is a proud exalting of our own Reaſon and Underſtanding, above the Infinite Wiſdom of God. God hath made our Reaſon a Judge and *Arbitor* in matters within its own *Sphere* and *Province*; but when it comes to ſummon God to its Bar, and Article againſt Heaven, it is an inſufferable arrogancy, and we do it at our own peril. God will have all Men know that he is an unaccountable Being, Job. 33. 13. Yea, he will have us to know that *the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than Men,* 1 Cor. 1. 25. That is, that thoſe very Works of God, which Man's proud Reaſon adventures to cenſure, as not ſo wiſe a Method as their own would be, hath more Wiſdom in it than all the deep-laid deſigns of the greateſt Politicians in the World. And 'tis ſtrange that Men ſhould dare to attempt ſuch a wickedneſs as this, after God hath ſo ſeverely puniſhed it in the fallen Angels.

2. It is no leſs than a ſpurning at the Soveraignty of God, from whoſe Pleaſure we derive our Beings, and all our Mercies *Rev.* 4. 11. In theſe quarrellings of Providence, and frets at divine appointments, we invade his Throne, and controul his Soveraign Pleaſure. How monſtrous were it to hear a Child quarrelling with his Father, that he is not ſo and ſo figured, or the Clay to chide the *Potter* for moulding it as it is?

3. 'Tis deſtructive to our own inward Peace and Tranquility of Mind, which is part of the puniſhment of this Sin; and a ſmart ſtripe, a ſore rebuke it is from the Hand of God upon us.

Contention is uncomfortable, though but

with a Neighbour, worſe with a near Relation; but a quarrel with God is deſtructive to all comfort in the World. Afflictions may diſturb a good Man's Peace, but a mutinous Spirit againſt God, deſtroys and ſtabs it at the very Heart. What is the Sin and Torment of the Devils, but their rage againſt the Lord, and ſwelling againſt the methods of his Grace? *He ſeeketh reſt, but findeth none*, Mat 12. 33. The Peace of our Spirits is a choice Mercy, and might be maintained amidſt all our Afflictions, were but our Intereſt in his Promiſes, and the true level of his Providences cleared to us.

4. 'Tis irrational, and highly unjuſt, to give the cauſe, and quarrel at the *effect*. God hath righteouſly and inſeperably linked *penal* with *moral* Evils; Sin and Sorrow by the Laws of Heaven are tackt and united together; he that doth Evil, ſhall feel Evil, *Gen.* 4. 7. We adventure upon Sin, and then fret at Affliction: *Prov.* 19. 3. *The fooliſhneſs of a Man perverts his way, and his Heart fretteth againſt the Lord.* Is this becoming a reaſonable Creature? Doth not every Man reap as he ſoweth? Can the Seed of Sin bring forth a Crop of Peace and Comfort? *Why doth the living Man complain, a Man for the puniſhment of his Sins*, Lam. 3. 39. Search your Hearts, and ſearch your Houſes, and you will quickly find that all your Afflictions in this World, were they ten thouſand times more and heavier than they are, do not come near to the deſert of one ſin. All Sorrows, Loſſes, Afflictions on this ſide Hell are quite below the value of Sin, the meritorious and provoking cauſe of them all.

5. 'Tis fooliſh and vain, to ſtrive againſt God, and conteſt perverſely with him. Can our diſcontents relieve us? Or our murmurs eaſe us? Will they turn God out of his way? No, no, *He is in one Mind, and who can turn him aſide*? Job. 23. 13. The Wheels of Providence go ſtraight forward and turn not when they go, *Ezek.* 1. 17. We may bring them over us to cruſh us, by ſtanding thus in their way, but cannot turn them out of their way.

*Impatiens ægrotus, crudelem facit medicum.*

*If ye ſtill walk contrary to me, then will I walk contrary to you, and puniſh you yet ſeven times for your Sins*, Lev. 26. 13, 14. Or I will walk in the raſhneſs of mine Anger, ſmiting you without moderation, as Men do in the height of their rage and Fury. This is all we ſhall get by fretting againſt God Never expect relief under, or releaſe from the yoke God hath laid on your Necks, till you be brought to accept the puniſhment of your Iniquities. *Lev.* 26. 41.

6. 'Tis a ſin full of *odious Ingratitude* towards your God: Which appears (1.) in murmuring becauſe it is ſo bad, when we ſhould be admiring that it is no worſe. Are there not Millions in Hell that never ſinned at higher rates than yon have done? Is this Affliction as bad as Hell? Hath God pardoned you and ſaved you, and yet doth he deſerve to be thus requited by you! (2.) In murmuring that our condition is ſo bad, when we may every day ſee others in a far worſe caſe, who are equal with us by nature, and were equal with them in guilt and provocation. If we ſpeak of outward Afflictions, certainly others would be glad to exchange conditions with us, and account themſelves happy in our Circumſtances. Conſider the deſcription given of thoſe Perſons *Job* 30. 3, 4, 5. And how little they differ in the manner of Life from bruit Beaſts: And if we ſpeak of inward Troubles, compare your own with thoſe of *Heman*, and *Aſaph*, in *Pſal.* 77. and *Pſal.* 88. and if of both together, and that in an intenſe degree, conſider *Job.* 6. 4. and you will ſoon find your condition full of ſparing Mercy: Theſe excellent Perſons that were ſo much above you in Grace, were yet plunged ſo much deeper than you into Affliction. And is it not then vile ingratitude in you, thus to mutiny and *charge your God fooliſhly*? (3.) But eſpecially here lies our Ingratitude, in quarrelling and cenſuring thoſe Providences, whoſe very end and errand is our eternal good; *Heb.* 12. 10. *But he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his Holineſs.*

7. 'Tis a Sin that deprives us of the fruits and benefits of our Afflictions: A tumultuous raging Spirit reaps no good by the Rod. The fruits of Affliction are called the *peaceable Fruits*, Heb. 12. 11. becauſe they are always gathered and reaped down by the afflicted Soul in a quiet and peaceful temper. *Anima ſedenda, & quieſcendo fit ſapiens.* Bloſſoms and Flowers open not in the boiſterous ſtorms of Winter, but in the mild and gentle Spring.

Well then, be convinced of the Sin and danger of a diſcontented Spirit under the Hand of God, and inſtead of mourning over loſt Relations, now mourn for the loſs of Patience, the want of Submiſſion, and for the Pride and Arrogancy of your own Reaſon, that preſumes to correct the works of the *Almighty*, and ſay to God, as *Joſeph* did to his Father, when he wittingly croſſed his hands in bleſſing *Ephraim* and *Manaſſah*, *Not ſo, my Father*? This is not fit.

*Query* 3. But how may theſe Evils be prevented or cured, and the tempeſtuous Soul calmed under the Rod? How ſhall all ſtrifes betwixt God and his People be ended, and the Soul made quiet at his Feet?

*Reply*, This bleſſed frame of Spirit may in a great degree and meaſure be attained in the uſe of the following *Directions*. I ſay, in their uſe and application, not by the preſcription or ſimple knowledge of them. And,

*Rule* 1. The firſt Rule or Direction, is this: *Study well the glorious Soveraignty of God over you, and awe your Hearts with the conſideration of it.* From his meer Pleaſure you and all that is your proceeded, on his Pleaſure you depend, and into that good Pleaſure of his Will your wills therefore ought to be reſolved: *Whatever the Lord pleaſed, that he did, in Heaven and in Earth, in the Sea and in all deep places*, Pſal. 135. 6. Man and Man ſtand on equal ground, and if our Reaſon be not ſatisfied about the equity of Mens dealings with us, we may aſk who did it, and demand the reaſons why he did it; but when we have to do with God, we muſt not diſpute his Pleaſure. Let the Potſherd ſtrive with the Potſherds of the of the Earth, but let not the Clay diſpute with the *Potter*. Now the Soveraignty of God is glorioully diſplayed in his *Decrees*, *Laws*, and *Providences*. (1.) In his *Decrees*, appointing the Creatures to their ends, whether to be Veſſels of Mercy, or of Wrath, *Rom.* 9 18, 19, 20. In this caſe there muſt be no diſputing with God. (2.) In his *Laws*, appointing the work and duty of the Creature, as alſo the Rewards and Puniſhments; Jam. 4 12. *There is one Law-giver, that is able to ſave and to deſtroy.* In this caſe his Soveraignty immediately and indiſpenſably binds the Conſcience of Man, and no humane Authority can diſſolve that Obligation: Nor muſt we ſnuff at the ſevereſt Command (3.) The glorious Soveraignty of God is diſplayed in his providential adminiſtrations, appointing every Man to that ſtation and condition he is in in this World; whether it be high or low, proſperous or afflicted. Pſal. 75. 6. *I ſaid to the fools, deal not fooliſhly*, &c. *for promotion cometh not from the* Eaſt, *or the* Weſt; *but God is Judge: He putteth down one, and ſetteth up another.* Let not them that are at the top of the World be lifted up; nor thoſe that are at the bottom be dejected: For God caſt every Man's Lot, and changeth their condition at his Pleaſure; a word of his Mouth plucks down the lofty, and exalts the lowly; he woundeth, and his Hands make whole. Hence it becomes the afflicted to be ſtill, and know that he is God, *Pſal.* 46. 10. To put his Mouth in the Duſt, and quietly to wait for his Salvation. All our fretting and ſtruggling cannot ſhake off the Yoke which he hath put upon us, but a weak and quiet ſubmiſſion to his Will, and compliance with his deſigns, is the beſt expedient to procure our Freedom. There is not one circumſtance of trouble befals you, without his Order; nor can you expect deliverance, but by order from him.

*Rule* 2. *Study the tranſcendent evil of ſin, and what the demerit of the leaſt ſin that ever you committed is.* This will becalm your tempeſtuous Spirits, and at once work them into *Contentation* with your preſent ſtate, and *Admiration* that it is no worſe, *Lam.* 3. 22. 39, 40.

Conſider, thou querulous and diſcontented Soul, that the wages of Sin is Death, *Rom.* 6. *ult.* That tribulation, anguiſh, and wrath, are due by Law, to every Soul of Man that doth Evil; that ſo often as we have ſinned, ſo often have we deſerved Hell: And ſhall we then charge God with Severity, for ſcourging us with the Rods of gentle fatherly Chaſtiſements? Is this Hell? Dare you ſay the ſevereſt affliction that ever was upon you, is above the demerit of your Sin?

'Tis true indeed, the Lord tells *Jeruſalem*, that ſhe had *received of his Hands double for all her ſins.* Iſai. 40. 2. But that is not the Language of ſtrict Juſtice, but of Compaſſions rolled together. There is not a gracious Soul in all the World, but will readily ſubſcribe *Ezra*'s Confeſſion, that God hath afflicted it leſs than its Iniquities deſerve, *Ezra* 9. 13. Oh if once we meaſure our afflictions by our Sins, we ſhall admire they are ſo few, ſo mild and gentle as they are.

*Rule.* 3. *Conſider what a difference there is betwixt the Saints meeting with Afflictions, and their parting with them.* You meet them with trembling and aſtoniſhment, but you ſhall part with them with praiſe and thankſgiving, bleſſing God for the manifold Bleſſings they have inſtrumentally conveyed to your Souls. It is good for me, ſaith *David*, that I have been afflicted. By theſe things ſin is prevented, diſcovered, and mortified, the inſnaring World imbittered, and the Reſt to come ſweetned.

Many other excellent Rules may be added; try theſe, and the bleſſing of the Spirit accompany them.

To conclude, be not ſwallowed up of Sorrows for what you have loſt, but ballance all the troubles of this Life with the hopes of the next. Your dear Children are gone, your ſweet Husband is gone; but conſider who took them, and whither. It is ſaid of *Enoch*, Gen. 5. 24. *He walked with God, and was not; for God took him.* Mr. *Upton* is not, and yet he is: He is not with Men, he is with God: He ceaſes not to *be*, though he ceaſes to *breath*: He is taken away, but God took him: He is better where he is, than where he was: Though he be not in your Boſom, he is in Chriſt's.

Imitate his Zeal, Plain-heartedneſs, diligence in duties, and you ſhall ſhortly meet him again, and never part any more. *For this we ſay by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain to the coming of the Lord, ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep. For the* 1 Theſſ.
*Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven with a* 15, 16,
*ſhout, and with the Voice of the Archangel, and* 18.
*the Trump of God: And the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt. Then we which are alive, and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air: And ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with theſe words.* Did you but know the deep *Emphaſis* of theſe words, *ever with the Lord*, I doubt not but you would find comfort enough in them for your ſelf, and a great overplus for the comforting of others.

# AN EXPOSITION OF THE Aſſemblies Catechiſm, WITH PRACTICAL INFERENCES From each QUESTION:

As it was carried on in the *Lords Days* Exerciſes in
*DARTMOUTH*,
In the *First Year of Liberty*, 1688.

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# THE PREFACE.

THAT Catechizing is an Ordinance of God, few will doubt, when they conſider the Apoſtles did firſt lay the Fundamentals of Religion; *Heb. 6.* 1. And *fed Babes with Milk, teaching them the firſt Principles of the Oracles of God*, Heb. 5. 12. and queſtionleſs taught them in that manner, which was moſt ſuitable to the Capacity of the Learners, which may well be ſuppoſed to be by plain and ſhort queſtions, and ſuitable Anſwers thereunto; and therefore this has been a conſtant Practice in the Church of God: and the Primitive Church had a Particular Perſon appropriated thereunto, whom they called *Catechiſt*.

And ſo all well-governed and wiſely managed Churches, have ſtill maintained and uſed it, as knowing the neceſſity and uſefulneſs thereof; for the younger Sort to inform them in the Principles of that Religion whereinto they were Baptized; and for the eſtabliſhment of the Adult and more aged therein.

Hence have iſſued all thoſe little Compoſures of all the fundamental Doctrines of Faith and Practice ſo handled (which we call Catechiſms) in the Churches; and particularly in ours, whereof there are many and divers, whoſe Authors have well deſerved for their Endeavours to inform and edify the People thereby.

But among them all, none excel This little Catechiſm of the *Aſſembly*, for Orthodoxy, Fulneſs, and Method.

And becauſe the Anſwers therein are ſome of them pretty large, and Treat of the moſt profound Myſteries of our Religion; therefore ſeveral Perſons have beſtowed their good and laudable Pains, ſome in deſcanting more largely, and proving by Scriptural Reaſons the Particulars: and one has ſhewn the harmony thereof with the Articles and Homilies of the Church of *England* (deſigned, I ſuppoſe, to remove the prejudice which ſome have taken againſt it). Others have parted the Queſtions and Anſwers into ſeveral little ones, under each, to make them more intelligible to younger ones, and more eaſy to be remembred.

Among whom, Worthy, Orthodox, and Excellent Mr. *John Flavell* may be ranked, who among other of his many and moſt profitable Labours, applied himſelf to the chewing of this Bread of Life, or crumbling it into ſmaller pieces, for the Conveniency of Children and (indeed) of all; wherein (as in all his other Works) he hath ſhewn himſelf a Workman that needs not to be aſhamed.

There needs no other recommendations to this *Poſthumus* Piece, but the worthy Author's Name; he was removed before he had compleatly finiſhed it; he had prepared his Queſtions and Anſwers upon the ſecond Petition of the *Lord's Prayer*; but lived not to propoſe them in the Publick Congregation. God then tranſlated him into his Kingdom of Glory above, while he was ſo induſtriouſly endeavouring to promote the Kingdom of Grace below.

The other five remaining Queſtions and Anſwers (to compleat the Work) were done by a ruder hand; as may eaſily be diſcerned by any obſervant Reader, who will find himſelf transfer'd from a plain, clear, and delightful Stile, method, and manner, into more rough, diſorderly, and unpleaſant ones; for who, indeed, could equal this Divine Labourer? Not the Compleater: who would account himſelf to have made very great Attainments in Divinity and Uſefulneſs, if he were left but a few furlongs behind him.

Let the Reader uſe and peruſe this Piece, and he will ſee cauſe to bleſs God for the Author.

*VALE.*

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## TO THE READER.

*THE Divine Providence having unexpectedly caſt my Lot for a few Days in* Dartmouth, *where that bleſſed man of God Mr.* John Flavell *did for many years honour Chriſt, and was honoured by him; I have been favoured with a ſight of that moſt judicious Explication of the* Aſſemblies Catechiſm, *which is emitted herewith.*

*Being deſired to teſtify my Reſpect to the worthy Author, by Prefacing this Excellent Labour of his with a few Lines; I can truly ſay (as ſometimes* Beza *of* Calvin*)* Now Mr. *Flavell* is dead, Life will be leſs ſweet, and Death leſs bitter to me.

*My heart bleeds to look on this deſolate Place, and not to ſee him, that whilſt living, was the glory of it.*

*But neither the Author, nor his Writings ſtand in need of the commendation of others, much leſs of mine.*

*His Works already publiſhed have made his Name precious in both* Englands, *and it will be ſo as long as the Earth ſhall endure.*

*There are ſome conſiderations which may cauſe the* Reader *to expect (and he will not find himſelf diſappointed therein) that which is extraordinary in this little* Manuel: *for the* Author's *Heart was very much engaged in doing this Service for Chriſt, in thus feeding his Lambs. And he did himſelf deſign the Publication of what is here committed to the Preſs; and was very deſirous (with an holy Submiſſion to the Will of God) to have perfected this Work before his Deceaſe; but had ſtrange intimations that he ſhould finiſh his Courſe, before that could be done.*

*When he did viva voce deliver his Meditations, there were many Enlargements, and lively Paſſages which are not here inſerted: nevertheleſs here is as much as he thought needful for publick view, not being willing that his Book ſhould be Voluminous.*

*In his laſt Catechetical Exerciſe concerning* Hallowing the Name of God, *he was exceedingly enlarged; but he muſt himſelf go into the Kingdom of Glory, when he intended to have diſcourſed on that Petition,* Thy Kingdom come.

*He alſo began ſome Meditations on* the Joys of Heaven: *But before he had an opportunity to expreſs what had been in his Heart, the Lord Jeſus ſaid unto him,* Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord. *And thus doth it happen many times to the eminent and holy Servants of God.*

*Another Conſideration, recommending what comes herewith, is, that it was amongſt Mr.* Flavell's *laſt Works. The (ἔσχατα ῥήματα) Laſt Sayings of wiſe and great Men have been eſteemed Oraculous; and the Scripture puts an Emphaſis on* the laſt Words of David, *the ſweet ſinger of* Iſrael, 2 Sam. 23. 1. *Not that thoſe were the laſt words that ever* David *ſpake, only they were written not long before his Death, when he was come near Heaven.*

*So was what is now put into the* Reader's *Hand, written by Mr.* Flavell *not long before his Tranſlation to the World of Souls, where the Spirits of Juſt men are made perfect.*

*There was a more than ordinary preſence of God with him to his laſt; and in his laſt Days, not the laſt Sermon that he preached (which was* June 21. 1691.) *He did more than once ſurprize his Hearers with an Intimation that, that might be the laſt time he ſhould ſpeak to them in the Name of the Lord. And was not then the Secret of the Lord with him?*

Dartmouth *will know, and* Devonſhire *will know, that there has been a Prophet among them.*

*And now my Soul bleeds to look on the dear Flock of God, which are as Sheep without a Shepherd. The Lord Jeſus, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, have compaſſion on them, and give them a Shepherd like to his bleſſed Servant* Flavell, *who did for many years feed them with Knowledge, and with Underſtanding.*

*Dartmouth,* March
*the* 21th 169$\frac{1}{2}$.

Increaſe Mather.

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# AN EXPOSITION OF THE Aſſemblies Shorter Catechiſm.

## 1. *Queſtion.*

### *Of Man's Chief End.*

**What is the Chief End of Man?**

A. **Man's Chief End is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.**

Q. 1. *Seeing a Chief ſuppoſeth an inferior End; What is that inferior End for which man was made?*

*A.* It was prudently, ſoberly, and mercifully, to govern, uſe, and diſpoſe of other Creatures in the Earth, Sea, and Air, over which God gave Man the Dominion; *Gen.* 1. 26. *And God ſaid, Let us make Man in our Image, after our likeneſs: and let them have dominion over the Fiſh of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over the Cattel, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth.* So Pſal. 8. 6. *Thou madeſt him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou haſt put all things under his feet.*

Q. 2. *What then is to be thought of thoſe men, who being wholly intent upon inferior things, forget and neglect their principal End?*

*A.* They are dead whilſt they live, 1 *Tim.* 5. 6. *But ſhe that liveth in pleaſure, is dead whilſt ſhe liveth.* They have their Portion in this Life, *Pſal.* 17. 14. *From men of the world which have their Portion in this Life,* and their end is deſtruction; *Phil.* 3. 19. *Whoſe end is deſtruction.*

Q. 3. *How can man glorifie God, ſeeing he is perfectly glorious in himſelf?*

*A* Man cannot glorifie God by adding any new degree of glory to him. *Job* 35. 7. *If thou be righteous, what giveſt thou him?* but by manifeſting his glory with the Lips; *Pſal.* 50. 23. *Whoſo offereth praiſe, glorifieth me;* or with the Life, *Mat.* 5. 16. *Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.*

Q. 4. *Wherein conſiſts the enjoyment of God?*

*A.* It conſiſts, *firſt,* In the facial viſion of him in Heaven. *Secondly,* In full conformity to him, 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. *But we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is. Thirdly,* In that full ſatisfaction which reſults from both the former, *Pſal.* 17. 15. *I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs.*

Q. 5. *Can none enjoy him in Heaven, who do not glorifie him on Earth?*

*A.* No adult Perſon can Scripturally expect happineſs in Heaven, without holineſs on Earth. *Heb.* 12. 14. *And holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* Rom. 8. 30. *Whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.*

Q. 6. *How comes the glory and enjoyment of God our Chief End?*

*A.* He is our Maſter, and rightful Owner, and Benefactor; we receive our Being and Preſervation from him; *Of him, and through him, and therefore to him be all Things;* Rom. 11. 36.

Q. 7. *Do all men make God their chief End?*

*A.* No, they do not; ſome make their ſenſual Pleaſure their chief End. *Phil* 3. 19. *Whoſe God is their Belly;* and ſome the World, *Col.* 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the Earth, and Covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry.*

Q. 8. *What are the Signs of a man's making himſelf his chief End?*

*A.* Thoſe make themſelves their chief End, who aſcribe the glory of what they have, or do, to themſelves, and not to God, *Dan.* 4. 30. *The King ſpake and ſaid, Is not this great Babylon which I have built?* Iſa. 10. 18. *For he ſaith, By the ſtrength of my hand have I done it; and by my wiſdom, For I am prudent; therefore they ſacrifice to their own net, and burn Incenſe unto their Drag.* Hab. 1. 16.

Q. 9. *Why are the glorifying and enjoying of God put together, as making up our chief End?*

*A.* Becauſe no man can glorifie God, that takes him not for his God; and none takes him for his God, that takes him not for his Supream Good; and both theſe being eſſentially included in this Notion of the chief End, are therefore juſtly put together.

Q. 10. *What is the firſt Truth inferr'd hence* ?

*A.* That God hath dignified Man above all other Creatuers on Earth, in giving him a capacity of glorifying God here, and of enjoying him hereafter.

Q. 11. *What is the ſecond truth inferr'd hence* ?

*A.* That the Soul of man is not annihilated by Death, but advanced by it, *Phil.* 1. 21. *To die is gain. V.* 23. *Having a deſire to depart, to be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

Q. 12. *What is the third truth inferr'd hence*;

*A.* That it is the duty and wiſdom of every Chriſtian to renounce, deny, and forſake all inferior Intereſts and Enjoyments, when they come in competition with the glory of God, and our enjoyment of him. *Luke* 14. 33. *So likewiſe whoſoever he be of you, that forſaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my Diſciple.*

Q. 13. *What is the fourth Inferrence hence* ?

*A.* That we are to abhor and renounce all thoſe Doctrines and Practices that debaſe the glory of God, and exalt and magnifie the Creature.

### *Of the Scriptures as our Rule.*

Queſt. 2. **What Rule hath God given to direct us, how we may glorifie and enjoy him?**

**A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, is the only rule to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy him.**

Q. 1. *How can the Scriptures be called the Word of God, ſeeing the things contained therein, were ſpoken and written by men* ?

*A.* They are truly and properly called the Word of God, becauſe they came not by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God ſpoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt, 2 *Pet.* 1. 21.

Q. 2. *What are the principal Arguments to perſwade us that the Sciptures are of Divine Authority, and Inſpiration* ?

*A.* Three things eſpecially convince us. *Firſt.* The Holineſs of the Doctrine therein contained. *Secondly*, The awful efficacy thereof on the Soul. *Thirdly*, The uncontroulable Miracles by which they are ſealed, put it beyond all rational doubt, that they are the very Word of God.

Q. 3. *What is the Holineſs of the Scriptures? and how doth that prove them to be God's Word* ?

*A.* The Holineſs of the Scriptures doth appear in two things. *Firſt*, In commanding and encouraging whatſoever is pure, and holy; *Phil.* 4. 8. *Whatſoever things are pure. Secondly*, In forbidding all unholineſs, under pain of Damnation, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. *Know ye not, that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, &c. This ſhews that they came not from Satan, being croſs to his deſign; nor from man, it being againſt his corrupt Nature; and therefore from God only.

Q. 4. *What is their Authority and Efficacy on the Soul? and how doth that prove them Divine?*

*A.* Their Authority and Efficacy on the Soul, conſiſts in three Things: *Firſt*, In the power they have to ſearch and diſcover the ſecrets of Men, *Heb.* 4. 12. *The Word of God is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of Soul and Spirit, of the Joynts and Marrow; and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Secondly*, In their converting Efficacy, changing and renewing the Soul, *Pſal.* 19. 7. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul. Thirdly*, In their chearing and reſtoring Efficacy, when the Soul is caſt down under any inward or outward trouble. *Pſal.* 19. 8. *The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoycing the Heart.* No humane Power can do ſuch things as theſe. *John* 17. 17. *Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.*

Q. 5. *How do Miracles confirm it* ?

*A.* Becauſe all proper Miracles are wrought only by the hand of God, *John* 3. 2. *And no man can do theſe Miracles that thou doeſt, except God be with him*; and ſo are his ſeal to whatſoever he affixes them, and it conſiſts not with his truth and holineſs to ſet it to a forgery.

Q. 6. *What was the end of writing the word?*

*A.* That the Church to the end of the world might have a ſure, known, ſtanding Rule to try and judge all things by, and not to be left to the uncertainty of Traditions. *John* 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have Eternal Life, and they are they which teſtify of me.*

Q. 7. *Doth not the Authority of the Scriptures depend on the Church, Fathers and Councils* ?

*A.* No, the Scriptures are not built on the Authority of the Church, but the Church on them. *Epheſ.* 2. 19, 20. *And are built on the Foundations of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner Stone.* And for Councils and Fathers, the Scriptures are not to be tried by them; but they by the Scriptures. *Iſa.* 8. 20. *To the Law, and to the Teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to this word, 'tis becauſe there is no light in them.*

Q. 8. *What may be fairly inferr'd from this Propoſition, That the Scriptures are the word of God?*

*A.* Three things may be thence inferr'd, *Firſt*, The perfection of the Scriptures, which being the only rule given by God, muſt therefore be perfect. *Secondly*, That it is the right of common People to read them. *John* 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures.* Acts 17. 11. *Theſe were more noble than thoſe of* Theſſalonica, *in that they received the word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearch the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo. Thirdly*, That we owe no Obedience to the Injunctions of men, farther than they are ſufficiently warranted by the written Word. *Mat.* 15. 9. *But in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.*

### *Of Faith and Obedience.*

Queſt. 3. **What do the Scriptures pri cipally teach?**

**A. The Scriptures principally tea what Man is to believe concerning Go and what duty God requires of Man.**

Q. 1. *Why is Faith conjoyned with Obedience, a put before it?*

*A.* Becauſe Faith is the principle from whe all Obedience flows, and no man can perform a duty aright in the eſtate of unbelief. *Heb.* 11. *But without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him; he that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is.*

Q. 2. *Can there be no ſaving Faith where the Scriptures are not known and preached?*

*A.* No; for the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 10. 14. *How then ſhall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? and how ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how ſhall they hear without a Preacher? and how ſhall they preach except they be ſent?* And v. 17. *So then, Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*

Q. 3. *Are not we bound to believe what Learned men teach us, as Points of Faith, though the things they teach be not contained in the Word of God?*

*A.* No; if the things they teach be not contained expreſly, or by neceſſary conſequence in the Word of God, we are not obliged to believe them as points of Faith. *Iſa.* 8. 20. *To the Law, and to the Teſtimony, if they ſpeak not according to this Word, it is becauſe there is no light in them.* Gal. 1. 8. *Though we, or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed.* And Chriſt hath charged us, *Mat.* 23. 10. *To call no man Maſter, for one is your Maſter, even Chriſt.*

Q. 4. *Are there ſome things in Scripture more excellent than others; Becauſe it's ſaid, the Scriptures principally teach matters of Faith and Duty?*

*A.* Every part of Scripture is alike pure; *Prov.* 30. 5. *Every word of God is pure,* and of equal authority, but not of equal weight; as ſeveral pieces of Gold are alike pure, and of the ſame ſtamp, but not of equal value.

Q. 5. *What may be inferred hence for Uſe?*

*A. Firſt,* Hence 'tis our duty to examine what we hear, by the Word; and not receive any Doctrine, becauſe men confidently affirm it, but becauſe the Scriptures require it. *Acts* 17. 11. *Theſe were more noble than thoſe of* Theſſalonica, *in that they received the Word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearched the Scriptures daily, whether theſe things were ſo. Secondly,* That Chriſtian Religion is not notional, but practical; and that impractical Faith ſaves no man, *Jam.* 2. 20. *Faith without Works is dead.*

### *God is a Spirit.*

Queſt. 4. **What is God?**

**A. God is a Spirit, Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable in his Being, Wiſdom, Power, Juſtice, Goodneſs and Truth.**

Q. 1. *Can the Nature of God be defined, ſo as en may expreſs properly and ſtrictly what God is?*

*A.* No: *Job* 11. 7. *Canſt thou by ſearching find ut God? canſt thou find out the Almighty unto perſion?*

We do then conceive moſt rightly of God, hen we acknowledge him to be unconceivable; d therefore one being ask'd the queſtion, what od is? anſwered rightly; If I fully knew that, hould be a God my ſelf; for God only knows own Eſſence.

Q. 2. *How many ways are there by which men know and deſcribe the Nature of God, tho ſtill imperfect Knowledge?*

A. There are two ways of knowing God in Life. *Firſt,* By way of affirmation; affirmthat of God by way of eminence, which is exent in the Creature; as when we affirm him e Wiſe, Good, Merciful, *&c.* *Secondly,* By of Negation, when we remove from God in our Conceptions all that is imperfect in the Creature: ſo we ſay God is Immenſe, Infinite, Immutable; and in this ſenſe we alſo call him a Spirit, (*i. e.*) he is not a groſs corporeal Subſtance.

Q. 3. *How many ſorts of Spirits are there? And of which ſort is God?*

*A.* There be two ſorts of Spirits, created, and finite; as Angels, and the Souls of Men are. *Secondly,* Uncreated, and Infinite; and ſuch a Spirit God only is, infinitely above all other Spirits.

Q. 4. *If God be a Spirit, in what ſenſe are we to underſtand all thoſe Scriptures, which ſpeak of the Eyes of the Lord, the Ears and Hand of God?*

*A.* We are to underſtand them as Expreſſions of God, in condeſcention to the weakneſs of our underſtandings; even as the Glory of Heaven is expreſt to us in Scripture by a City, and the Royal Feaſt. Theſe ſhadows are uſeful to us whilſt we are in the Body; but we ſhall know him in Heaven after a more perfect manner.

Q. 5. *What may be inferr'd from the Spiritual Nature of God?*

*A.* Hence learn, that it is both ſinful and dangerous to frame an Image or Picture of God. Who can make an Image of his Soul? which yet is not ſo perfect a Spirit as God is? And as it is ſinful to attempt it, ſo it is impoſſible to do it; *Deut.* 4. 15, 16. *Take ye therefore good heed unto your ſelves; for ye ſaw no manner of Similitude, on the day that the Lord ſpoke to you in* Horeb *out of the midſt of the Fire; leſt ye corrupt your ſelves, and make you a graven Image, the ſimilitude of any figure,* &c.

Q. 6. *What elſe may be inferr'd from thence?*

*A.* That our Souls are the moſt noble and excellent part of us, which moſt reſembles God; and therefore our chief regard and care ſhould be for them, whatever becomes of the vile Body, *Mat.* 16. 26. *For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall a man give in Exchange for his Soul?*

Q. 7. *What further Truth may be inferr'd hence?*

*A.* That men ſhould beware of ſpiritual Sins, as well as of groſs and outward Sins; for there is a filthineſs of the Spirit, as well as of the Fleſh, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit;* and as God ſees them, ſo he greatly abhors them, as Sins that defile the nobleſt part of man, on which he ſtamp'd his own Image.

Q. 8. *What alſo may be inferr'd from hence?*

*A.* Hence we learn, that ſpiritual Worſhip is moſt agreeable to his Nature and Will; and the more ſpiritual it is, the more acceptable it will be to him. *John* 4. 24. *God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth.* Externals in worſhip are of little regard with God; as places, habits, geſtures, *&c.*

*Apply this,*

*Firſt,* To Superſtitious men, *Iſa.* 66. 1, 2, 3.
*Secondly,* To Children that ſay a Prayer, but mind not to whom, nor what they ſay.

### *Of God's Infinity.*

Queſt. 1. *What is the ſenſe and meaning of this Word* [ *Infinity*? ]

*A.* It ſignifies that which hath no bounds or limits, within which it is contained, as all created things are.

Q. 2. *In how many reſpects is God infinite?*

*A.* God is infinite or boundleſs in three reſpects.

*Firſt*, In reſpect of the perfection of his Nature; his Wiſdom, Power, and Holineſs, exceed all meaſures and limits; as 1 *Sam.* 2. 2. *There is none holy as the Lord*, &c. *Secondly*, In reſpect of time and place; no time can meaſure him, *Iſa.* 57. 15. *Thus ſaith the high, and lofty one, that inhabiteth Eternity*, 1 Kings 8. 27. *Behold the Heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much leſs this Houſe which I have built?* The Heaven of heavens contains all created Beings; but not the Creator. *Thirdly*, In reſpect of his Incomprehenſibleneſs, by the underſtanding of all Creatures. *Job* 11. 7. *Canſt thou by ſearching find out God? canſt thou find out the Almighty to perfection?*

Q. 3. *If God be thus Infinite, and no underſtanding can comprehend him, How then is it ſaid in* 1 John 3. 2. We ſhall ſee him as he is?

*A.* The meaning is not, that glorified Saints ſhall comprehend God in their underſtandings; but that they ſhall have a true apprehenſive Knowledge of God: and that we ſhall ſee him immediately, and not as we do now thorow a glaſs darkly.

Q. 4. *What is the firſt Leſſon to be learnt from God's Infinity?*

*A.* That therefore men ſhould tremble to ſin even in ſecret. *Pſal.* 139. 11. *If I ſay, ſurely the darkneſs ſhall cover me, even the Night ſhall be light about me.*

Q. 5. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* The ſecond Inſtruction is, That there is an infinite evil in ſin, objectively conſider'd, as it is committed againſt an Infinite God; and therefore it deſerves Eternal Puniſhment; and no ſatisfaction can poſſibly be made for it, but by the Blood of Chriſt. 1 *Pet.* 1. 18. *Foraſmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold —— but with the precious Blood of Chriſt.*

Q. 6. *What is the third Inſtruction from God's Infinity?*

*A.* The third Inſtruction is, That thoſe who are reconciled to God in Chriſt, need not fear his ability to perform any mercy for them; for he is able to *do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, Epheſ.* 3. 20. And thoſe that are not reconciled, are in a very miſerable condition, having infinite Power ſet on work to puniſh them. 2 *Theſ.* 1. 9. *Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*

Q. 7. *What is the fourth Inſtruction from God's Infinity?*

*A.* That no place can bar the acceſs of gracious Souls to God. They are as near him in a Dungeon, as when at Liberty; and that he knows their thoughts, when their tongues cannot utter them.

## [ *Eternal.* ]

Queſt. 1. W*Hat is it to be Eternal, as God is?*

*A.* The Eternity of God is, to be without beginning, and without end. *Pſal.* 90. 2. *From everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God.*

Q. 2. *How doth God's Eternity differ from the Eternity of Angels, and Humane Souls?*

*A.* It differs in two reſpects; *Firſt*, In this, That tho Angels, and the Souls of men ſhall have no end; yet they had a beginning, which God had not. *Secondly*, Our Eternity is by gift from God, or by his appointment; but his Eternity is neceſſary, and from his own Nature.

Q. 3. *In what ſenſe is the Covenant called an everlaſting Covenant?*

*A.* The Covenant is called an Everlaſting Covenant, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. becauſe the mercies of it, conveyed to believers, as Pardon, Peace, and Salvation, are mercies that ſhall have no end.

Q. 4. *In what ſenſe is the Goſpel Everlaſting?*

*A.* The Goſpel is called the Everlaſting Goſpel, *Rev.* 14. 6. becauſe the effects thereof upon the Souls it ſanctifies, will abide in them for ever.

Q. 5. *In what ſenſe is the Redemption of Chriſt called the Eternal Redemption?*

*A.* The Redemption of Chriſt is called Eternal Redemption in *Heb.* 9. 12. becauſe thoſe whom he redeems by his Blood, ſhall never more come into Condemnation.. *John* 5. 24. *He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation, but is paſſed from death unto life.*

Q. 6. *Why is the laſt Judgment of the world by Chriſt, called Eternal Judgment?*

*A.* The laſt Judgment is called Eternal Judgment, not becauſe God judged men from Eternity, or becauſe the Day of Judgment ſhall laſt to Eternity; but becauſe the conſequences of it will be Everlaſting Joy or Miſery to the Souls of Men; therefore it's called *Eternal Judgment*, Heb. 6. 2.

Q. 7. *What may wicked men learn from the Eternity of God?*

*A.* Hence wicked men may ſee their own miſery in the Perfection of it; that they will have an eternal Enemy to avenge himſelf upon them for ever, in the World to come, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 9. *Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord.*

Q. 8. *What may good men learn from it?*

*A.* That their joy and happineſs will be perfect and endleſs, who have the Eternal God for their Portion. *Pſalm* 16. 11. *In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy, at thy right hand there are pleaſures for evermore.*

Q. 9. *What may all men good and bad learn from it?*

*A.* All men may learn three things from the Eternity of God. *Firſt*, That their life is a thing of nought, compared with God. *Pſal* 39. 5. *Mine age is nothing before thee. Secondly*, That ſins, o duties, long ſince committed, or performed, a all preſent before God. *Thirdly*, That God ca never want opportunity to do his work, an carry on his deſigns in the world. All time in the hand of the Eternal God. *Rev.* 12. 1 *The devil is come down unto you, having great wrat becauſe he knoweth that he hath but a ſhort time.*

### *Of God's Unchangeableneſs.*

Queſt. 1. W*Hat Scriptures plainly aſſert t Attribute?*

A. *Exod.* 3. 14. And God ſaid unto *Moſes* AM, that I AM. *Dan.* 6. 26. For he is the livi God, and ſtedfaſt for ever, *Jam.* 1. 17. *VV whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning.*

Q. 2. *Whence doth God's Immutability flow?*

*A.* The Immutability of God flows from Perfection of his Nature, to which nothing be added, and from which nothing can be taken away. If any thing could be added to make him better than he is; or if any thing could be taken away, to make him leſs good than he is, then he were not the chiefeſt Good, and conſequently not God.

Q. 3. *By what other Argument prove you his Immutability?*

*A.* I prove it from the Eternity of God. If God be Eternal, he muſt be Immutable; for if he change by addition of ſomething to him he had not before, then there is ſomething in God which he had not from Eternity. And if he change by diminution, then there was ſomething in God from Eternity, which now is not; but from *Everlaſting to Everlaſting*, he is the ſame God, and therefore changeth not.

Q. 4. *But it is ſaid, God repents, and Repentance is a change; How then is he unchangeable, and yet repents?*

*A.* In thoſe Phraſes God ſpeaks to us, as we muſt ſpeak of, and to him; not properly, but after the manner of men; and it only notes a change in his outward Providence, not in his Nature.

Q. 5. *But how could God become man, and yet no change made on him?*

*A.* There is a twofold change, one active, made by God, that we allow. He made a change upon our Nature by uniting it to Chriſt; but a paſſive change made upon God, we deny. The Nature of man was made more excellent, but the Divine Nature was ſtill the ſame.

Q. 6. *VVhat is the firſt Inſtruction from God's Immutability?*

*A.* That thoſe that are moſt unchangeable in holineſs, are moſt like God. *Let him that is holy, be holy ſtill?*

Q. 7. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That the happineſs of God's people is firm, and ſure, being ſtill upon the word of an unchangeable God. *Mal.* 3. 6. *For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye ſons of* Jacob *are not conſumed.* Heb. 6. 18.

Q. 8. *What is the third Inſtruction from this Attribute?*

*A.* That the hopes of all Wicked men are vain, being built upon a preſumption, that God will not deal with them as he hath threatned he will do.

Q. 9. *What is the laſt Inſtruction from God's Immutability?*

*A.* That Chriſtians may take as much encouragement now from the nature, word, and providence of God, as the Saints in any former Generation did, or might do; for he is the ſame now, as he was then.

### *Of God's Wiſdom.*

Queſt. 1. *How manifold is the wiſdom of God?*

*A.* There is a perſonal and eſſential wiſdom of God; the perſonal wiſdom is the Son of God. 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. *Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God.* Col. 2. 3. *In whom are laid the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.* The eſſential wiſdom of God, is the eſſence of God; of which this Queſtion ſpeaks.

Q. 2. *What is the Eſſential wiſdom of God?*

*A.* The Eſſential wiſdom of God, is his moſt exact and perfect knowledge of Himſelf, and all Creatures, and his ordering, and diſpoſing them in the moſt convenient manner, to the Glory of his own Name. *Epheſ.* 1. 11. *According to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after the councel of his own will.*

Q. 3. *What is the firſt property of God's wiſdom?*

*A.* The firſt property is, he is only wiſe, *Rom.* 16, 27. *To God only wiſe be glory.* And whatſoever wiſdom is in Angels, or Men, is all derived, and borrowed from God; but his from none. *Iſa.* 40. 14. *With whom took he counſel? and who inſtructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and ſhewed to him the way of underſtanding?*

Q. 4. *VVhat is the ſecond property of God's wiſdom?*

*A.* The ſecond property is, That he is incomprehenſible in his wiſdom. *Rom.* 11. 33, 34. *Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God,* &c.

Q. 5. *VVhat is the third property of the wiſdom of God?*

*A.* The third property is, That God is perfectly wiſe, which no Creatures, no not the very Angels in Heaven are. *Job* 4. 18. *And his Angels he chargeth with folly.*

Q. 6. *VVhat is the moſt glorious and eminent diſcovery of the wiſdom of God?*

*A.* The moſt glorious diſplay of the wiſdom of God was in the work of our Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt. *Col.* 2. 3. *In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.* 1 Cor. 1. 24. *Chriſt the wiſdom of God.*

Q. 7. *VVhat is the firſt Inſtruction from God's wiſdom?*

*A.* The firſt Inſtruction is, That God is a fit object of our truſt, dependance, and reſignation, *Iſa.* 30. 18. *And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment; bleſſed are all they that wait for him.*

Q. 8. *VVhat is the ſecond Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* The ſecond Inſtruction is, That it is a dangerous arrogancy in the Creature, either to preſcribe unto God, and direct his Maker. *Job* 21. 22. *Shall any teach God knowledge, ſeeing he judgeth thoſe that are high?* Or to quarrel with his providences, as not ſo fit and convenient as they ſhould be. *Job* 40. 2. *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty inſtruct him? He that reproveth God, let him anſwer it.*

Q. 9. *VVhat is the third Inſtruction from it?*

*A.* That the people of God have much reaſon to quiet, and encourage themſelves, when crafty and ſubtil Enemies ſurround them. For the *fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than man,* 1 Cor. 1. 25.

Q. 10. *VVhat is the fourth Inſtruction from God's wiſdom?*

*A.* The fourth Inſtruction is, That the true way to Wiſdom, is to be ſenſible of our own folly. 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *If any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe.* And to apply our ſelves by Prayer to God the fountain of it. *Jam.* 1. 5. *If any man lack wiſdom, let him ask it of God.*

Q. 11. *VVhat is the laſt Inſtruction from God's wiſdom?*

*A.* That the ſtudy of Chriſt, and of the Scriptures, is to be preferred to all other ſtudies in the world. *Col.* 2. 3. *In whom are hid all the* *treaſures of wiſdom, and knowledge.* And the Scriptures contain all that Wiſdom which is for our Salvation. 1 *Cor.* 2. 7. *But we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom which God ordained before the world, unto our glory.*

### *Of God's Power.*

Queſt. 1. W*Hat is the Power of God?*

*A.* An Eſſential property of his Nature, whereby he can do all things that he pleaſes to have done. *Jer.* 32. 17. *Ah Lord God, behold thou haſt made the Heavens, and the Earth by thy great power, and ſtretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.*

Q. 2. *What evidences have we before our eyes of the Almighty Power of God?*

*A.* It appears in the Creation of the World. *Rom.* 1. 20. *For the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead.* And its Suſtentation. Heb.. 1. 3. *Who upholdeth all things by the word of his power.*

Q. 3. *Did God's power ever act its utmoſt?*

*A.* No, he can do more than ever he did, or ever will do. *Mat.* 3. 9. *God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto* Abraham. Mat. 26. 53.

Q. 4. *Are there not ſome things which God cannot do?*

*A.* Yes, there are, but they are ſuch things as are inconſtent with his truth and holineſs. *Tit.* 1. 2.—— *which God that cannot lye.* 2 Tim. 2. 13. *He cannot deny himſelf.*

Q. 5. *What is the firſt thing inferred from God's power?*

*A.* That all the Creatures neceſſarily depend on him for what ability they have, and without the permiſſion of the ſupreme Power they can do us no hurt. *Joh.* 19. 11. *Thou couldeſt have no power againſt me except it were given thee from above.*

Q. 6. *VVhat is the ſecond Inference from hence?*

*A.* That the difficulties which lie in the way of the Promiſes, need be no ſtumbling-blocks to our Faith. *Rom.* 4. 20, 21. *He ſtaggered not at the promiſes through unbelief, being fully perſwaded, that what he had promiſed he was able alſo to perform?*

Q. 7. *VVhat is the third Inference from this Attribute?*

*A.* The Saints need not be ſcared at the greatneſs of their ſufferings: their God can carry them through. *Dan.* 3. 17 *Our God whom we ſerve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace.*

Q. 8. *VVhat is the Fourth Inference?*

*A.* That the Salvation of God's People is certain, whatever their dangers be; Being kept by this mighty Power. 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. *VVho are kept by the Power of God through faith to Salvation.*

Q. 9. *VVhat is the laſt Inference hence?*

*A.* That the ſtate of the damned is unconceiveably miſerable. Their Puniſhment proceeding from the glory of the Almighty. 2 *Theſ.* 1. 9. *VVho ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.*

### *Of God's Holineſs.*

Queſt. 1. H*Ow manifold is the Holineſs of God?*

*A.* The Holineſs of God is twofold; Communicable, or Incommunicable; of his communicable holineſs the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Heb.* 12. 10. *But he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs.* Of his incommunicable holineſs that Scripture ſpeaks, 1 *Sam.* 2. 2. *There is none holy as the Lord.*

Q. 2. *VVhat is the eſſential and incommunicable Holineſs of God?*

*A.* It is the Infinite purity of his Nature, whereby he delights in his own holineſs, and the reſemblance of it in his Creatures, and hates all impurity. *Hab.* 1. 13. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity.*

Q. 3. *VVhat is the firſt property of God's Holineſs?*

*A.* He is eſſentially holy. Holineſs is not a ſeparable quality in God, as it is in Angels and Men: but his Being and his Holineſs are one thing.

Q. 4. *VVhat is the ſecond property of God's Holineſs?*

*A.* God is eſſentially Holy, the author and fountain of all communicated Holineſs. *Lev.* 20. 8. *I am the Lord which ſanctifieth you.*

Q. 5. *VVhat is the third property?*

*A.* That the Holineſs of God is the perfect rule and pattern of holineſs to all Creatures. 1 *Pet.* 1. 16. *Be ye holy, for I am holy.*

Q. 6. *VVhat is the firſt Inſtruction?*

*A.* That the holieſt of men have cauſe to be aſhamed and humbled when they come before God. *Iſa.* 6. 3, 5. *And one cried unto another, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole earth is full of his glory. Then ſaid I, VVoe is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a man of unclean lips,* &c.

Q. 7. *VVhat is the ſecond Inſtruction from God's Holineſs?*

*A.* That there is no coming near to God without a Mediator; *for our God is a conſuming fire.*

Q. 8. *VVhat is the third Inſtruction from God's Holineſs?*

*A.* That Holineſs is indiſpenſibly neceſſary, to all thoſe which ſhall dwell with him in Heaven. *Heb.* 12. 14. *And holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

Q. 9. *VVhat is the fourth Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That the Goſpel is of ineſtimable value, as it is the inſtrument of conveighing the Holineſs of God to us. 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the ſpirit of the Lord.* Joh. 17. 17. *Sanctiſy them through thy truth, thy word is truth.*

Q. 10. *What is the laſt Inſtruction from God's Holineſs?*

*A.* That all the deſpiſers and ſcoffers of Holineſs, are deſpiſers of God: for Holineſs is the very Nature of God; and in the Creature it is his repreſented Image.

### *Of God's Juſtice.*

Queſt. 1. W*Hat is the Juſtice of God?*

*A.* The Juſtice of God is perfect rectitude and equity of his Nature, whereby he is juſt in himſelf, and in all his ways tow the Creatures. *Deut.* 32. 4. *He is the rock work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right*

Q. 2. *What is the firſt Property of God's Ju*

*A.* That it infinitely excels all humane Ju in the Perfection of it. No Creature can pare in Juſtice with God. *Job* 9. 2. *How ſhall man be juſt with God.*

Q. 3. *What is the ſecond property of God's Juſtice?*

*A.* That he is Univerſally Righteous in all his adminiſtrations in the world. *Pſal.* 145. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

Q. 4. *What was the greateſt demonſtration of the Juſtice of God, that ever was given to the world?*

*A.* The greateſt evidence that ever was given of the Juſtice of God, was in his exacting full ſatisfaction for our ſins upon Chriſt. *Rom* 3. 25, 26. *Whom God hath ſet forth, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I ſay, at this time, his righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus.* Rom. 8. 32. *He ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.*

Q. 5. *What is the Second Diſcovery of God's Juſtice?*

*A.* The Second Diſcovery of the Juſtice of God, is in the Eternal Puniſhment of Sin in Hell, upon all that do not repent, and come to Chriſt by Faith in this World; Rom. 2. 5. *But after thy hardneſs, and impenitent heart, treaſureth up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

Q. 6. *What is the Third Evidence of God's Juſtice?*

*A.* The Third Evidence of the Juſtice of God is, in making good all the mercies he hath promiſed to believers, exactly to a tittle. 1 *John* 1. 19. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithfull and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.* 2 Tim. 4. 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day.*

Q. 7. *What is the Firſt inference from God's Juſtice?*

*A.* That ſinners have no cauſe to complain of God's Judgments, though they be never ſo terrible, or durable; *Rom.* 2. 5. *But after thy hardneſs, and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

Q. 8. *What is the Second Inference from God's Juſtice?*

*A.* That without doubt there is a Judgment to come in the next Life, otherwiſe God would not have the glory of his Juſtice, *Eccleſ.* 3. 16, 17. *I ſaw under the ſun the place of judgment, that wickedneſs was there; and the place of righteouſneſs, that iniquity was there: I ſaid in mine heart, God ſhall judge the righteous, and the wicked.*

Q. 9. *What is the Third Inference from God's Juſtice?*

*A.* That Penitent and Believing Sinners need not doubt of the forgiveneſs of their ſins, 1 *John* 1. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.*

Q. 10. *VVhat is the Laſt Inference from it?*

*A.* The Laſt Inference is, That Meekneſs and Patience under afflictions, is our unqueſtionable Duty; and murmuring againſt God, is a great ſin and evil. *Lam.* 3. 39. *VVherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his ſins?*

### *Of God's Goodneſs.*

Queſt. 1. W*Hat is the Goodneſs of God?*

*A.* It is an Eſſential Property of his Nature, whereby he is abſolutely and perfectly good in himſelf, and the Fountain of all communicated Goodneſs to the Creature. *Pſalm* 119. 68. *Thou art good, and doſt good, teach me thy Statutes.*

Q. 2. *How doth the Goodneſs of God differ from the Mercy of God?*

*A.* It differs in its Objects; for Miſery is the Object of Mercy; but Goodneſs extends to the Creatures that are happy, as well as miſerable; as the Angels, *Pſal.* 145. 9. *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

Q. 3. *What is the Firſt Property of God's Goodneſs?*

*A.* That all his other Attributes flow out of it as their Fountain: The other Acts of God are but the Effluxes of his Goodneſs. *Exod.* 33. 19. *And he ſaid, I will make all my goodneſs paſs before thee, and I well proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will ſhew mercy unto whom I will ſhew mercy.* Exod. 34. 6. *And the Lord paſſed by before him, and proclaimed The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth.*

Q. 4 *What is the Second Property of the Divine Goodneſs?*

*A.* That it is ſupream, and perfect in it ſelf, ſo as the goodneſs of no Creature is, or can be. *Luke* 18. 19. *None is good ſave one, and that is God:* And conſequently above all additions from the Creature. *Pſalm* 16. 2: *O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord——my goodneſs extendeth not unto thee.*

Q. 5. *What is the Third Property of God's Goodneſs?*

*A.* That it is communicative with Pleaſure and delight to the Creature: No Mother draws out her Breaſt to an hungry Child with more pleaſure than God doth his Goodneſs to the Saints. *Pſalm* 145. 9. *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

Q. 6. *In what Acts hath God firſt manifeſted his Goodneſs?*

*A.* He hath manifeſted it in the Creation and Government of the World. *Pſalm* 104. 24. *O Lord, how manifold are thy works? in wiſdom haſt thou made them all.*

Q. 7. *What was the principal Work in which God hath manifeſted his Goodneſs to men?*

*A.* The Principal manifeſtation of God's Goodneſs, was in the Work of Redemption by Chriſt. *Rom.* 5. 8. *God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us.* 1 John 4. 8, 9. *In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten ſon into the world, that we might live through him.*

Q. 8. *But are not the Judgments of God on the Wicked, and his Afflictions on the Saints, impeachments of his goodneſs?*

*A.* No, It is the property of Goodneſs to hate and puniſh Evil in the impenitent. *Exod.* 34. 7. *Keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, and tranſgreſſion, and ſin, and that will by no means clear the guilty,* &c. And the Afflictions of the Saints flow from his Goodneſs, and end in their true and eternal good. Heb. 12. 6. *For whom the Lord loveth,* *he chaſtneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth.* Pſalm 119. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes.*

Q. 9. *What may we infer from the Goodneſs of God?*

*A.* The firſt thing is, that Sin hath made our Natures baſe, and diſingenuous, in that we take no notice of his Goodneſs. *Iſa.* 1.3 *The Oxe knoweth his owner, and the Aſs his maſters crib; but Iſrael doth not know, my people doth not conſider*; And anſwer not the deſign of it. Rom. 2.4. *Not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance.*

Q. 10. *What is the Second Inference from the Goodneſs of God?*

*A.* That therefore God is the fitteſt Object of our delight, and love, and of our truſt and confidence. (1.) Of our Delight and Love. *Pſalm.* 116. 1. *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice, and my ſupplication.* (2.) Of our Truſt and Confidence. *Pſalm* 34. 8. *O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good; bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him.*

Q. 11. *What is the Third Inference from God's Goodneſs?*

*A.* That Chriſtians ſhould imitate God in his Goodneſs, in charity to our Enemies. *Mat.* 5.44, 45. *But I ſay unto you, Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you, that ye may be the Children of your father which is in heaven.*

Q. 12. *What is the Laſt Inference from God's Goodneſs?*

*A.* That Chriſtians have great encouragement to go to God for pardon in caſe of ſin. *Pſal.* 130. 4. *But there is forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared*; and for refuge of dangers. *Nahum* 1. 7. *The Lord is good, a ſtrong hold in the day of trouble; he knoweth them that truſt in him.*

### *Of God's Truth.*

Queſt. 1. WHat is the Truth of God?

*A.* It is an Eſſential Property of his Nature, whereby he is perfectly faithful in himſelf, and in all that he hath ſpoken. *Deut.* 32. 4. *He is the Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he.* Pſalm 119. 142. *Thy righteouſneſs is an everlaſting righteouſneſs, and thy Law is the truth.*

Q. 2. *What is the firſt Property of Divine Truth?*

*A.* The firſt Property of it is, That it is eſſential and neceſſary to God; *He cannot lye*, Tit. 1. 2.

Q. 3 *What is the Second Property of it?*

*A.* The Second Property is, That it is everlaſting, and abiding to all Generations. *Pſalm* 100. 5. *For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlaſting, and his truth endureth to all generations.* Iſa. 25. 1. *O Lord, thou art my God, I will exalt thee—thy counſels of old are faithfulneſs and truth.*

Q. 4. *What is the Third Property of Divine Truth?*

*A.* The Third Property is, that he is univerſally true in all his Words and Works. (1.) In all his Words. *John* 17. 17. *Thy word is truth* (2.) In all his Works. *Pſalm* 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto ſuch as keep his covenant.*

Q. 5. *What is the Firſt Leſſon from God's Truth to be learnt?*

*A.* That truth and ſincerity of heart is that which is moſt ſuitable, and pleaſing to God. *Pſal.* 51. 6. *Behold, thou deſireſt truth in the inward parts.*

Q. 6. *What is the Second Leſſon from God's Truth?*

*A.* That whatever God hath foretold, ſhall aſſuredly come to paſs, and be fulfilled in his time. *Joſh.* 23. 14. *Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord our God ſpoke concerning you; all are come to paſs unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.*

Q. 7. *What is the Third Leſſon from the Truth of God?*

*A.* That a Promiſe from God is full ſecurity to the Faith of his People, and they may look upon it as good as a mercy in hand. *Heb.* 10. 23. *For he is faithful that promiſed.*

Q. 8. *What is the Fourth Leſſon from God's Truth?*

*A.* That whatever God hath threatned in his Word againſt ſinners, ſhall ſurely come upon them, except they repent, *Zech.* 1. 6. *But my word, and my ſtatutes, which I commanded my ſervants, the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned, and ſaid, Like as the Lord of hoſts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, ſo hath he dealt with us.* Ezek. 12. 27, 28. *The word which I have ſpoken, ſhall be done, ſaith the Lord God.*

Q. 9. *What is the Fifth Leſſon from God's Truth?*

*A.* That falſhood in Words and Actions is contrary to God's Nature, and abhorred by him. *John* 8. 44. *Ye are of your father the Devil, and the luſt of your father ye will do; he was a murtherer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, becauſe there is no truth in him; when he ſpeaketh a lie, he ſpeaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

Q. 10. *VVhat is the Laſt Leſſon from God's Truth?*

A. *The day of judgment* will rightly and juſtly ſtate every man's condition. *Rom.* 2. 2. *But we are ſure that the judgment of God is according to truth, againſt them which commit ſuch things.*

### *Of One God.*

Queſt. 5. **ARE there more Gods than one?**

A. **There is but one only, the living and true God.**

Q. 1. *How doth it appear that there is but one God?*

*A.* It is evident from Scripture there is but one God. *Deut.* 6. 4. *Here, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord.* Jer. 10. 10. *But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlaſting King*; and as Scripture *reveals* no more, ſo Reaſon will *allow* no more.

Q. 2. *Why will Reaſon allow no more but one God?*

*A.* Becauſe God is the Firſt Being, *Revel.* 1. 11. *Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt*; and there can be but one Firſt Being, and God is the moſt perfect, and excellent Being. *Pſalm* 71. 19. *Thy righteouſneſs alſo, O God, is very high, who hath done great things: O God, who is like unto thee?* And there can be but one moſt Perfect and Excellent Being.

Q. 3. *But doth not the Scripture ſay in* 1 Cor. 8. 5. *That there are Gods many, and Lords many?*

*A.* Yes, there are many in *Title*, and many in *Opinion*; but one only in *Truth*. *Jer.* 10. 10. *But the*

*the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlaſting King.*

Q. 4. *Why is he called the true God?*

*A.* To diſtinguiſh him from the Idols and falſe Gods of the Heathens. 1 *Theſ.* 1. 9. *How ye turned to God from Idols, to ſerve the living and true God.* Acts 14. 15. *We preach unto you, that ye ſhould turn from theſe vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all things that are therein.*

Q. 5. *Why is he called the living God?*

*A.* Becauſe all Life, Natural, Spiritual, and Eternal, is in him, and from him only. *Firſt,* Natural Life. *Acts* 17. 28. *For in him we live, and move, and have our being. Secondly,* Spiritual Life. *Eph.* 2. 1. *You hath he quickned, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. Thirdly,* Eternal life in glory. *Col.* 3. 4. *When Chriſt who is our life ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory.*

Q. 6. *What is the firſt Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* If but one God, then all his Children ſhould be of one heart, having one and the ſame Father. *Eph.* 4. 5, 6. *One Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

Q. 7. *What is the ſecond Inference from hence?*

*A.* That it is Idolatry to perform worſhip to any other but God only. *Pſalm* 86. 9, 10. *All nations whom thou haſt made, ſhall come and worſhip before thee, O Lord, and ſhall glorify thy name, for thou art great, and doeſt wondrous things, thou art God alone.*

Q. 8. *What is the Third Inference from it?*

*A.* That our ſupream love is due to God only, and 'tis very ſinful to place it on any other. *Deut.* 6. 4, 6. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul and with all thy might.*

Q. 9. *What is the Fourth Inference from God's Unity?*

*A.* That God only muſt have the reliance and dependance of our Souls. *Jer.* 17. 5, 7. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Curſed be the man that truſteth in man, that maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord. Bleſſed is the man that truſteth in the Lord, and whoſe hope the Lord is.*

Q. 10. *What is the laſt Inference from it?*

*A.* That we have great cauſe to be thankful for the Goſpel, which diſcovers the only true God to us, and that we are not as the Heathens, worſhipping many and falſe Gods. 1 *Cor.* 8. 5, 6. *For though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven, or in earth, as there be Gods many, and Lords many; but to us there is but one God, the father of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

### *Of three Perſons in the Godhead.*

Queſt. 6. **HOW many Perſons are there in the Godhead?**

*A.* **There are three Perſons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one God, the ſame n ſubſtance, equal in Power and Glory.**

Q. 1. *What mean you by the word Godhead?*

*A.* It is the Nature, Eſſence, or Being of God, s the Apoſtle ſpeaks; *Acts* 17. 29. *Foraſmuch en as we are the offſpring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or ſilver, or ſtone, graven by art, and mans device.*

Q. 2. *What is a Perſon in the Godhead?*

*A.* It is the Godhead diſtinguiſhed by perſonal Properties; each Perſon having his diſtinct Perſonal Properties. *Heb.* 1. 3. *Who being the brightneſs of his glory and the expreſs image of his perſon, upholding all things by the word of his power.*

Q. 3. *How doth it appear there are three perſons, and no more?*

*A. Firſt,* From Chriſt's Baptiſm. *Mat.* 3. 16, 17. *And Jeſus when he was baptized, went up ſtraitway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the ſpirit of God deſcending like a dove, and lighting upon him, and lo a voice from heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved ſon, in whom I am well pleaſed.*

Q. 4. *How elſe, in the ſecond place, doth it appear?*

*A.* From the Inſtitution of our Baptiſm. *Mat.* 28. 19. *Go ye therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, of the ſon, and of the holy ghoſt.*

Q. 5. *What is the third Proof from Scripture?*

*A.* From the Apoſtolical Benediction. 2 *Cor.* 13. 14. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt, be with you all,* Amen. Where three diſtinct bleſſings are wiſht, from the three divine Perſons in the Godhead; *Grace* from Chriſt, *Love* from the Father, and *Communion* with the Spirit.

Q. 6. *What farther evidence is there of it in the Scripture?*

*A.* From plain, poſitive aſſertions of the Scripture, aſſerting, *Firſt,* A Trinity of Perſons. *Secondly,* A Unity of Eſſence. 1 *Joh.* 5. 7. *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the father, the word, and the holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one.*

Q. 7. *What is the firſt Inſtruction from the Trinity?*

*A.* That the Doctrine of the Goſpel concerning Chriſt, is fully confirmed and ratified by three witneſſes from Heaven, who are above all exceptions. 1 *Joh.* 5. 7. *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the father, the word, and the Holy Ghoſt.*

Q. 8. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction from the Trinity?*

*A.* Hence we learn the true order and manner of worſhipping God in the Son. *Joh.* 16. 23. *Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the father in my name, he will give it you.* And by the Spirit. *Eph.* 6. 18. *Praying always, with all prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit.*

Q. 9. *What is the third Inſtruction from the Trinity?*

*A.* That the Covenant of Grace conveys a rich portion to Believers, in making over all three Perſons to them. *Jer.* 31. 33. *But this ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.*

Q. 10. *What is the fourth Inſtruction from the Trinity?*

*A.* That as it is the duty of all the Saints to give diſtinct glory to the three Perſons in the Godhead; ſo it will be a ſpecial part of their bleſſedneſs in Heaven, to contemplate the diſtinct benefits received from them all. *Rev.* 1. 5. *And from Jeſus Chriſt, who is the faithful witneſs, and the* *firſt begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth; unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.*

### *Of God's Decrees.*

Queſt. 7. **What are the Decrees of God? A. The Decrees of God are his eternal purpoſe, according to the counſel of his will, whereby for his own glory he hath fore-ordained whatſoever comes to paſs.**

Q. 1. *What things are Decreed of God?*

*A.* All things whatſoever come to paſs, even the ſmalleſt. *Eph.* 1. 11. *In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will.*

Q. 2. *What is the End of God's Decrees?*

*A.* The Glory of his own Name, *Eph.* 1. 11, 12. *Who worketh all things according to the counſel of his own will, that we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory who firſt truſted in Chriſt.*

Q. 3. *But there are ſome evil things done in the World, do they fall under God's Decree?*

*A.* Though God doth neither approve them, nor neceſſitate men to commit them, yet he doth permit and ſuffer them to be done, and will turn them to his own Glory. *Acts* 4. 27, 28. *For of a truth, againſt thy holy child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Iſrael are gathered together, for to do whatſoever thy hand, and thy counſel determined before to be done.*

Q. 4. *VVho are the Objects of God's Special Decrees?*

*A.* Angels and Men are the Objects of God's Special Decrees. 1 *Tim.* 5. 21. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect angels, that thou obſerve theſe things,* &c. Rom. 8. 33. *VVho ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*

Q. 5. *VVhat is the Firſt Property of God's Decrees?*

*A.* That they are moſt wiſe Acts of God laid in the depth of Wiſdom and Counſel. *Rom.* 11. 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!*

Q. 6. *What is the Second Property of God's Decrees?*

*A.* The Decrees of God are moſt free, all flowing from the meer pleaſure of his Will. *Rom.* 9. 18. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

Q. 7. *VVhat is the Third Property of God's Decrees?*

*A.* They are moſt firm and ſtable. 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *Nevertheleſs, the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, the Lord knoweth them that are his,* Zech. 6. 1.

Q. 8. *VVhat is the fourth Property of God's Decrees?*

*A.* They are Eternal, and before all time, *Acts* 15. 18. *Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.*

Q. 9. *VVhat is the Fifth Property of God's Decrees?*

*A.* They are moſt pure, and altogether unſpotted of ſin, 1 John 1. 5. *This is the meſſage which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, That God is Light, and in him is no darkneſs at all.*

Q. 10. *VVhat is the Firſt Inſtruction from God's Decrees?*

*A.* That we ought to aſcribe nothing to Chance, but to the appointment or providence of God, *Prov.* 16. 33. *The lot is caſt into the lap, but the whole diſpoſing thereof is of the Lord.*

Q. 11. *VVhat is the Second Inſtruction from God's Decrees?*

*A.* That God's hand is to be acknowledged in the greateſt Afflictions that befalls us. 2 Sam. 16. 11. *And David ſaid to Abiſhai, and to all his ſervants, Behold, my ſon which came forth of my bowels ſeeketh my life, how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inſtruction from God's Decrees?*

*A.* That we ought to be thankful to God for all the good, and patient under all the evils that befall us. *Job* 2. 10. *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive evil?*

### *Of the Creation.*

Queſt. 9. **What are the Works of Creation? A. The Work of Creation is, Gods making all things of nothing, by the Word of his Power, in the ſpace of Six Days, and all very good.**

Q. 1. *What is it to create?*

*A.* To create, is to give a Being to that which had no Being; or to bring ſomething out of nothing. *Heb.* 11. 3. *Through Faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, ſo that things which are ſeen, were not made of things that do appear.*

Q. 2. *How did God create the world?*

*A.* By his infinite Power, executed in his Word of Command. *Pſalm* 33. 6. 9. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth; for he ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt.*

Q. 3. *VVhat Attributes of God ſhine forth in the Creation?*

*A.* The Wiſdom of God ſhines forth gloriouſly, not only in their formation, but dependance one upon another. *Pſalm* 104. 24. *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wiſdom haſt thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.*

Q. 4. *What may we learn from the Creation?*

*A.* That God perfectly knows all that is in the Creature, be it never ſo ſecret. *Pſalm* 94. 8, 9. *Underſtand, O ye brutiſh among the people; and ye fools, when will ye be wiſe? He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? he that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee?*

Q. 5. *What's the Second Inſtruction from the Creation?*

*A.* That God is the rightful owner of us all, and may do what he will with us. *Rom.* 9. 20. *Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest againſt God! Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, why haſt thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel to honour, and another to diſhonour?*

Q. 6. *What is the Third Inſtruction from the Creation?*

*A.* That God only is the proper Object of Worſhip. *Jer.* 10. 11. *Thus ſhall he ſay unto them, The Gods that have not made the heavens, and th* *earth, even they ſhall periſh from the earth, and from under theſe heavens.*

Q. 7. *What is the Fourth Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That Chriſtians ſhould not fear the power of Creatures, ſince they derive their Being and Power from God. *Iſa.* 54. 16, 17. *Behold I have created the Smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, that bringeth forth an inſtrument for his work; and I have created the waſter to deſtroy, no weapon that is formed againſt thee ſhall proſper.*

Q. 8. *What is the Fifth Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* That Atheiſm is a ſin againſt Natural Light and Reaſon. *Rom.* 1. 20. *For the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; ſo that they are without excuſe.*

Q. 9. *What is the Sixth Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* That God's Glory is the end of all Being. *Col.* 1. 16. *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him.*

Q. 10. *What is the Seventh Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* That there is an unnatural rebellion in ſin, ſmiting at him that made and preſerves our Being. *Iſa.* 1. 2. *I have nouriſhed and brought up children, and they have rebelled againſt me.*

Q. 11. *What is the Eighth Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That God can in a moment revive and ſave the Church, when at the loweſt ebb. *Iſa.* 65. 18. *Behold, I create Jeruſalem a rejoycing, and her people a joy.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That it is eaſy with God to revive a dejected Soul. *Iſa.* 57. 19. *I create the fruit of the lips; Peace peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, ſaith the Lord, and I will heal him.*

### *Of Man's Creation.*

Queſt. 10. **HOW did God create Man?**

**A. God created Man Male and Female, after his own Image, in Knowledge, Righteouſneſs, and Holineſs, with dominion over the Creatures.**

Q. 1. *How did God create Man?*

*A.* God created man in his own Image. *Gen.* 1. 27. *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.*

Q. 2. *What is meant by the Image of God?*

*A.* Not a reſemblance of God in any bodily Shape or Figure, but in holineſs. *Eph.* 4. 24. *And that ye put on that new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.*

Q. 3. *In what Graces did Man reſemble God?*

*A.* In ſuch a knowledge of God himſelf, and the Creatures, which made him happy. *Col.* 3. 10. *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.*

Q. 4. *In what other Graces did this Image conſiſt?*

*A.* In Righteouſneſs as well as Holineſs. *Eph.* 4. 24. *And that ye put on that new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.*

Q. 5. *What is the Firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* The deplorable miſery of the Fall. *Rom.* 5. 12. *Wherefore as by one man ſin entred into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.*

Q. 6. *What is the Second Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* The beauty of Holineſs, which is the Image of God, and the Excellency of Man. *Pſal.* 16. 3. *But to the ſaints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.*

Q. 7. *What is the Third Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* We have infinite cauſe to bleſs God for Chriſt, who repairs this loſt Image in his people. *Eph.* 4. 23. *And be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind.*

Q. 8. *What is the Fourth Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That the deſpiſers of Holineſs are the deſpiſers of God; for Holineſs is God's Image.

Q. 9. *What's the Fifth Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* The excellency of Sanctification, which defaces the Image of Satan, and draws the Image of God upon the Soul of Man.

### *Of Divine Providence.*

Queſt. 1. **What are God's Works of Providence?**

**A. God's Works of Providence, are his juſt, holy, wiſe, and powerful preſerving and governing all his Creatures, and all their Actions.**

Q. 1. *How doth it appear there is a Divine Providence?*

*A.* It appears by plain Scripture Teſtimonies. *Heb.* 1. 3. *Upholding all things by the word of his power.* Col. 1. 17. *By him all things conſiſt.* Luke 12. 6, 7. *Are not five ſparrows ſold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God; but even the very hairs of your head are all numbred.*

Q. 2. *How elſe is Providence evidenced?*

*A.* By Scripture Emblems, as *Jacob*'s Ladder. *Gen.* 28. 12, 13. *And he dreamed, and behold a ladder ſet upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; behold the Angels of God aſcended and deſcended on it:* And *Ezekiel*'s wheels, *Ezek.* 1. 20. *Whitherſoever the ſpirit was to go, they went, thither was their ſpirit to go, and the wheels were lifted up over againſt them, for the ſpirit of the living creature was in the wheels.*

Q. 3. *What further Scripture evidence is there?*

*A.* The ſure accompliſhment of Scripture Predictions, as *Iſrael*'s Captivity, and Deliverance from *Egypt* and *Babylon*, Chriſt's Incarnation, the Riſe and Ruin of the Four Monarchies. *Dan.* 2. 31. *Thou, O King ſaweſt, and behold a great Image, whoſe brightneſs was excellent, ſtood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible.* Dan. 7. 3. *And four great beaſts came up from the Sea, diverſe one from the other.*

Q. 4. *What is it's firſt Act about the Creatures?*

*A.* It ſuſtains, preſerves, provides for them. *Pſalm* 145. 15, 16. *The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou giveſt them their meat in due ſeaſon; thou openeſt thine hand, and ſatisfieſt the deſire of every living thing*, and defendeſt them from danger. *Pſalm* 36. 6. *Thy righteouſneſs is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a great deep, O Lord, thou preſerveſt man and beaſt.*

Q. 5. *What is the Second Act of Providence about the Creatures?*

*A.* It rules and governs the Creatures and their Actions. *Pſalm.* 66. 7. *He ruleth by his power for ever, his eyes behold the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themſelves.*

Q. 6. *How manifold is Divine Providence?*

*A.* It is common and general over all, or ſpecial and peculiar to ſome men. 1 *Tim.* 4. 10. *VVho is the ſaviour of all men, eſpecially of thoſe that believe.*

Q. 7. *How is Providence exerciſed about ſinful Actions?*

*A.* In permitting them. *Acts* 4. 16. In reſtraining them. *Pſalm* 76. 10. *Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee, and the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.* And over-ruling them to good. *Gen.* 50. 20. *But as for you, ye thought evil againſt me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to paſs, as it is this day, to ſave much people alive.*

Q. 8. *VVhat are the Properties of Providence?*

*A.* It is (1) holy. *Pſalm* 145. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.* (2.) Wiſe. *Pſalm* 104. 24. *O Lord how manifold are thy works! in wiſdom haſt thou made them all.* (3.) Powerful. *Dan.* 4. 35. *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, what doſt thou?*

Q. 9. *What is the Firſt Inſtruction from it?*

*A.* That God's People are ſafe amidſt all their enemies and dangers. 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them whoſe hearts are perfect towards him.*

Q. 10. *What is the Second Inſtruction?*

*A.* That Prayer is the beſt expedient to Proſperity, and ſucceſs of our lawful affairs. *Pſalm* 145. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.*

Q. 11. *What is the Third Inſtruction from it?*

*A.* That God's People ſhould reſt quietly in the care of his Providence for them in all their ſtraits. *Mat.* 6. 26. *Behold the fowls of the air, for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet our heavenly father feedeth them; are ye not much better than they?*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inſtruction from it?*

*A.* That it is no ſmall Priviledge to be adopted Children of God, and the Members of Chriſt, for all is ordered for their eternal Good. *Eph.* 1. 22, 23. *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his Body, the fulneſs of him, that filleth all in all.*

### *Of the Covenant of Works.*

Queſt. 12. **What ſpecial Act of Providence did God exerciſe towards Man, in the eſtate wherein he was created?**

**A. When God had created Man, he entred into a Covenant of Life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil npou pain of Death.**

Q. 1. *What was God's Covenant with* Adam *before the Fall?*

*A.* It was to give Life and Happineſs upon condition of perfect Perſonal Obedience. *Gal.* 3. 12. *The law is not of Faith; but the man that doth them, ſhall live in them.*

Q. 2. *Was this Covenant made only with* Adam, *or with him and his Poſterity?*

*A.* It was made with him, and all his natural Poſterity, deſcending in the ordinary way of Generation from him. Rom. 4. 12. *Wherefore as by one man ſin entred into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.* v. 14. and 18. *Nevertheleſs, death reigned from Adam to Moſes, even over them that had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adams tranſgreſſion, who is the figure of him that was to come: Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon all men unto juſtification of life.*

Q. 3. *Was* Adam *able to preform the obedience required of him in that Covenant?*

*A.* Yes; for he was made upright. *Eccleſ.* 7. 29. *God made man upright, but they have ſought out themſelves many inventions.*

Q. 4. *Had this Covenant any Mediator?*

*A.* No, he neither had, nor needed any Mediator for ſatisfaction; becauſe no ſin was in him; nor interceſſion, for he wanted nothing.

Q. 5. *Did this Covenant admit of no repentance, nor accept any ſhort Endeavours?*

*A.* No, it did not; but ſentenceth and curſeth the Tranſgreſſors of it, for the leaſt breach. *Gal.* 3. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

Q. 6. *How was the threatning fulfilled, of dying in the day he eat, ſeeing he lived 930 years?*

*A.* He died ſpiritually, that day; and though the ſentence on his body was reſpited in order to Poſterity, yet then his body received the death wound, of which afterward he died

Q. 7. *VVhat is the firſt Inference from* Adam's *Covenant?*

*A.* Miſerable are all they that grow on the natural root of the firſt *Adam. Gal.* 4. 21. 22. *Tell me, ye that deſire to be under the law. Do ye not hear the law? for it is written, That* Abraham *had two ſons, the one by a Bond-maid, the other by a Free-woman.*

Q. 8. *VVhat is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* That God is juſt in all the Puniſhments and Miſeries that came upon Man, yea, Infants, that never ſinned after his ſimilitude. *Rom.* 5. 14. *Nevertheleſs death reigned from* Adam, *to* Moſes, *even over them that had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of* Adam's *tranſgreſſion.*

Q. 9. *VVhat is the third Inference?*

*A.* The glorious Priviledge of Believers, who are under a better Covenant, eſtabliſht upon better Promiſes. *Heb.* 8. 6. *But now hath he obtained a more excellent miniſtry, by how much alſo he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which is eſtabliſht upon better promiſes.*

Q. 10. *VVhat is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* That we ſhould pity the unregenerate, eſpecially our own among them; and labour to plant them in the ſecond *Adam.*

### *Of the Fall of Man.*

*Queſt.* 13. **DID our firſt Parents continue in the eſtate wherein they were created?**

**A. Our firſt Parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the eſtate wherein they were created, by ſinning againſt God.**

Q. 1. *How doth it appear that man is fallen?*

*A.* By the Scripture Hiſtory, an account of in *Gen.* 3. 6, 7. *And when the woman ſaw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe, ſhe took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave alſo unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they ſewed fig leaves together, and made themſelves Aprons, and they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, in the cool of the day,* and Adam *and his wife hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God, amongſt the trees of the garden.* And the ſad experience we all have of it in our own ſelves. *Rom.* 5. 12. *Therefore as by one man ſin entred into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.*

Q. 2. *How could man fall, ſince he was made upright?*

*A.* Though he was upright, yet his will was mutable; and by abuſing that liberty, he fell. *Eccleſ.* 7. 29. *Lo this only have I found. that God hath made man upright, but they have ſought out many inventions.*

Q. 3. *How did God leave him to abuſe the freedom of will?*

*A.* Not by inclining him to abuſe it; but by with-holding that further grace which he was no way obliged to continue to him.

Q. 4. *Did the will of man loſe its liberty to good, by the Fall?*

*A.* Yes, it did, and is ſo wounded, that it cannot without preventing and regenerating grace put forth one ſpiritual and ſaving act. *Eph.* 2. 8, 9, 10. *For by grace are ye ſaved, through faith, and that not of our ſelves, is is the gift of God. Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt; for we are all his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works,* &c.

Q. 5. *VVhat was the aggravation of* Adam's *Sin?*

*A.* It was aggravated in his being a Publick Innocent Perſon, ſo newly placed in a State of Happineſs and Liberty.

Q. 6. *What is the firſt inference from the Fall?*

*A.* That the beſt Creature left to himſelf, cannot be long ſafe; as the Angels, and *Adam. Pſal.* 49. 12. *Nevertheleſs man being in honour abideth not, he is like the beaſt that periſh.*

Q. 7. *What is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* That ſince man could not be his own keep-r, he can be much leſs his own Saviour. 2 *Cor.* . 5. *Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves to think y thing as of our ſelves; but our ſufficiency is of od.*

Q. 8. *VVhat is the third Inference?*

*A.* That it is impoſſible for the Covenant of orks to juſtify any one. *Rom.* 3. 20. *Therefore the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified his ſight.* Rom. 8. 3. *For what the law could not in that it was weak through the fleſh; God ſending his own ſon, in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh.*

Q. 9. *What is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* What cauſe have we to bleſs God for riſt, who recovered us when the Fall left us leſs? *Rom.* 5. 6. *For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the un-y.*

## *Of Sin.*

Queſt. 14. **What is Sin?**

A. **Sin is any want of conformity unto, or tranſgreſſion of the law of God.**

Queſt. 1. *What is meant by the Law?*

*A.* The Commands and Rules flowing from God's Soveraignty, whereby his will is manifeſted, and the Creature bound to obedience.

Q. 2. *Where is this Law written?*

*A.* It is written either in the heart, *Rom.* 2 15. *VVhich ſhews the work of the law written in their hearts, which we call the law of nature.* Or in the Bible, which we call the written Moral Law.

Q. 3. *VVhat conformity is due to this Law of God?*

*A.* A twofold conformity is due to it. *Firſt,* Internal, in our hearts. *Secondly,* External, in our lives; and the want of either is ſin, 1 *Joh.* 3. 4. *VVhoſoever committeth ſin, tranſgreſſeth alſo the law; for ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law.*

Q. 4. *How doth it appear that the want of internal conformity in ſin?*

*A.* Becauſe the Law requires it. *Mark* 12. 30. *And thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength; for this is the firſt commandment.* And condemns the want of it, *Rom.* 7. 7. *VVhat ſhall we ſay then? is the law ſin? God forbid; nay, I had not known ſin but by the law; for I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.*

Q. 5. *Is nothing a ſin but what is againſt God's Law?*

*A.* No, nothing can be a ſin but what God hath either expreſly, or by conſequence forbidden in his word.

Q. 6. *VVherein lies the evil of tranſgreſſing God's Laws?*

*A.* The evil of ſin principally lies in offence and wrong done to God, whoſe ſoveraignty it labours to ſhake off, and deſpiſes his will. *Pſal.* 31. 4. *Againſt thee, thee only, have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight.*

Q. 7. *VVhat further evil is in ſin?*

*A.* It highly wrongs the Sinner's Soul, by defacing, defiling, and damning it. *Prov.* 8. 36. *But he that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own ſoul: all they that hate me, love death.*

Q. 8. *VVherein is the evil of ſin manifeſted?*

*A.* It's manifeſted in the Death of Chriſt, the Terrors of Conſcience, and Torments of Hell.

Q. 9. *VVhat courſe muſt the Sinner take to recover himſelf out of his miſery?*

*A.* Repentance towards God, faith towards Chriſt; and both evidenced by new obedience. *Acts* 20. 21. *Teſtifying both to the* Jew, *and alſo to the* Greeks, *repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. 10. *What may we infer from hence?*

*A.* That we have infinite cauſe to bleſs God for Chriſt's ſatisfaction of the Law for our Sins.

## *Of the Tree of Knowledge.*

Queſt. 15. **What is the ſin whereby our firſt Parents fell from the Eſtate wherein they were created?**

A. **The ſin whereby our firſt Parents fell from the Eſtate wherein they were created,**

**created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.**

Q. 1. *Why was this Tree called the Tree of Knowledge?*

*A.* Not from any natural efficacy it had to give knowledge; but the Knowledge he ſhould have by eating, or not eating, was experimental Knowledge, (*i. e.*) Knowledge to his Sorrow.

Q. 2. *Why did God forbid him this Tree?*

*A. Firſt*, For the diſcovery of his dominion over man. *Secondly*, For the trial of his ſubjection and obedience. *Thirdly*, For the aggravation of his ſin, if he ſhould eat.

Q. 3. *What evil was there in eating of it?*

*A.* There was a twofold Evil, the evil of Sin, and the evil of Puniſhment, both very great.

Q. 4. *VVhat was the Evil of Sin?*

*A.* A threefold Evil of Sin. *Firſt*, Againſt God, called diſobedience. *Rom.* 5. 19. *For as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners. Secondly*, Againſt himſelf, Soul, Body, and Eſtate. *Thirdly*, Againſt his Poſterity. *Rom.* 5. 12. *VVherefore as by one man ſin entred into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.*

Q. 5. *VVhat was the Evil of Puniſhment?*

*A. Firſt*, Loſs of God's Image. *Secondly*, Horror of Conſcience. *Thirdly*, Sorrow on the Female Sex. *Fourthly*, Curſe on the Creature. *Fifthly*, Expulſion from Paradiſe. *Sixthly*, Death both of Body and Soul.

Q. 6. *What is the firſt Inſtruction from it?*

*A.* To take heed of ſmall beginnings of Temptations, and reſiſt it in the firſt motions. *Jam.* 3. 5. *Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.*

Q. 7. *What is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* Not to hold a parly with the tempter. See 2 *Cor.* 11. 3. *But I fear leſt by any means, as the ſerpent beguiled* Eve, *through his ſubtilty; ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.*

Q. 8. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* That Satan's Policy lies much in the choice of his tempting Inſtruments; as *Eve* and *Peter*, *&c.*

Q. 9. *What is the fourth Inference?*

*A.* A neceſſity of keeping ſtrong-guards on our Senſes. *Iſa.* 33. 15. *That ſtoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil, he ſhall dwell on high, his place of defence ſhall be the munition of rocks.*

Q. 10. *What is the fifth Inference?*

*A.* That Covenant-breaking is a heinous ſin, which God will puniſh. *Hoſ.* 8. 1. *He ſhall come as an Eagle againſt the houſe of the Lord, becauſe they have tranſgreſſed my Covenant, and treſpaſſed againſt my laws.*

Q. 11. *What is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* That the corruption of our nature is much ſeen in deſiring forbidden things. *Rom.* 7. 7. *What ſhall we ſay then? Is the law ſin? God forbid: Nay, I had not known ſin, but by the law; for I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.*

### *Of the Fall of* Adam, *and ours in him.*

Queſt. 16. **DId all Mankind fall in Adam's firſt tranſgreſſion?**

A. **The Covenant being made with** Adam, **not only for himſelf, but for his Poſterity; all mankind deſcending from him by ordinary Generation, ſinned in him, and fell with him in his firſt tranſgreſſion?**

Q. 1. *Did no man ever eſcape the Sin of* Adam?

*A.* Yes, The man Chriſt Jeſus did, and he only. *Heb.* 7. 26. *For ſuch an high prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners.*

Q. 2. *Why was not Chriſt tainted with it?*

*A.* Becauſe he came into the world in an extraordinary way. *Mat.* 1. 18. *Now the birth of Chriſt was on this wiſe, when as his mother* Mary *was eſpouſed to* Joſeph, *before they came together, ſhe was found with child of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Q. 3. *How doth it appear all others are tainted with it?*

*A.* It appears by Scripture-Teſtimony. *Rom.* 5. 12. *VVherefore as by one man ſin entred into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.* And experience of the beſt men. *Rom.* 7. 21. *I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.*

Q. 4. *How came all men to fall with* Adam?

*A.* Becauſe all were included in *Adam*'s Covenant, as a Man's Covenant includes his Children before they be born; or the treaſon of the father affects his Poſterity.

Q. 5. *VVhat infer you from hence?*

*A.* The ſtupendious wiſdom of God in ſending Chriſt in our nature, and yet without the ſin and taint of it. 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. *Chriſt the wiſdom of God?*

Q. 6. *VVhat is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* Hence we learn the admirable love of Chriſt in taking our nature, with all the ſinleſs Infirmities thereof. *Rom.* 8. 3. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own ſon in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh.*

Q. 7. *VVhat is the third Inference?*

*A.* The neceſſity of our Union with Chriſt, in order to our participation of his Righteouſneſs and Redemption. 1 *Cor.* 15. 22. *For as in* Adam *all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.*

Q. 8. *VVhat is the fourth Inference?*

*A.* Hence we learn the malignant and mort nature of ſin, in as much as one ſin defiled and deſtroyed a whole world.

Q. 9. *VVhat is the fifth Inference?*

*A.* That though all be not equally ſenſible of their need, yet one ſinner needs Chriſt as much as another.

Q. 10. *What is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* That no man hath any cauſe or reaſon to boaſt of the goodneſs of his nature, ſince the beſt were by nature under the ſame ſin and miſery as the worſt, *Eph.* 2. 3. *Among whom alſo we all h our converſation in times paſt, in the luſt of our fleſ fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh, and of the mind, a were by nature the children of wrath even as others.*

### *Of Original Sin.*

Queſt. 17. **INto what Eſtate did the F bring Mankind?**

A. **The Fall brought Mankind into Eſtate of Sin and Miſery.**

Q. 18. **Wherein conſiſts the ſinfuln of that Eſtate whereinto Man fell.**

A. **The ſinfulneſs of that Eſtate whereto Man fell, conſiſts in the guilt of** Adam **firſt Sin, the want of Original Righ ouſne**

**ouſneſs, and Corruption of his whole Nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual Tranſgreſſions which proceed from ſin.**

Q. 1. *How many ſorts of Sin are all men under?*

*A.* All men are guilty before God of two ſorts of Sin; of Original, and Actual. *Pſal* 51. 5. *Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.* Eccleſ. 7. 20. *For there is not a juſt man upon earth, that doth good and ſinneth not.*

Q. 2. *How can we be guilty of* Adam's *firſt Sin?*

*A.* We are guilty of it, becauſe *Adam* ſinned not only as a ſingle, but alſo as a publick Perſon, and repreſentative of all Mankind. *Rom.* 5. 15, 16, 17. *But not as the offence; ſo alſo is the free gift; for if through the offence of one, many be dead: much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jeſus Chriſt, hath abounded unto many, and not as it was by one that ſinned, ſo is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation.*

Q. 3. *How elſe came we under his guilt?*

*A.* We are guilty of his Sin by Generation, for we were in his loyns; as Treaſon ſtains the Blood of the Poſterity, or the Parents Leproſie the Children. *Pſal.* 51. 5. *Behold I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.*

Q. 4. *Wherein doth it conſiſt?*

*A.* It conſiſts in two things. *Firſt,* In our averſation and enmity to that which is good. *Rom.* 7. 18. *In me, that is, in my fleſh, there dwelleth no good thing. Secondly,* In proneneſs to that which is evil. *Rom.* 7. 14. *But I am carnal, ſold under ſin.*

Q. 5. *Is this corruption of Nature in all Men?*

*A.* Yes, In all meer Men, and Women, none exempted. *Rom.* 3. 10. and 23. *As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one, for all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God.*

Q. 6. *In what part of our Nature doth this Sin abide?*

*A.* It abides in the whole man, in every part of man, both Soul and Body. *Gen.* 6. 5. *God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* 1 Theſ. 5. 23. *Now the God of peace ſanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole ſpirit, and ſoul, and body, be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. 7. *How is the Body infected by it?*

*A.* In the readineſs of the Bodily Members to farther Sin, and its Temptations in the Soul. *Rom.* 3. 13, 14, 15. *Their throat is an open ſepulcher, with their tongues they have uſed deceit, the poyſon of Aſps is under their lips, whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs, their feet are ſwift to ſhed blood.*

Q. 8. *What learn we from Original Sin?*

*A.* To bear patiently the Miſeries we ſee on our Children, and their death alſo without murmuring. *Rom.* 5. 14. *Nevertheleſs death reigned from* Adam *to* Moſes, *even over them that had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of* Adam's *Tranſgreſſion.*

Q. 9. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* It teaches us Humility, and ſhould be matter of Confeſſion and Humiliation, when we ſin actually. *Pſal.* 51. 5. *Behold I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my Mother conceive me.*

Q. 10. *What is the third Inſtruction?*

*A.* It ſhould provoke Parents to uſe their utmoſt diligence for the Converſion of their Children, who draw ſin from them.

Q. 11. *What is the laſt Inſtruction?*

*A.* It teaches us the neceſſity of Regeneration, and ſhould provoke us greatly to deſire it.

### *Of Man's Miſery.*

Queſt. 19. **What is the Miſery of that Eſtate whereinto Man fell?**

A. **All Mankind by their Fall loſt communion with God, are under his wrath and curſe; and ſo made liable to all miſeries in this life, to death it ſelf, and to the pains of Hell for ever.**

Q. 1. *What communion had God with Man before the Fall?*

*A.* Man then enjoyed the gracious preſence and favour of God with him, which was better than life.

Q. 2. *How doth it appear this was loſt by the Fall?*

*A.* It appears by Scripture-Teſtimony, That *Adam* loſt it as to himſelf. *Gen.* 3. 8. *And* Adam *and his wife hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God, among the trees of the garden.* And we in him. *Eph.* 2. 12. *At that time ye were without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world.*

Q. 3. *Was this the only miſery that came by the Fall?*

*A.* No; Man did not only loſe communion with God, but fell under his wrath and curſe. *Eph.* 2. 3. *And were by nature children of wrath, even as others.*

Q. 4. *Doth the wrath and curſe of God then lie on all Men?*

*A.* It lies on all the unregenerate in the world. *Gal.* 3. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which is written in the book of the law, to do them. But believers are delivered from it by Chriſt.* 1 Theſ. 1. 10. *Even Jeſus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

Q. 5. *How are the miſeries of Man by the Fall divided?*

*A.* They are divided into the Miſeries of this world, and of the world to come.

Q. 6. *What are the miſeries that come on them in this world?*

*A.* The Miſeries of Life; as Sickneſs, Pain, Poverty on the Body; Fear, Trouble, Sorrow on the Mind, and at laſt Death it ſelf. *Rom.* 6. *ult. The wages of ſin is death.*

Q. 7. *What are the Miſeries after this Life?*

*A.* The Pains and Torments of Hell for ever. *Pſal.* 9. 17. *The wicked ſhall be turned into hell.*

Q. 8. *What are the Torments of Hell?*

*A.* Pain of Loſs, and Pain of Senſe. *Mat.* 25. 41. *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire.*

Q. 9. *What learn you from hence?*

*A.* The woful State of the unconverted. Miſerable here, and miſerable to Eternity.

Q. 10. *What elſe learn we hence?*

*A.* The great Salvation Believers have by Chriſt from all this miſery. *Heb.* 2. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*

### *Of the Salvation of God's Elect, and of the Covenant of Grace.*

Queſt. 20. **DID God leave all Mankind to periſh in the State of Sin and Miſery?**

**A. God having out of his meer good pleaſure from all eternity, elected ſome to everlaſting life, did enter into a Covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the eſtate of Sin and Miſery; and to bring them into an Eſtate of Salvation by a Redeemer?**

Q. 1. *Are ſome Perſons choſen to Salvation, and others left?*

*A.* Yes: God hath choſen ſome to Salvation, and paſſed by others; as the Scriptures ſpeak. See *Rom.* 8. 30. *Moreover whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called.* And *Jude* v. 4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men,* &c.

Q. 2. *Did God chuſe ſome becauſe he foreſaw they would be better than others?*

*A.* No: God's choice was not on foreſeen works; but meerly of his grace, and good pleaſure of his will. *Eph.* 1. 5. 6. *Having predeſtinated us into the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt unto himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace.*

Q. 3. *Is this Election of God made in time, and that according as men uſe their free will, or from Eternity?*

*A.* Election is an Eternal act of God before the world was, and depends not on Man's uſing his free-will; as appears from *Eph.* 1. 4 *According as he hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love.*

Q. 4. *Shall all that be Elected, be called, and ſaved?*

*A.* Yes, the Scripture is full and plain for it. *Acts* 13. 48. *And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* Rom. 8. 30. *Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called,* &c.

Q. 5. *By whom are the Elect ſaved?*

*A.* By Chriſt the only Redeemer. *Tit.* 3. 4, 5, 6. *But after that the kindneſs, and love of God our Saviour towards man, appeared not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy, he ſaved us, by waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which he ſhed on us abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.*

Q. 6. *Is there no other way of Salvation but by Chriſt?*

*A.* No, no other way is revealed in Scripture. *Acts* 4. 12. *Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.*

Q. 7. *What learn you from God's Election?*

*A.* What cauſe we have to admire Free-grace in our choice, who were no better than others. *Eph.* 2. 3. *And were by nature children of wrath, even as others.*

Q. 8. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* It teaches us humility, we made not our ſelves to differ; but the free grace of God made the difference. 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. *For who maketh thee to differ from another?*

Q. 9. *What is the third Inſtruction?*

*A.* It teaches us diligence to make our Election ſure to our ſelves, by our calling. 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Wherefore the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election ſure.*

Q. 10. *What is the fourth Inſtruction?*

*A.* It is matter of Confort to God's Elect, amidſt all dangers in the world. 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *Neverthele ſs the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.*

### *Of the Covenant of Grace.*

Queſt. 1. W*Hat is the Covenant of Grace?*

*A.* It is a new compact or agreement made with Sinners, out of meer grace, wherein God promiſeth to be our God, and that we ſhall be his People, and to give everlaſting life to all that believe in Chriſt. *Jer.* 31. 33. *Bu this ſhall be the Covenant that I will make with th houſe of Iſrael, after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I wi put my law in their inward parts, and write it in the hearts, and will be their God, and they ſhall be m people.*

Q. 2. Ho

Q. 2. *How doth this Covenant differ from the Covenant of Works?*

*A.* They differ many ways; but principally in three things. *Firſt*, The Covenant of Works had no Mediator; the Covenant of Grace hath a Mediator. *Heb.* 12. 24. *And to Jeſus the Mediator of the new Covenant. Secondly*, In the former, no place was found for repentance. In the *Second*, God admits it. *Heb.*8.10 *For this is the covenant that I will make with the Houſe of Iſrael, after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people.* Ver. 12. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins will I remember no more. Thirdly*, In their Condition, the former requires exact Obedience, the latter Faith, and ſincere Obedience. *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved.*

Q. 3. *May a Sinner that hath no worthineſs at all of his own, be taken into the Covenant of Grace?*

*A.* Yes, he may. *Iſa.* 43. 25. *I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.* This Covenant is not of Works, but of Grace. *Rom.* 11. 5, 6. *And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwiſe grace is no more grace; but if it be of works then it is no more grace, otherwiſe work is no more work.*

Q. 4. *Is this Covenant changeable, or an unchangeable Covenant?*

*A.* No, it is not changeable, but everlaſting and unchangeable for ever. *Iſa.* 54. 10. *For the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the Covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.*

Q. 5. *VVhat are the principal things beſtowed in this Covenant?*

*A.* God himſelf, and in and with him Pardon and Salvation. *Jer.* 31. 33. *I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.*

Q. 6. *Can no Sin be forgiven out of this Covenant?*

*A.* No, God pardons none out of this Covenant. *Joh* 3. 18. *But he that believeth not, is condemned already.*

Q. 7. *VVhat is the firſt Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* Humbled and believing Sinners have ſingular ſupport from this New Covenant. 1 *John* 2. 12. *I write unto you little children, becauſe your ſins are forgiven you for his name ſake.*

Q. 8. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That 'tis the great concern of all men to examine whether they be in this Covenant, or no. 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own ſelves; know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be Reprobates.*

Q. 9. *What is the third Inſtruction?*

*A.* See here the miſerable State of the wicked, which have no intereſt in it. *Pſal.* 50. 16. *But unto the wicked God ſaith, What haſt thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou ſhouldſt take my Covenant in thy mouth?*

Q. 10. *What is the laſt Inſtruction?*

*A.* That Chriſtians are obliged to walk as people in Covenant with God. 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. *But ye are a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him, who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.*

*Of the only Redeemer.*

*Queſt.* 21. **Who is the Redeemer of God's Elect?**

**A. The only Redeemer of God's Elect, is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who being the Eternal Son of God, became man, and ſo was, and continueth to be God and Man, in two diſtinct natures, and one perſon for ever.**

Q. 1. *What doth the name Redeemer ſignify?*

*A.* It ſignifies one that frees another out of Captivity and Bondage, as Chriſt did. *Mat.* 20. 28. *And to give his life a ranſome for many.*

Q. 2. *What was the miſery from which Chriſt delivered us?*

*A.* A twofold miſery, *viz.* Sin and Hell. *Firſt*, Sin. *Mat.* 1. 21. *Thou ſhalt call his name Jeſus, for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins. Secondly*, Hell. 1 *Theſ.* 1. 10. *Even Jeſus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.*

Q. 3. *How did Chriſt deliver us from this Miſery?*

*A. Firſt*, By Price. *Secondly*, By Power. By Price. 1 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. *Ye are not redeemed with ſilver and gold from your vain converſation, received by tradition from your fathers: but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot.* By Power. Col. 1. 13. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated us into the Kingdom of his dear ſon.*

Q. 4. *When was the Redemption wrought by Chriſt?*

*A.* It was decreed from Eternity; it was actually wrought on the Croſs. *Col.* 1. 20. *And having made peace through the blood of his Croſs, by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf, by him, I ſay, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

Q. 5. *How then could they be redeemed that died before?*

*A.* Though Chriſt's Blood was actually ſhed after the Old Teſtament believers died; yet the virtue of Chriſt's Death extends to them, as well as us. *Heb.* 11. 39, 40. *And theſe all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promiſe, God having provided ſome better thing for us, that they without us ſhould not be made perfect.*

Q. 6. *Why would not God deliver us without ſuch a Redeemer?*

*A.* Becauſe it was not ſo much for the honour of his Juſtice. *Rom.* 3. 25. *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs, for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I ſay, at this time his righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus.*

Q. 7. *What is the firſt Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* That all that are out of Chriſt are in a miſerable Bondage, and Captivity. *John* 8. 36. *If the ſon therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.*

Q. 8. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* Hence ſee the heinous nature of Sin, which required ſuch a price to ſatisfy for it. 1 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. *We were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot.*

Q. 9. *What is the third Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* The wonderful love of Chriſt in redeeming us at ſuch a rate. *Rev.* 1. 5. *Who loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.*

Q. 10. *What is the laſt Inſtruction?*

*A.* This ſtrongly obligeth us to an univerſal holineſs. 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. *For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your ſpirit, which are Gods.*

### *Of Chriſt's Incarnation.*

Queſt. 22. **HOW did Chriſt being the Son of God become man?**

A. **Chriſt the Son of God became man, by taking to himſelf a true Body, and a reaſonable Soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, in the womb of the Virgin** Mary, **and born of her, yet without Sin.**

Q. 1. *Who is the only Redeemer of God's Elect?*

*A.* The Lord Jeſus Chriſt is their only Redeemer, and there is no other Redeemer beſides him. *Acts* 4. 12. *Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.*

Q. 2. *How is he the Son of God, or can be, as no other is ſo?*

*A.* He is the Son of God by Nature, from all Eternity, and ſo no Angel or Saint is. *Heb.* 1. 5. *For unto which of the Angels ſaid he, at any time, Thou art my ſon, this day have I begotten thee?*

Q. 3. *Why was it neceſſary he ſhould become man?*

*A.* That he might be capable to ſuffer Death in our room. *Heb.* 2. 15, 16, 17. *For verily he took not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him the ſeed of* Abraham; *wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high prieſt, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people.*

Q. 4. *Why muſt the Redeemer be God as well as Man?*

*A.* Becauſe the blood of a meer man could not ſatisfy and redeem us. *Acts* 20. 28. *Feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.*

Q. 5. *Do theſe two Natures make two Perſons?*

*A.* No, The Humane Nature is united to the ſecond Perſon, and ſubſiſts in union with it. *John* 1. 14. *And the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Q. 6. *Was the Union only for a time?*

*A.* No, It continues and abides for ever. *Heb.* 7. 24. *But this man, becauſe he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable Prieſthood.*

Q. 7. *What is the firſt Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* Hence we learn the tranſcendent love of God to poor Sinners. *John* 3. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten ſon, that whoſoever believeth on him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.*

Q. 8. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* Hence we learn the matchleſs love of Chriſt, that he ſhould ſtoop to ſuch a condition for us. 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.*

Q. 9. *What is the third Inſtruction?*

*A.* That the greateſt Sins are capable of remiſſion to Believers. *John* 1. 29. *Behold, the lamb of God which taketh away the ſins of the world.*

Q. 10. *What is the fourth Inſtruction?*

*A.* That thoſe that be in Chriſt need not fear the denial or want of any other mercy. *Rom.* 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his own ſon, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?*

Q. 11. *What is the fifth Inſtruction?*

*A.* Hence we learn how impious it is to aſcribe any part of the glory of Redemption to any other beſides Chriſt.

Q. 12. *What is the ſixth Inſtruction?*

*A.* This teaches us the miſerable condition of all that are out of Chriſt, and the neceſſity of their damnation, he being the only Redeemer.

### *Of the Manner of Chriſt's Incarnation.*

Queſt. 1. W*AS Chriſt's Incarnation a voluntary act in him?*

*A.* Yes, it was; for though he had a command to die for us, *John* 10. 18. *No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my ſelf, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again;* Yet he came willingly. *Pſal.* 40. 6, 7. *Sacrifice and offerings thou didſt not deſire, mine ears haſt thou opened; burnt offerings, and ſin offerings haſt thou not required; lo, I come, in the volume of thy book, it is written of me,* V. 8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart.*

Q. 2. *Was the Body of Chriſt a real and true Humane Body?*

*A.* Yes, it was a true and real Body, not the appearance and ſhape of a Body only. *Luke* 24. 38. *And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts?* Ver. 29. *Behold my hands, and my feet, that it is I my ſelf; handle me, and ſee, for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones as ye ſee me have.*

Q. 3. *Had he a true Humane Soul as well as a Body?*

*A.* Yes, he had, a real Humane Soul alſo, and all the natural faculties and powers thereof. *Mat.* 26. 38. *Then ſaith he unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death.*

Q. 4. *Was he then in all reſpects like to other men?*

*A.* No; his conception was not like others, *Iſa.* 7. 14. *Behold, a virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name* Emanuel. And he had no ſin in him as others have. Heb. 7. 26. *For ſuch an high prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners.*

Q. 5. *Did Chriſt put off the Humane Nature at his Aſcention?*

*A.* No, he did not, but carried it up to glory, and now is in our Nature in Heaven. 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. *Received up into glory.*

Q. 6. *Why did he aſſume our Nature?*

*A.* That he might die in it for our Salvation. *Heb.* 2. 15. *And delivered them who through fear of death were all their life time ſubject to bondage.*

Q. 7. *Why did he riſe in it after Death?*

*A.* He raiſed it from the dead, for our Juſtification. *Rom.* 4. 25. *Who was delivered for our offences*

*offences, and was raiſed again for our Juſtification.*

Q. 8. *VVhy did he aſcend in our Nature into Heaven?*

*A.* To be a Mediator of interceſſion in our Nature. *Heb.* 7. 25. *VVherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.*

Q. 9. *VVhat is the firſt Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That the Body of Chriſt is not every where, but is contained in Heaven. *Acts* 3. 21. *VVhom the heaven muſt receive till the times of reſtitution of all things.*

Q. 10. *VVhat is the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* That Chriſt is full of tender compaſſions to his peoples infirmities. *Heb.* 4. 15. *For we have not an high prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin.*

Q. 11. *VVhat is the third Inſtruction?*

*A.* That great and admirable is the glory deſigned for the bodies of Believers. *Phil.* 3. 21. *Who ſhall change our vile bodies, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inſtruction?*

*A.* That the bodily Eyes of Believers after the Reſurrection, ſhall ſee Chriſt in glory. *Job* 19. 26, 27. *And though after my skin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God, Whom I ſhall ſee for my ſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another.*

### *Of Chriſt's Offices.*

Queſt. 23. **What offices doth Chriſt execute as our Redeemer?**

A. **Chriſt as our Redeemer doth execute the Office of a Prophet, of a Prieſt, and of a King, both in his Eſtate of Humiliation and Exaltation.**

Q. 1. *What are the States and Conditions of our Redeemer?*

*A.* Chriſt's States are twofold, namely, his State of Humiliation, and his State of Exaltation. *Phil.* 2. 8, 9. *And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Croſs. Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.*

Q. 2. *How many Offices belongs to Chriſt in theſe States?*

*A.* Chriſt hath a threefold Office; namely, of a Prophet, of a Prieſt, and of a King.

Q. 3. *Why doth Chriſt take all theſe three Offices?*

*A.* Becauſe they are all neceſſary for our Salvation, and we have the benefit of them all. 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *Who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption.*

Q. 4. *Can no man take Chriſt in one Office, and not in another?*

*A.* No; whoever will have the benefit of any one, muſt receive him in all. *Acts* 5. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince, and a ſaviour, for to give repentance unto Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of Sins.*

Q. 5. *What reſpect have the Offices of Chriſt to the Promiſes?*

*A.* The Promiſes flow out of them as out of their Fountain. 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. *For all the promiſes of God in him, are Yea, and in him, Amen.*

Q. 6. *What Promiſes flow out of the Prophetical Office?*

*A.* All the Promiſes of Illumination, Guidance and Direction flow out of Chriſt's Prophetical Office?

Q. 7. *What Promiſes flow out of the Prieſtly Office?*

*A.* All the Promiſes of Pardon and Peace flow out of it.

Q. 8. *What Promiſes flow out of the Kingly Office?*

*A*, All the Promiſes of Defence, Protection and Deliverances.

Q. 9. *What is the firſt Inſtruction?*

*A.* Hence we learn the compleatneſs of Chriſt for all the wants of his people. *Col.* 2. 10. *And ye are compleat in him.*

Q. 10. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* Hence we learn the folly and miſery of all Hypocrites that cloſe partially with Chriſt.

Q. 11. *What is the third Inſtruction?*

*A.* Hence we learn the ſingular dignity, of the Lord Jeſus. None ever have all thoſe Offices but Chriſt.

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inſtruction?*

*A.* That Faith is a conſiderate act; and requires much deliberation.

### *Of Chriſt's Prophetical Office.*

Queſt. 24. **HOW doth Chriſt execute the Office of a Prophet?**

A. **Chriſt executeth the Office of a Prophet, in revealing to us by his word and ſpirit, the will of God for our ſalvation.**

Q. 1. *What doth Chriſt's Prophetical Office imply?*

*A.* It implies man's natural blindneſs and Ignorance. 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.*

Q. 2. *What elſe doth it imply?*

*A.* That Chriſt is the original and fountain of all that light, which guides us to ſalvation. 2 *Cor.* 4. 6, 7. *For God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. 3. *How doth Chriſt teach men the will of God?*

*A.* He doth it by external Revelation of it. *Acts* 3. 22. *For* Moſes *truly ſaid unto the fathers, A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him ſhall ye hear in all things, whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you.* And by internal Illumination. Luke 24. 45. *Then opened he their underſtanding, that they might underſtand the Scripture.*

Q. 4. *What need then of Man's Miniſtry?*

*A.* Very much; for Chriſt hath inſtituted Miniſters as inſtruments, by whom he will teach us. *Eph.* 4. 11, 12. *And he gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt.* Acts 26. 18. *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins.*

Q. 5. *Can no man ſavingly know the will of God without the teachings of Chriſt?*

*A.* No; though common knowledge may be obtained in a natural way, yet not ſaving. *Mat.* 11. 25. *At that time Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid, I* *thank thee, O father, Lord of Heaven and earth; becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes.*

Q. 6. *How appears it that Chriſt is appointed to this Office?*

*A.* We have the written word for it. *Acts* 3. 22. *A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him ſhall ye hear in all things, whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you.*

Q. 7. *What is the firſt Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* None need be diſcouraged at their natural weakneſs, if Chriſt be their Teacher. *Mat.* 11. 25. *At that time Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid, I thank thee, O father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt reveal'd them unto babes.* Pſal. 19. 7. *The teſtimonies of the Lord are ſure, making wiſe the ſimple.*

Q. 8. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* That it's a dreadful judgment to be ſpiritually blinded under the Goſpel. 2 *Cor.* 4. 3, 4. *But if our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them are loſt, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine into them.*

Q. 9. *VVhat is the third Inſtruction?*

*A.* That Prayer is the beſt Expedient to obtain ſaving Knowledge *Jam.* 1. 5. *If any of you lack wiſdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him.*

Q. 10. *VVhat is the laſt Inſtruction?*

*A.* Learn hence the tranſcendent excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt above all other knowledge. *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. *Yea doubtleſs, I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord.*

### *Of Chriſt's Prieſthood.*

Queſt. 25. **HOW doth Chriſt execute the Office of a Prieſt?**

**A. Chriſt executeth the Office of a Prieſt, in his once offering up of himſelf a ſacrifice to ſatiſfy Divine Juſtice, and reconciling us to God, and in making continual interceſſion for us.**

Q. 1. *VVhat is the Prieſthood of Chriſt in general?*

*A.* It is his expiation of our Sins by the ſacrifice of himſelf, and obtaining God's favour for us. *Col.* 1. 20. *And having made peace through the blood of his croſs, by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf; by him, I ſay, whether they be things in heaven, or things in earth.*

Q. 2. *VVhat are the parts of Chriſt's Prieſtly Office?*

*A.* It hath two parts. *Firſt*, Oblation, or offering of himſelf. *Heb.* 9. 14. *How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal ſpirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſciences from dead works, to ſerve the living God. Secondly*, Interceſſion for us. *Heb.* 7. 25. *Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.*

Q. 3. *VVhat is the end of Chriſt's Oblation?*

*A.* The end of it as to God, it was to ſatisfy his Incenſed Juſtice. *Rom.* 3. 25. *VVhom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs, for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God.* And as to men, to put away their ſins. *Heb.* 9. 26. *For then muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the world, but now once in the end of the world, he hath appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.*

Q. 4. *VVhat is the firſt difference between Chriſt and other Prieſts?*

*A.* Other Prieſts offered the Blood of Beaſts; Chriſt his own Blood. *Heb.* 9. 12. *Neither by the blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own blood, he entred in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

Q. 5. *What is the ſecond difference?*

*A.* They offered many Sacrifices; Chriſt perfected all by one offering. *Heb.* 10. 14. *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified.*

Q. 6. *What was the ſacrifice Chriſt offered to God?*

*A.* His Body. *Heb.* 10. 10. *By the which will we are ſanctified through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all.* And his Soul. *Iſa.* 53. 10. *When thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin.*

Q. 7. *Whence is the efficacy of this Sacrifice?*

*A.* From the Divine Perſon to whom that Soul and Body was united. *Acts* 20. 28. *Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.*

Q. 8. *What is the firſt Inference from it?*

*A.* That Believers are diſcharged by Chriſt from all their ſins and debts. *Acts* 13. 36. *And by him all that believe are juſtified from all things.*

Q. 9. *What is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* That it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an abſolute God. *Luke* 23. 31. *For if they do theſe things in a green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?*

Q. 10. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* That it's impoſſible for man to ſatisfy God for his own Sins. *Pſal.* 130. 3. *If thou, Lord, ſhouldeſt mark iniquities, O Lord, who ſhall ſtand?*

Q. 11. *What is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* That the Chriſtian Religion only ſettles the conſcience in peace. *Heb.* 9. 14. *How much ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal ſpirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſciences from dead works to ſerve the living God?*

### *Of Chriſt's Kingly Office.*

Queſt. 26. **HOW doth Chriſt execute the Office of a King?**

**A. Chriſt executeth the Office of a King in ſubduing us to himſelf, in ruling and defending us, and reſtraining and conquering all his and our Enemies.**

Q. 1. *How manifold is Chriſt's Kingdom?*

*A.* Twofold. *Firſt*, Internal in men's Souls. *Luke* 17. 20. *Behold the Kindom of God is within you. Secondly*, External over the world. *Eph.* 1. 22. *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church.*

Q. 2. *What is the End of Chriſt's providential Kingdom?*

*A.* The good and ſalvation of the Church. *Joh* 17. 2. *As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſ given him.*

Q. 3. *Wherein doth he exerciſe his Kingly Power*

*A.* In reſtraining his, and his peoples enemies. *Pſal.* 76. 10. *Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee, the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.*

Q. 4. *How elſe is it Exerciſed?*

*A.* In protecting his Church amidſt all Enemies. *Exod.* 3. 3. *And* Moſes *ſaid*, I *will now turn aſide, and ſee this great ſight, why the buſh is not burnt.*

Q. 5. *What Inſtruments doth Chriſt uſe?*

*A.* Angels are miniſtring Spirits to him. *He*

1. 14

1. 14. *Are they not all miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?* And men, yea the worſt of men. *Rev.* 12. 16. *And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and ſwallowed up the flood which the dragon caſt out of his mouth.*

Q. 6. *In what manner doth Chriſt rule the world?*

*A.* By Supream power. *Rev.* 9. 16. *He hath on his veſture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, Lord of lords.* And perfect Wiſdom. *Eph.* 1. 11. *In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him, who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will.*

Q. 7. *What learn we from hence?*

*A.* That the Church is ſaved amidſt all dangers. *Jer.* 30. 11. *For I am with thee, ſaith the Lord, to ſave thee; though I make a full end of all nations, whither I have ſcattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee.*

Q. 8. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* That the godly may ſafely truſt to Chriſt's care. 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them whoſe heart is perfect towards him.*

Q. 9. *What is the third Inſtruction?*

*A.* That all plots againſt the Church ſhall ſurely be defeated. *Iſa.* 54. 17. *No weapon that is formed againg thee ſhall proſper.*

Q. 10. *VVhat is the fourth Inſtruction?*

*A.* It gives the Saints full ſatisfaction in all conditions. *Rom.* 8. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpoſe.*

Q. 11. *VVhat is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* We ſhould not ſtand in a ſlaviſh fear of men. *Iſa.* 51. 12. *I, even I am he that comforteth you; who art thou that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a man that ſhall die, and of the ſon of man which ſhall be made as graſs?*

### *Of Chriſt's Humiliation.*

Queſt. 27. **Wherein did Chriſt's Humiliation conſiſt?**

A. **Chriſt's Humiliation conſiſts in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the Law, undergoing the miſeries of this life, the wrath of God, and the curſed death of the croſs; in being buried, and continning under the power of death for a time.**

Q. 1 *What doth Chriſt's humbling of himſelf import?*

*A.* His voluntarineſs in the deepeſt point of Self-denial. *Pſal.* 40. 7. *Then ſaid I, lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me.*

Q. 2. *What was the firſt act of Chriſt's Humiliation?*

*A.* His taking man's Nature on him, with all its ſinleſs Infirmities. *Rom.* 8. 3. *God ſending his own ſon, in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh.*

Q. 3. *What is the ſecond part of his Humiliation?*

*A.* That mean life he lived in this world, which obſcured his Divine Glory. *Mark* 6. 3. *Is not this the carpenter, the ſon of* Mary?

Q. 4. *What was the firſt thing in Chriſts Life that humbled him?*

*A.* The poverty of it. *Mat.* 8. 20. *And Jeſus ſaith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have neſts; but the ſon of man hath not where to lay his head.*

Q. 5. *What was the ſecond thing in his life that humbled him?*

*A.* The Temptations of Satan, to which he was ſubject. *Mat.* 4. 1. *Then was Jeſus led up of the ſpirit into the wilderneſs, to be tempted of the devil, and that for our ſakes.* Heb. 2. 17. *VVherefore in all things it behoveth him to be made like unto his brethen.* v. 18. *For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.*

Q. 6. *What is the third thing in Chriſt that humbled him?*

*A.* His ſubjection to the Law. *Gal.* 4. 4. *But when the fulneſs of the time was come, God ſent forth his ſon, made of a woman, made under the law.*

Q. 7. *VVhat was the fourth thing in Chriſt's life that humbled him?*

*A.* The Revilings and Contradictions of Sinners. *Heb.* 12. 3. *For conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf.*

Q. 8. *VVherein was Chriſt humbled in his death?*

*A.* His death was painful and ignominious. *Gal.* 3. 13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us. For it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* Made a curſe for us, and deſerted in it. *Mat.* 27. 46. *And about the ninth hour, Jeſus cried with a loud voice, ſaying; Eli, Eli, Lamaſabachthani, that is to ſay, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

Q. 9. *VVhat is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* That lowlineſs and humility becomes Chriſt's Followers. *Mat.* 11. 29. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart.*

Q. 10. *VVat is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* That Chriſt's love to Sinners is aſtoniſhingly great. 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.*

Q. 11. *VVhat is the third Inference?*

*A.* Chriſtians ſhould be ready to ſuffer for Chirſt. 1 *Pet.* 4. 1. *Foraſmuch as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the fleſh; arm your ſelves likewiſe with the ſame: for he that hath ſuffered in the fleſh, hath ceaſed from ſin.*

Q. 12. *VVhat is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* That Humiliation is the true way to Exaltation. *Mat.* 23. 12. *And whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that ſhall humble himſelf, ſhall be exalted.*

### *Of Chriſt's Exaltation.*

Queſt. 27. **Wherein conſiſts Chriſt's Exaltation?**

A **Chriſt's Exaltation conſiſts in his riſing from the dead on the third day; in aſcending np into heaven, in ſitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the World at the laſt day.**

Q. 1. *VVhat is the firſt ſtep of Chriſt's Exaltation?*

*A.* His Reſurrection from the dead.

Q. 2. *How doth his Reſurrection appear?*

*A.* By the Scripture Propheſies accompliſht in him. 1 *Cor.* 15. 4. *And that he was buried, and that he roſe again the third day, according to the ſcriptures.*

Q. 3. *Why did Chriſt riſe again?*

*A.* To eſtabliſh our Faith, and aboliſh our Sins. 1 Cor. 15. 17. *And if Chriſt be not riſen, your faith is vain, you are yet in your ſins.*

Q. 4. *What other end was there of Chriſt's Reſurrection?*

*A.* To declare his Divine Power. *Rom.* 1. 4. *And declared to be the ſon of God with power, according to the ſpirit of holineſs, by the reſurrection from the dead. And to evidence the fulneſs of his ſatisfaction.* John 16. 10. *Of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to my father, and ye ſee me no more.*

Q. 5. *Did Chriſt riſe in the ſame Body he laid down?*

*A.* It was ſubſtantially the ſame. *John* 20. 27. *Then ſaith he to* Thomas, *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into thy ſide, and be not faithleſs, but believing.*

Q. 6. *What doth Chriſt's Reſurrection teach us?*

*A.* The certainty of Reſurrection after death 1 *Cor.* 15. 20. *But now is Chriſt riſen from the dead, and become the firſt fruits of them that ſlept.*

Q. 7. *What was the ſecond ſtep of Chriſt's Exaltation?*

*A.* His Aſcention after forty days into Heaven. *Acts* 1. 2, 3. *Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghoſt had given commandments unto the Apoſtles, whom he had choſen, to whom alſo he ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs, being ſeen of them forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*

Q. 8. *Why did Chriſt ſtay ſo long on Earth?*

*A.* To aſſure the truth of his Reſurrection, and to ſettle the due Government of his Church. *Acts* 1. 2, 3.

Q. 9. *For what end did he aſcend?*

*A.* To take Poſſeſſion of his glory. *John* 17. 5. *And now, O father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* And that as our fore-runner. *Heb.* 6. 20. *Whether the fore-runner is for us entred, even Jeſus,* &c.

Q. 10. *In what manner did Chriſt aſcend?*

*A.* Triumphantly, and magnificently. *Pſal.* 47. 5. *God is gone up with a ſhout, the Lord with a ſound of a trumpet.*

Q. 11. *What doth his aſcenſion teach us?*

*A.* Heavenly-mindedneſs. *Col.* 3. 1, 2. *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God; ſet your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.* And an encouragement in our Chriſtian race. *Heb.* 12. 1, 2. *Wherefore ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus the author and finiſher of our faith. Who for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſate down at the right hand of the Throne of God.*

### *The Second Part of the 28th Queſtion of Chriſt's Exaltation.*

Queſt. 1. WHat was the Third degree of Chriſt's Exaltation?

*A.* His ſitting at God's right hand in Heaven. *Heb.* 1. 3. *VVhen he had by himſelf purged our ſins, ſate down on the right hand of the majeſty on high.*

Q. 2. *What doth God's right hand ſignify?*

*A.* A State of Honour. *Heb.* 1. 13. *But to which of the angels ſaid he at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footſtool?* And Power. *Mat.* 26. 94. *Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the ſon of man ſitting on the right hand of power*

Q. 3. *What is implied in Chriſt's ſitting there?*

*A.* That his work on earth is finiſhed. *Heb.* 10. 11, 12. *But this man after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſin, for ever ſate down on the right hand of God.*

Q 4 *What elſe doth it ſignify?*

*A.* Chriſt's power over all enemies. *Pſal.* 110. 2. *The Lord ſhall ſend the rod of thy ſtrength out of Sion; rule thou in the midſt of thine enemies.*

Q. 5. *What learn we from Chriſt's ſitting there?*

*A.* The high honour Believers are advanced to by Chriſt. *Eph.* 2. 6. *And hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Q. 6. *What is the laſt ſtep of Chriſts Exaltation?*

*A.* His coming to Judgment. *Acts* 10. 42. *And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtify that it is he which was ordained of God to be judge of quick and dead.*

Q. 7. *Is it certain there ſhall be a Judgment day?*

*A.* Yes, the Scripture aſſures it. 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. *For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt.* And every man's conſcience witneſſes to it. *Rom.* 2. 16. *In the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt, according to my Goſpel.*

Q. 8. *What is the firſt property of Chriſt's Judgment?*

*A.* It will be awful and ſolemn. 1 *Theſ.* 4. 16. *For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the Arch-angel, and with the Trump of God, and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt.*

Q. 9. *What is the ſecond Property of it?*

*A.* It will be exact and critical. *Rom.* 2. 16. *In the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt, according to my Goſpel.* Mat. 12. 36. *But I ſay unto you, That every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of Judgment.*

Q. 10. *What is the third Property of it?*

*A.* It will be an univerſal Judgment. *Rev.* 20. 12. *And I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God, and the books were opened.*

Q. 11. *How is this a part of Chriſt's Exaltation?*

*A.* He now acts in the fulneſs of his Kingly Power. *Mat.* 25. 34. *Then ſhall the King ſay unt them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* And this will rowl away th reproach of his enemies. *Rev.* 1. 7. *Behold h cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him, an they alſo which pierced him.*

Q. 12. *What learn we from Chriſt's being Judge*

*A.* That Believers ſhall not be caſt in Judgment. *Rom.* 8. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Q. 13. *What learn we hence?*

*A.* The deplorable State of Chriſtleſs Perſon *Luke* 19. 27. *But thoſe mine enemies that wou not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, a ſlay them before me.*

Q. 14. *What elſe learn we from Chriſt's Judgment?*

*A.* To give all diligence to be found of him peace. 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. *Wherefore beloved, ſeeing th ye look for ſuch things, be diligent, that ye may found of him in peace.*

### *Of the Application of Chriſt.*

Queſt. 29. **HOW are we made partakers of the Redemption purchaſed by Chriſt?**

A. **We are made partakers of the Redemption purchaſed by Chriſt, by the effectual Application of it to us by his holy Spirit.**

Q. 1. *What did our Redemption coſt Chriſt?*

*A.* It coſt him his own Blood to obtain it. *Heb.* 9. 12. *Neither by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own blood, he entred once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

Q. 2. *Can none have the benefit of it, except it be applied to them?*

*A.* No; if Chriſt be not applied, we cannot be ſaved. *John* 1. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

Q. 3. *Whoſe work or office is it to apply Chriſt to us?*

*A.* It's the office and work of God's Spirit. *Tit.* 3. 45. *But after that the kindneſs and love of God our, Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done; but according to his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Q. 4. *What Means doth the Spirit uſe in applying Chriſt?*

*A.* The external means he makes uſe of, is the Miniſtry of the Goſpel. 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollo, but Miniſters by whom ye believed?*

Q. 5. *Is this ſufficient of it ſelf?*

*A.* No; the Bleſſing and Power of the Spirit muſt accompany it, or Chriſt cannot be applied. 1 *Theſ.* 1. 5, 6. *For our Goſpel came not unto you in word only, but alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your ſake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Q. 6. *To whom doth the Spirit apply Chriſt?*

*A.* To thoſe that were given him of the Father before the world was. *Acts* 13. 48. *And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* John 14. 17. *Even the ſpirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you.*

Q. 7. *Is the Application of Chriſt to a Soul finiſht at once?*

*A.* Tho the firſt act of Faith unites the Soul to Chriſt; yet it is a continued act. 1 *Pet.* 2. 4. *To whom coming as unto a living ſtone.*

Q. 8. *What learn you from hence?*

*A.* What a deſtitute thing the Soul is that's out of Chriſt. *Rev.* 3. 17, 18. *Becauſe thou ſayeſt I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing, and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

Q. 9. *What elſe doth it teach us?*

*A.* The riches and dignity of Believers. Chriſt, and all his purchaſes are theirs. 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. *Whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's.*

Q. 10. *What elſe doth it teach us?*

*A.* The Righteouſneſs of God in the deſtruction of all unbelievers. *John* 5. 40. *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.*

### *Of our Union with Chriſt.*

Queſt. 30. **HOW doth the Spirit apply to us the Redemption purchaſed by Chriſt?**

A. **By working faith in us, thereby uniting us to Chriſt in our effectual Calling.**

Q. 1. *Can none have ſaving benefit by Chriſt, but ſuch as are united to him?*

*A.* No; for as *Adam*'s Sin could not hurt us, except we had been in him; ſo Chriſt's Redemption cannot profit us, except we are in him. 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption.*

Q. 2. *What are the Bonds of this Union?*

*A.* The Spirit on God's part. 1 *John* 3. 24. *And he that keepeth his Commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the ſpirit which he hath given us.* And Faith on our part. *Eph.* 3. 17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith.*

Q. 3. *What is the firſt Property of this Union?*

*A.* It is an intimate Union. *Eph.* 5. 30. *For we are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones.*

Q. 4. *What is the ſecond Property?*

*A.* It is an Union never to be diſſolved. *Rom.* 8. 35, 38. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall tribulation, diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword? for I am perſwaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

Q. 5. *What is the third Property of this Union?*

*A.* It makes Chriſt, and all that he hath purchaſed, become ours. 1 *Cor.* 3. 23. *All are yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's.*

Q. 6. *What is the fourth property of this Union?*

*A.* It is the foundation and root of all our ſpiritual and acceptable Obedience. *John* 15. 4. *Abide in me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of it ſelf, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

Q. 7. *What is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* That ſaving Grace in the Saints is immortal, being ſecured to them in and by Chriſt. *Col.* 3. 3. *Your life is hid with Chriſt in God.*

Q. 8. *What is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* That the relation between Chriſt and Believers is very dear and intimate. *Eph.* 5. 30. *For we are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones.*

Q. 9. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* That Believers need not be afraid to go down to the Grave. *Rom.* 8. 38. *For I am perſwaded, that neither death nor life,—— nor any other creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* And this Union holds after death. *Mat.* 22. 31, 32. *But as touching the reſurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was ſpoken unto you by God, ſaying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not a God of the dead, but of the living.*

Q. 10. *What is the fourth Inference?*

*A.* That in wronging and perſecuting the Saints, men wrong and perſecute Chriſt himſelf. *Acts* 9. 4. *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice ſaying unto him, Saul, Saul, Why perſecuteſt thou me?*

Q. 11. *What is the fifth Inference?*

*A.* That in relieving and refreſhing the Saints, we relieve and refreſh Chriſt himſelf. *Mat.* 25. 34, 35. *For I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat, and I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in, naked and ye cloathed me. I was ſick, and ye viſited me, I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.* Ver. 40. *In as much as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* That there is a ſympathy in Chriſt under all the preſſures and grievances of his people. *Heb.* 4. 15. *We have not an high prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin.*

### *Of Effectual Calling.*

Queſt. 31. **What is effectual Calling?** **A. Effectual Calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our ſin and miſery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Chriſt, and renewing our wills, he doth perſwade and enable us to embrace Jeſus Chriſt, freely offered to us in the Goſpel.**

Q. 1. *What makes the difference between effectual and ineffectual Calling?*

*A.* Ineffectual calling is when men have nothing but the external ſound of the Goſpel. *Mat.* 20.16. *For many be called, and few choſen.* Effectual is, when the Spirit works in conjunction with the Word. *John* 6. 45. *It is written in the prophets, And they ſhall be all taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the father, cometh unto me.*

Q. 2. *What is the Firſt act of the Spirit in Effectual Calling?*

*A.* Conviction of Sin. *John* 16. 8. *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of ſin.*

Q. 3. *Do the Called of God hear any voice from Heaven?*

*A.* Ordinarily it is a call without ſound, yet as efficacious as an audible Voice from Heaven.

Q. 4. *What is the Second act of the Spirit in our Effectual calling.*

*A.* The Illumination of the mind in the knowledge of Chriſt. *Acts* 26. 18. *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.*

Q. 5. *In what things doth it enlighten them?*

*A.* In this, That Chriſt is their only remedy. *Acts* 4. 12. *Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.* And their all-ſufficient remedy. *Heb.* 7. 25. *Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him.*

Q. 6. *What is the Third Act?*

*A.* His renewing of the Sinner's will, and making it flexible. *Pſal.* 110. 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* Ezek. 36. 26. *A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you, and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh.*

Q. 7. *Can no man come to Chriſt till thus enabled?*

*A.* No, it's not in the power of man's Nature or Will, till thus renewed and enabled. *Eph.* 1. 19, 20. *And what is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to uſward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him on his own right hand in the heavenly places.* John 6. 44. *No man can come to me except the father which hath ſent me draw him.*

Q. 8. *What ſort of men are moſt ordinarily called?*

*A.* The poor and mean ones in the world. 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. *For ye ſee your calling brethren, how that not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.*

Q. 9. *What is the firſt Inſtruction from it?*

*A.* Souls effectually called are never loſt. *Rom.* 11. 29. *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

Q. 10. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* All things co-operare to their good. *Rom.* 8. 28. *For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpoſe.*

Q. 11. *What is the third Inſtruction?*

*A.* It is dangerous to refuſe God's call. *Prov.* 1. 24. *Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand and no man regarded.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inſtruction?*

*A.* That Chriſtians are obliged to walk ſuitably to their heavenly calling. 1 *Theſ.* 2. 12. *That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.*

### *Of the Concomitants of Vocation.*

Queſt. 32. **What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this Life?**

**A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of Juſtification, Adoption, Sanctification, and the ſeveral benefits which in this life do either accompany, or flow from them.**

Q. 1. *Are all that be effectually called, juſtified*

*A.* Yes, God juſtifies all, and every Soul tha obeys and anſwers his call. *Rom.* 8. 30. *Whom he called, them he alſo juſtified.*

Q. 2. *What other benefits have the called in this Life*

*A.* They are all the adopted Children of God. *Eph.* 1. 5. *Having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jeſus Chriſt unto himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will.*

Q. 3. *Are thoſe all the benefits the Called receive*

*A.* No, they are not only juſtified and adopted, but alſo ſanctified. 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption*

Q. 4. *Do theſe three bleſſings come ſingly to the called*

*A.* No, they are all accompanied with multitudes of other bleſſings flowing from them. *Eph* 1. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſu Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt.*

Q. 5. *What are the mercies flowing from Juſtification*

*A.* They are great and manifold. *Rom.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *Therefore being juſtified by faith, we hav*

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*eſteemed amongſt men, is abomination in the ſight of God.* Nor other mens juſtifying of us. *Rev.* 3. 1. *I know thy works, that thou haſt a name to live, and art dead.*

Q. 3. *Is there any thing in man to merit his Juſtification ?*

*A.* No, it is an act of Free-grace in God. *Rom.* 3. 24. *Being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. 4. *If it be not for any inherent righteouſneſs, how then ?*

*A.* It is for the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to us. *Rom.* 4. 6. *Even as* David *alſo deſcribeth the bleſſedneſs of the man unto whom God imputeth righteouſneſs without works.*

Q. 5. *How is Chriſt's righteouſneſs made ours ?*

*A.* By Application of it to us by Faith. *Gal.* 2. 16. *Knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified.*

Q. 6. *Is it not partly by Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, and partly our own ?*

*A.* No: by Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, without any mixture of ours. *Rom.* 3. 28. *Therefore we conclude, that a man is juſtified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

Q. 7. *But doth not* James *ſays otherwiſe.* Jam. 2. 14. *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works, Can faith ſave him ?*

*A.* The two Apoſtles contradict not one another. *Paul* ſpeaks of Juſtification before God; and *James* of juſtifying our Faith before men.

Q. 8. *Is no regard then to be had to good works ?*

*A.* Yes, very great; they that believe, muſt be careful to maintain good works. *Tit.* 3. 8. *That they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.* Theſe things are good and profitable unto men.

Q. 9. *Why can none be juſtified by works ?*

*A.* Becauſe all are guilty before God. *Rom.* 3. 29. *Is he the God of the Jews only ? Is he not alſo of the Gentiles ? Yes, of the Gentiles alſo.* And the Law curſes all that are under guilt. *Gal.* 3. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

Q. 10. *What is the firſt Inference from hence ?*

*A.* The happy State of Believers who are now at Peace with God. *Rom.* 5. 1. *Therefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And whom he juſtifieth he glorifieth. *Rom.* 8. 30. *Whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.*

Q. 11. *What is the ſecond Inference hence ?*

*A.* The excellency and neceſſity of Faith. *Rom.* 3. 30. *The circumciſion is juſtified by faith, and the uncircumciſion through faith.*

Q. 12. *What is the third Inference ?*

*A.* That the greatneſs of ſin is no bar to faith, ſince it is the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt that Juſtifieth. 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. *For he hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we may be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.*

Q. 13. *What is the laſt Inference ?*

*A.* That

*A.* That Believers ought to be exceeding humble, and far from boaſting. The Law of Faith excludes boaſting. *Rom.* 3. 27. *Where is boaſting then? It is excluded; by what law? Of works? nay, but by the law of faith.*

### *Of Adoption.*

Queſt. 34. **What is Adoption?**

**A. Adoption is an act of God's Free-grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a Right to all the Priviledges of the Sons of God.**

Q. 1. *How many ſorts of Sons be there?*

*A.* There is one by Generation, and another by Adoption. *John* 1. 12, 13. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Q. 2. *What moves God to adopt any man?*

*A.* Nothing but his Free-love. *John* 3. 1. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed on us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God.*

Q. 3. *Is this priviledge common to all men?*

*A.* No; it's peculiar to them that receive him. *John* 1. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God.*

Q. 4. *What is the firſt property of Adoption?*

*A.* It is a coſtly Relation. *Gal.* 4. 45. *When the fulneſs of time was come, God ſent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons.*

Q. 5. *What is the ſecond property of Adoption?*

*A.* It is an high and honourable Relation. 1 *John* 3. 1. *Behold what manner of love the father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God.*

Q. 6. *VVhat is the third property of Adoption?*

*A.* It is a free relation on God's part. *Eph.* 1. 45. *According as he hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will.* And it makes us free. *John* 8. 36. *If the ſon therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.*

Q. 7. *What is the fourth property of Adoption?*

*A.* It is a permanent relation. *John* 8. 35. *The ſon abideth in the houſe for ever.*

Q. 8. *What is the firſt priviledge of the adopted?*

*A.* They have an intereſt in God as Children in a Father. 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. *And will be a father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.*

Q. 9. *What is the ſecond Priviledge?*

*A.* Being God's Sons, they are Heirs of God, and joynt Heirs with Chriſt. *Rom.* 8. 17. *And if children, then heirs, Heirs of God, and joynt heirs with Chriſt.*

Q. 10. *What is the third Priviledge?*

*A.* Seaſonable and ſanctified Afflictions. *Heb.* 12. 6. *He ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth.*

Q. 11. *What is their fourth Priviledge?*

*A.* The Attendance and Miniſtry of Angels. *Heb.* 1. 14. *Are they not all miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth to mininſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?*

Q. 12. *VVhat is their fifth Priviledge?*

A. The aſſiſtance of the Spirit in Prayer. *Rom.* 8. 15. *For we have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we cry,* Abba *father.* And God's audience of their Prayers. 1 *John* 5. 14. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, That if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*

Q. 13. *VVhat uſe ſhould we make of this?*

*A.* It teacheth us to carry our ſelves as Children to our heavenly Father. *Firſt*, In our Imitation of him. *Eph.* 5. 1. *Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children. Secondly*, In our ſubmiſſion to him. *Heb.* 12. 9. *Furthermore, we have had fathers of our fleſh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: ſhall we not much rather be in ſubjection to the father of ſpirits, and live?* Thirdly, In our dependance on him. *Mat.* 6. 32. *For your heavenly father knoweth that you have need of all theſe things.*

### *Of Sanctification.*

Queſt. 35. **WHAT is Sanctification?**

**A. Sanctification is the work of God's Free-grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the Image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto ſin, and live unto righteouſneſs.**

Q. 1. *What are the parts of Sanctification?*

*A.* Dying unto Sin, and living unto God. *Rom.* 6. 11. *Likewiſe reckon ye alſo your ſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

Q. 2. *Who is the Author of Sanctification?*

*A.* God only. *Jude ver.* 1. *To them that are ſanctified by God the Father.*

Q. 3. *What is the inſtrument of it?*

*A.* The word of God. *John* 17. 17. *Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.*

Q. 4. *What part of man is ſanctified?*

*A.* Every part, both of the Soul and Body. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 23. *And the very God of peace ſanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole ſpirit, ſoul and body, be preſerved blameleſs, unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. 5. *Is Sanctification perfected at once?*

*A.* No; but by degrees. 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. 6. *When will it be made perfect?*

*A.* When we come to Heaven, and not before. 1 *Cor.* 13. 10, 11. *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.*

Q. 7. *What are the ſigns of true Sanctification?*

*A.* When it runs into all parts of our Converſation. 1 *Pet.* 1. 15. *But as he which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation. Secondly*, And continues to the end. *Rev.* 22. 11. *Let him that is holy, be holy ſtill.*

Q. 8. *What is the inſeparable companion of Sanctification?*

*A.* Righteouſneſs towards men. *Luke* 1. 74, 75. *That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ſerve hi without fear, in holineſs, and righteouſneſs before hi all the days of our life.*

Q. 9. *What is oppoſite to Sanctification?*

*A.* All filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit. 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having therefore theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, l us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpiri*

Q. 10. *What is the priviledge of the ſanctified?*

*A.* They are all elected, and ſhall be glorified. 1 *Pet.* 1. 2, 4. *Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the father, through ſanctification of the ſpirit——to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for you.*

Q. 11. *VVhat is the caſe of them who live and die unſanctified?*

*A.* They ſhall never ſee God. *Heb.* 12. 14. *Follow peace with all men, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

Q. 12. *VVhat differenceth true, from pretended Sanctification?*

*A.* True Sanctification purgeth the heart from the love of ſin. *Rom.* 7. 15. *For that which I do, I allow not.* And the life from the dominion of ſin. Rom. 6. 19. *As ye have yeilded your members ſervants to uncleanneſs, and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even ſo now yield your members ſervants to righteouſneſs, unto holineſs.*

Q. 13. *May great ſinners be ſanctified?*

*A.* Yes, the Spirit of God can ſanctify the vileſt heart. 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. *And ſuch were ſome of you, but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified.*

## *Of Aſſurance, the frnit of Juſtification.*

Queſt. 36. **WHAT are the benefits which in this life do either accompany, or flow from Juſtification, Adoption, and Sanctification?**

A. **The benefits which in this life do either accompany, or flow from Juſtification, Adoption, and Sanctification, are aſſurance of God's love, peace of Conſcience, joy in the Holy Ghoſt, increaſe of Grace, and perſeverance therein to the end.**

*Q.* 1. *Is Aſſurance poſſible to be attained in this Life?*

*A.* Yes; for fome have had it. *Cant.* 6. 3. *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.* And all Chriſtians are commanded to ſtrive for it. 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *VVherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence, to make your calling and election ſure.*

*Q.* 2. *How many ſorts of aſſurance are there?*

*A.* There is an objective Aſſurance. 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *Nevertheleſs the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.* And a ſubjective or perſonal Aſſurance. *Gal.* 2. 20. *VVho loved me, and gave himſelf for me.*

*Q.* 3. *Is perſonal Aſſurance perfect in this Life?*

*A.* No, it admits of doubts and fears, which interrupts it, and it is not always at one height. 1 *Cor.* 13. 10. *VVhen that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.*

*Q.* 4. *On what Teſtimony is perſonal Aſſurance built?*

*A.* Upon the Teſtimony of God's Spirit, witneſſing with ours. *Rom.* 8. 16. *The ſpirit it ſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.*

*Q.* 5. *Doth the Spirit make uſe of ſigns in us to aſſure us?*

*A.* Yes, Ordinarily he doth. 1 *John* 3. 14. *We know that we are paſſed from death to life, becauſe we love the brethren.* And *ver.* 24. *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the ſpirit which he hath given us.*

*Q.* 6. *How is true aſſurance diſcerned from preſumption?*

*A.* True aſſurance humbles the Soul. *Gal.* 2. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt; nevertheleſs I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me.* And makes the Soul afraid of Sin. 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having therefore theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.*

Q. 7. *What is the uſual ſeaſon of Aſſurance?*

*A.* The time of greateſt ſufferings for Chriſt. 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. *If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy are ye; for the ſpirit of glory and of God reſteth upon you.*

Q. 8. *Is perſonal Aſſurance abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation?*

*A.* No; a man may be ſaved, and in Chriſt, without it. *Iſa.* 50. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? Let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.*

Q. 9. *What is the fruit of Aſſurance?*

*A.* Joy unſpeakable amidſt outward Troubles. *Rom.* 5. 11. *And not only ſo, but we alſo joy in God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

Q. 10. *What ſins uſually eclipſe our Aſſurance?*

*A* Negligence in duty ſtarves it. 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Give diligence to make your calling and election ſure. For if ye do theſe things, ye ſhall never fall.* And ſinning againſt light ſtabs it. *Pſal.* 51. 8. *Make me to hear joy and gladneſs, that the bones which thou haſt broken may rejoyce.*

Q. 11. *What is the firſt Inference from this Doctrine?*

*A.* That no unregenerate Perſon can have any Aſſurance; for it is the fruit of Juſtification, Adoption and Sanctification.

Q. 12. *What is the ſecond inference?*

*A.* That all the Joys of Heaven are not to come; but ſome communicated in this life. 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Whom having not ſeen ye love; in whom though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoyce with joy unſpeakeable and full of glory.*

Q. 13. *What is the third inference?*

*A.* That aſſured Believers need to be circumſpect perſons, that they grieve not the Spirit. *Eph.* 4. 30. *And grieve not the ſpirit of God, whereby ye are ſealed unto the day of redemption.*

## *Of Peace of Conſcience.*

Queſt. 1. WWhat *doth the word* Peace *ſignify in Scripture?*

*A.* In the Language of the Old Teſtament it ſignifies all temporal good. 1 *Sam.* 25. 9. *Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine houſe, and peace be unto all that thou haſt.* And in the New Teſtament all ſpecial good; as 2 *Theſ.* 3. 16. *Now the Lord of peace give you peace always.*

Q. 2. *VVhat are the kinds of ſpecial Peace?*

*A.* There is a twofold ſpecial peace; One without us, by reconciliation. *Rom.* 5. 1. *Therefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God:* And peace within us by way of conſolation. *Col.* 3. 15. *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts.*

Q. 3. *VVhat did our peace coſt Chriſt?*

*A.* It coſt him bloody Stripes and Sufferings. *Iſa.* 53. 5. *The chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and by his ſtripes we are healed.*

Q. 4. *Can none have true peace but ſuch as are in him?*

*A.* No; others may have falſe Peace. *Luke* 11. 21. *VVhen a ſtrong man armed keepeth his palace,*

*palace, his goods are in peace.* But Believers only have true peace. *Rom.* 5. 1. *Therefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. 5. *Have all Believers peace in their conſcience at all times?*

*A.* No, they are always in a ſtate of peace, but have not always the ſenſe of peace. *Iſa.* 50. 10 *VVho is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.*

Q. 6. *VVhat is that which hinders the ſenſe of peace in Believers?*

*A.* Their Sins againſt the Lord, and grieving of his Spirit. *Iſa.* 59. 2. *But your iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God; and your ſins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

Q. 7. *VVhat maintains the ſtate of peace when the ſenſe of peace is loſt?*

*A* Chriſt's continual and potent Interceſſion with the Father for us. 1 *John* 2. 12. *My little children, theſe things write I unto you, that ye ſin not? and if any man ſin, we have an advocate with the father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous.*

Q. 8. *VVhat is the beſt way to maintain our peace with God?*

*A.* Strict walking by Goſpel Rules. *Gal.* 6. 16. *And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.*

Q. 9. *Doth this Peace come and go with outward Peace?*

*A.* No, we may enjoy this when no peace is to be had in the World. *John* 16. 33. *Theſe things I have ſpoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace? in the world ye ſhall have tribulation, but be of good chear, I have overcome the world.*

Q. 10. *VVhat is the firſt Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That the wicked are in a ſad caſe at all times, but eſpecially in evil times. *Iſa.* 57. 20, 21. *But the wicked are like the troubled Sea when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt; There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.*

Q. 11. *VVhat is the ſecond Inſtruction from hence?*

A. That the chief Care of a Chriſtian ſhould be to keep his peace with God. *Jer.* 17. 17. *Be not a terror to me, Thou art my hope in the day of evil.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inſtruction?*

*A.* Let the Saints long to be in Heaven; the State of full and perfect Peace. *Iſa.* 57. 2. *He ſhall enter into peace; they ſhall reſt in their beds, each one walking in his uprightneſs.*

### *Of Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

Queſt. 1. HOW *many ſorts of Joy are there among men?*

*A.* There is a Senſitive Joy. *Acts* 14. 17. *Nevertheleſs he left not himſelf without witneſs, in that he did good, and gave us rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs.* A ſinful Joy. *Prov.* 15. 21. *Folly is joy to him that is deſtitute of wiſdom.* And a ſpiritual Joy. *Rom.* 5. 11. *And not only ſo, but we alſo joy in God though our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. 2. *Why is ſpiritual Joy called joy in the Holy Ghoſt?*

*A.* Becauſe the Holy Ghoſt is the Author of it. *Gal.* 5 22. *But the fruit of the ſpirit is love, joy, peace, &c.*

Q. 3. *What is the Firſt thing begets joy in the Saints?*

*A.* The Firſt thing they joy in is, their Juſtification before God. *Iſa.* 61. 10. *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my ſoul ſhall be joyful in my God; for he hath cloathed me with the garments of ſalvation, he hath covered me with the robes of righteouſneſs.*

Q. 4. *What is the Second thing that breeds this Joy?*

*A.* Hopes of Glory breeds Joy in the Saints. *Rom.* 5. 2. *And rejoyce in hopes of the glory of God.*

Q. 5. *VVhat is the inſtrument by which the ſpirit conveys this Joy?*

*A.* Faith is the inſtrument of it. *Phil.* 1. 25. *And having this confidence, I know that I ſhall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith.*

Q. 6 *VVhat is the firſt Property of this Joy?*

*A.* 'Tis Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory. 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Believing, ye rejoyce with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.*

Q. 7. *VVhat is the ſecond Property of it?*

*A.* That it is not in the power of men to deprive the Saints of it. *John* 16. 22. *And your joy no man taketh from you.*

Q. 8. *VVhat is the third Property of it?*

*A.* It makes the Soul free and chearful in the ways of Obedience. *Pſal.* 119. 32. I *will run the ways of thy commandments, when thou ſhalt enlarge my heart.*

Q. 9. *VVhat is moſt deſtructive to a Chriſtian's Joy?*

*A.* Sin, eſpecially ſin againſt light. *Pſal.* 51. 8. *Make me to hear joy and gladneſs, that the bones which thou haſt broken may rejoyce.*

Q. 10. *VVhat ſhould be the main Care of a Chriſtian in this VVorld?*

*A.* To maintain his joy in God to the laſt. *Acts* 20. 24. *But none of theſe things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my ſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy.*

Q. 11. *Have not Hypocrites their joys as well as real Chriſtians?*

*A.* Yes, but the Joy of the Hypocrite is no grounded upon Scripture-warrant, and will vaniſ away, and will come to nothing at laſt. *John* 5. 35. *He was a burning and a ſhining light, and y were willing for a ſeaſon to rejoyce in his light.*

Q. 12. *What is the firſt Inference from hence*

*A.* Let all that expect joy in the Holy Ghoſt, ſee that they preſerve purity of Conſcience an Converſation. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Grace be to you, an peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſu Chriſt.*

Q. 13. *VVhat is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* That Religion is no melancholy thing, bu the fountain of all Joy and Pleaſure. *Prov.* 3. 17 *Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her pat are peace.*

### *Of the Increaſe of Grace.*

Queſt. 1. DOTH *all true Grace increaſe an grow?*

*A.* Yes, it doth, like the Morning light. *Pro* 4. 18. *The path of the juſt is as the ſhining ligh that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.* An for that end God hath appointed Miniſters a Ordinances. *Eph.* 4. 11, 12. *And he gave fo Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers; for t perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſt for the edifying of the body of Chriſt.*

Q. 2. *Cannot falſe or ſeeming Grace grow?*

A.

*A.* It grows in reſpect of its greater fitneſs and readineſs for acts of Obedience. *Col.* 1. 11. *Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience, and longſuffering, with joyfulneſs.*

Q. 5. *What is the third reſpect or manner of its growth?*

*A.* It grows in reſpect of its abilities to fix the mind more ſteadily on ſpiritual things. Hence grown Chriſtians are called ſpiritual men. *Gal.* 6. 1. *Ye which are ſpiritual reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs.*

Q. 6. *Why muſt all true Grace grow?*

*A.* Becauſe there is a Stature to which Chriſtians are appointed. *Eph.* 4. 12, 13. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.*

Q. 7. *What are the cauſes of a Chriſtians growth?*

*A.* Union with Chriſt *John* 15. 4. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me.* And his Bleſſings on the Ordinances. *Iſa.* 55. 10, 11. *For as the rain cometh down, and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower, and bread to the eater; So ſhall my word be that goeth out of my mouth, it ſhall not return unto me void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſent it.* And Providence. *Phil.* 1. 19. *For I know that this ſhall turn to my ſalvation through your prayers, and the ſupply of the ſpirit of Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. 8. *May not true Grace ſometimes decay?*

*A.* Yes, it may. *Rev.* 2. 4. *Neverthele ſs I have ſomewhat againſt thee, Becauſe thou haſt left thy love.* But not utterly. 1 *John* 3. 9. *Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin, for his ſeed remaineth in him.*

Q. 9. *What is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* To bleſs God for Goſpel Ordinances. *Pſal.* 92. 13, 14 *Thoſe that be planted in the Houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the courts of our God, they ſhall ſtill bring forth fruite in old age; they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing.*

Q. 10. *What is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* Hence we ſee the miſerable ſtate of them that grow worſe and worſe. *Jude, Verſe* 12 *Theſe are ſpots in your feaſts of charity, when they feaſt with you, feeding themſelves without fear. Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds. Trees whoſe fruit withereth; without fruit, twice dead, pluckt up by the root.*

Q. 11. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* Chriſtians ſhould not be diſcouraged at their weakneſs in Grace, for they have a merciful Chriſt. *Iſa.* 42. 3. *A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and the ſmoaking flax ſhall be not quench, he ſhall bring forth judgment unto truth.* And a ſure Promiſe. 17. 9. *The righteous alſo ſhall hold on his way; and that hath clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* That all true Criſtians draw daily nearer nearer to the heavenly and perfect State 2 4. 16. *For which cauſe we faint not; but though outward man periſh, yet the inward man is renewed by day.* Rom. 13. 11. *Now is our ſalvation nearer when we believed.*

### *Of Perſeverance.*

Q. 1. WHAT *is Perſeverance to the End?*

*A.* It is the ſteady and conſtant continuance of Chriſtians in the ways of Duty and Obedience, amidſt all Temptations and Diſcouragements to the contrary. *Col.* 1. 23. *If ye continue in faith, grounded and ſetled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Goſpel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a miniſter.*

Q. 2. *Do all that profeſs Chriſt, continue in him?*

*A.* No; many that at firſt zealouſly profeſs him, afterwards fall away. *John* 6. 66. *From that time many of his Diſciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

Q. 3. *Why do not all Perſevere?*

*A.* Becauſe all Profeſſors have not a good root and foundation. *Matt.* 13. 20, 21. *But he that received the ſeed in ſtony places, the ſame is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himſelf, but endureth for a while; for when tribulation, or perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the word, by and by he is offended.*

Q. 4. *What is the Firſt ground of the Saints Perſeverance?*

*A.* God's electing love, in which they are given to Chriſt. *John* 10. 29. *My father which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand.*

Q. 5. *What is the ſecond ground of Perſeverance?*

*A.* The immortal nature of Sanctifying grace. *John* 4. 14. *But whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water, ſpringing up into everlaſting life.* 1 John 3. 9. *For his ſeed rmaineth in him.*

Q. 6. *VVhat is the third ground of it?*

*A.* The Covenant of Grace. *Jer.* 32. 40. *I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, That I will not trun away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me.*

Q. 7. *What is the fourth ground of it?*

*A.* Chriſt's effectual Interceſſion. *Luke* 22. 32. *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*

Q. 8. *Are there no declinings of grace in the ſaints?*

*A.* Yes, there are. *Rev.* 2. 4. *Nevertheleſs I have ſomewhat againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love.* Yet Grace cannot be totally or finally loſt. For the ſeed of God remaineth in the ſanctified. 1 *John* 3. 9. *VVhoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin, for his ſeed remaineth in him; and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.*

Q. 9. *Is there no hope of Salvation for final Apoſtates?*

*A.* No; the Goſpel gives none. *Heb.* 10. 38. *But if any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.*

Q. 10. *VVhat is the firſt Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* It warns all men to lay a good foundation, leſt the buildings of hope be overturned when the ſtorm comes, *Mat.* 7. 24, 25. *Therefore whoſoever, heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him to a wiſe man which built his houſe upon a rock, and the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.*

Q. 11. *VVhat is the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* That all men ſhould look to themſelves leſt they loſe the things which they have wrought. 2 *Epiſt.* of *John*, Ver. 8. *Look to your ſelves, that ye loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.*

Q. 12. *VVhat is the laſt Inſtruction?*

*A.* Let no true Chriſtians be diſcouraged, how weak ſoever, for God is able to make him ſtand. *Rom.* 14. 4. *VVho art thou that judgeſt another man's ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth, yea, he ſhall be holden up; for God is able to make him ſtand.*

### *Of perfection at Death.*

Queſt. 37. **What benefits do Believers receive from Chriſt at their Death?**

A. **The Souls of Believers are at their death made perfect in holineſs, and do immediately paſs into glory; their bodies being ſtill united to Chriſt, do reſt in their Graves till the Reſurrection.**

Q. 1. *VVhat is the ſtate of perfect holineſs?*

*A.* In conſiſts in a perfect freedom from ſin, or any of the leaſt inclination to ſin. *Eph.* 5. 27. *That he may preſent it to himſelf a glorious Church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, but that it ſhould be holy and without blemiſh.*

Q. 2. *VVherein elſe doth perfection conſiſt?*

*A.* It conſiſts in the attainment of the higeſt meaſures and degrees of holineſs the creature is capable of. *Eph.* 4. 12, 13. *For the perfecting of the Saints,—— till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.*

Q. 3. *Cannot this be attained whilſt in the body?*

*A.* No; for here all our graces are imperfect. 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. *For now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face.* And we live at a diſtance from God. 2 *Cor.* 5, 6. *VVhilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.*

Q. 4. *How is this attained at Death.*

*A.* At Death the roots of Sin are pulled up out of the Believer's Nature. *Heb.* 12. 23. *And to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.*

Q. 5. *VVhy muſt the Soul be made perfect at death?*

*A.* Becauſe the purity of the heavenly State admits no ſin or imperfection. *Rev.* 21. 27. *And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatſoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lye; but they which are written in the lambs book of life.*

Q. 6. *What is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* That Death ſhould be lovely and deſirable in the eyes of Believers. *Phil.* 1. 23. *Having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

Q. 7. *What is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* That God hath provided ſingular relief for his people that now groan under their Sins, and many imperfections. 1 *Cor.* 13. 12, 13. *And now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then ſhall I know, even as alſo I am known.*

Q. 8. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* That the heavenly State is infinitely above and beyond whatever we enjoy here. 1 *Cor.* 2.9. *But as it is written, Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

Q. 9 *What is the fourth Inference?*

*A.* That Believers are but at a ſmall diſtance from the Satisfaction of all their deſires. *Rom.* 13. 11. *Now is our ſalvation nearer than when we believed.*

Q. 10. *What is the fifth Inference?*

*A.* That the Saints ſhould earneſtly purſue that perfection, even in this imperfect ſtate. *Phil.* 3. 13, 14 *Brethren, I count not my ſelf to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth to thoſe things which are before, I preſs towards the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Q. 11. *What is the ſixth Inference?*

*A.* That death to the Saints is better than life. *Phil.* 1. 21. *For to me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inference?*

A. That Faith is abſolutely neceſſary to entitle us to this perfect ſtate.

### *Of immediate Glorification.*

Queſt. 1. *Do all that die in Chriſt immediately paſs into glory?*

*A.* Yes, they do. *Luke* 23. 43. *To day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.* Phil. 1. 23. *Having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt.*

Q. 2. *What is the Firſt reaſon for their immediate Glorification?*

A. Becauſe Heaven is prepared and ready for them. *Mat.* 25. 34. *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

Q. 3. *What is the Second reaſon for it?*

*A.* Becauſe at Death they are as ready for Heaven as ever they ſhall be. *John* 9. 4. *I muſt work the work of him that ſent me while it is day, the night cometh, when no man can work.*

Q. 4. *What is the Third reaſon for it?*

*A.* Becauſe Death elſe could not be gain, as it is, *Phil.* 1. 21. *For to me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain.*

Q. 5. *What is the Fourth reaſon for it?*

*A.* Becauſe there is the ſame reaſon for all, as for any one: but ſome are immediately glorified. *Luke* 23. 43. *To day ſhall thou be with me in Paradiſe.*

Q. 6. *What is the Fifth reaſon for it?*

*A.* Becauſe Chriſt longs for their coming to him, and they for his Enjoyment; and theſe longings are in vain, if not ſatisfied. *Rev.* 22. 17, 20. *And the ſpirit and the bride ſay, Come, and let him that heareth ſay, Come; and let him that is a thirſt ſay, Come? and whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely; he which teſtifieth theſe things, ſaith, I come Surely, I come quickly, Amen, even ſo, come Lord Jeſus.*

Q. 7. *What is the Firſt Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That the Apparitions of departed Saints ordinarily are but Fables. They wander not. *Rev.* 3. 12. *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he ſhall go no more out.*

Q. 8. *What is the Second Inference?*

*A.* That Purgatory is a groundleſs Fable, and invention of men; and the Scriptures alledged to countenance it, groſly abuſed. 1 *Pet.* 3. 19. *By the which alſo he went and preacht unto the ſpirits in priſon.*

Q. 9. *What is the Third inference from it?*

*A.* That Heaven muſt needs be a marvell ſurprize to Belivers, how long ſoever they h converſed with it here.

Q. 10. *What is the Fourth inference.*

*A.* The conſideration of this ſhould prov Saints to work hard to finiſh all they have to on Earth. *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. *Whatſoever thy*

*fin*

*findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whether thou goeſt.*

Q. 11. *What is the Fifth Inference?*

*A.* That there is no reaſon to grieve exceſſively for departed Saints. 1 *Theſ.* 4. 13. *Even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inference.*

*A.* That Chriſtleſs ones are immediately in Hell. *Luke* 16. 22, 23. *The rich man alſo died, and was buried, and in Hell he liſt up his eyes, being in torment.*

### *Of reſt in the Grave.*

Queſt. 1. WHY *muſt Believers come to the Grave?*

*A.* Becauſe where Sin has been, Death by the Law muſt follow. *Rom.* 5. 12. *Wherefore as by one man ſin entred into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.*

Q. 2. *What is the Firſt priviledge of their Bodies there?*

*A.* 'Tis the Priviledge of their Bodies to be there in union with Chriſt. 1 *Theſ.* 4. 14. *Them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.*

Q. 3. *What is their Second priviledge?*

*A.* Their Graves are places of Reſt; not Priſons, but Beds of Reſt. *Iſa.* 57. 2. *He ſhall enter into peace, they ſhall reſt in their beds, each one walking in his uprightneſs.*

Q. 4. *What is the Firſt evil they reſt from?*

*A.* All the toils, and troubles, and afflictions of this life. *Rev.* 14. 13. *They may reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them.*

Q. 5. *VVhat is the Second evil they reſt from?*

*A.* They reſt from all perſecutions from men. *Job.* 13. 17. *There the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary be at reſt.*

Q. 6. *VVhat is the Third evil they reſt from?*

*A.* They reſt from Sin, never to feel temptation or inclination to ſin. *Heb.* 12. 23. *And to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.*

Q. 7. *How long ſhall the Bodies reſt in the Grave?*

*A.* Not for ever, but till the Day of the Reſurrection. *Job* 19. 26. *For though after my skin worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God.*

Q. 8. *VVhat is the Firſt inference from hence?*

*A.* That union with Chriſt redounds to the ſingular advantage of the Body as well as the Soul. *Rom.* 8. 11. *But if the ſpirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies by his ſpirit that dwelleth in you.*

Q. 9. *VVhat is the Second Inference?*

*A.* That Death diſſolves not the union betwixt Chriſt and the Souls or Bodies of his. *Mat.* 22. 33. *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*

Q. 10. *VVhat is the Third Inference?*

*A.* That ſeeing our Bodies are to have ſo long and ſo ſweet reſt in the Grave, we ſhould not ſpare them in God's Service now. 2 *Pet.* 1. 13, 14. *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to ſtir you up, by putting you in remembrance, knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off this my Tabernacle, even as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhewed me.*

Q. 11. *VVhat is the Fourth Inference?*

*A.* That Chriſtians ſhould neither too much fear their own, nor ſorrow for others death. *Rom.* 8. 38. *For I am perſwaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,—— nor any other creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* 1 Theſ. 4. 13. *I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not even as others which have no hope.*

### *Of the Reſurrection.*

Queſt. 1. IS *the Reſurrection a credible Doctrine?*

*A.* Yes, it is. *Acts* 26. 8. *VVhy ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead?*

Q. 2. *VVhy then doth it ſeem incredible to man?*

*A.* Becauſe they err, not knowing the Scriptures, and the Power of God. *Mark* 12. 24. *Do ye not therefore err, becauſe ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?* The Power of God aſſures us it may be ſo, and the word of God tells us it muſt be ſo.

Q. 3. *Is it ſinful to doubt of the Doctrin of the Reſurrection?*

*A.* 'Tis not only a ſin to doubt it, but an hereſy to deny it, it being a fundamental Article. *Heb.* 6. 2. *And of the reſurrection of the dead.* 1 Cor. 15. 13, 14. *But if there be no reſurrection of the dead, then is Chriſt not riſen; and if Chriſt be not riſen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is alſo vain.*

Q. 4. *VVho muſt riſe again at the Reſurrection?*

*A.* All men, good and bad, muſt riſe again. *Acts* 24. 15. *And have hope towards God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and the unjuſt.* Rev. 20. 12, 13, 14. *And I ſaw the dead ſmall and great, ſtand before God,* &c.

Q. 5. *VVhat is the firſt difference betwixt the Reſurrection of the juſt and unjuſt?*

*A.* Saints riſe by virtue of their union with Chriſt. *Rom.* 8. 11. *But if the ſpirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead dwell in you; he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies by his ſpirit that dwelleth in you.* But the wicked by his power.

Q. 6. *VVhat is the ſecond difference?*

*A.* The ſecond and main difference will be in the contrary ends to which they riſe, ſome to life, and ſome to condemnation. *Dan.* 12. 2. *And many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame, and everlaſting contempt.*

Q. 7. *VVhat is the glory to which Saints bodies ſhall be raiſed?*

*A.* In the likeneſs of Chriſt's glorious Body. *Phil.* 3. 21. *VVho ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like to his glorious body.*

Q. 8. *What is the Firſt inference from hence?*

*A.* That every man ſhould ſtrive to the uttermoſt to attain to the Reſurrection of the juſt *Phil.* 3. 10, 11. *That I may know him, and the power of his Reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of the ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain to the reſurrection of the dead.*

Q. 9. *What is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* Comfort to them that now groan under manifold Diſtempers, and Deformities of Body;

they being made equal to Angels. *Mark* 12. 25. *For when they ſhall riſe from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the Angels which are in heaven.*

Q. 10. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* Get union with Chriſt by Faith, as you expect a joyful Reſurrection. *John* 11. 25. *Jeſus ſaid unto her, I am the reſurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live.*

Q. 11. *What is the fourth Inference?*

*A.* Saints ſhould not fear Death. *Gen.* 46. 3. *Fear not to go down into Egypt.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* Imploy your Bodies for good now.

### *Of Chriſt's acknowledging Believers.*

Queſt. 38. **What benefit do Believers receive from Chriſt at the Reſurrection?**

**A. At the Reſurrection Believers being raiſed up in glory, ſhall be openly acknowledged, and acquitted in the Day of Judgment, and made perfectly bleſſed in the full enjoying of God to all Eternity.**

Q. 1. *What is it to be acknowledged by Chriſt?*

*A.* It is Chriſt's owning of the ſpecial relation betwixt him and them. *Mat.* 25. 34. *Come ye bleſſed of my father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

Q. 2. *Whom will Chriſt acknowledge for his?*

*A.* Such as confeſs Chriſt now. *Mat.* 10. 32. *Whoſoever therefore ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs alſo before my father which is in heaven.*

Q. 3. *Before whom will Chriſt confeſs them?*

*A.* Before his Father, Angels and men. *Rev.* 3. 5. *He that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be cloathed in white Raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confeſs his name before my Father, and before Angels.*

Q. 4. *Who ſhall be denied by Chriſt in that Day?*

*A.* All that now deny Chriſt, ſhall be denied by him. 2 *Tim.* 2. 12. *If we deny him, he alſo will deny us.*

Q. 5. *Why will Chriſt openly acknowledge them?*

*A.* To wipe off all Aſperſions and Cenſures that now are caſt upon them. *Iſa.* 66. 5. *Your brethren that hated you, that caſt you out for my names ſake, ſaid, Let the Lord be glorified; but he ſhall appear to your joy, and they ſhall be aſhamed.*

Q. 6. *What will be the effect of Chriſt's Acknowment?*

*A.* 'Twill put a full end to all Doubts, Fears, and Jealouſies of themſelves. 1 *Cor.* 4. 3, 4. *But with me it is a very ſmall thing that I ſhould be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not my own ſelf, for I know nothing by my ſelf; yet am I not hereby juſtified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord.*

Q. 7. *What other effect will it produce in them?*

*A.* Joy unſpeakable and tranſcendent: hence called time of refreſhing. *Acts* 3. 19. *When the time of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord.*

Q. 8. *Is this the only time Chriſt acknowledgeth them?*

*A.* No, he acknowledgeth them by his Spirit's Teſtimony now; but that's private in their Boſoms. *Rom.* 8. 16. *The ſpirit it ſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirits, that we are the children of God.*

Q. 9. *What is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* To warn all how they paſs raſh Cenſures on Chriſt's Servants. *Pſal.* 73. 15. *If I ſay, I will ſpeak this, Behold I ſhould offend againſt the generation of thy children.*

Q. 10. *What is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* Let none be afraid or aſhamed to confeſs the Perſon, Office, or any truth of Chriſt, for any loſs or danger, that may threaten them. *Luke* 12. 8, 9. *Alſo I ſay unto you whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him ſhall the ſon of man alſo confeſs before the Angels of God. But he that denieth me before men, ſhall be denied before the Angels of God.*

Q. 11. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* Let Chriſtians abound in good works. Every act of Charity for Chriſt, ſhall be acknowledged by him in the Day of Judgment. *Mat.* 25. 35. *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* Let all Chriſtians love and long for the day of Chriſt's appearing. 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *Hence forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto them alſo that love his appearing.*

### *Of Chriſt's acquitting Believers.*

Queſt. 1. *What is it to be acquitted by Chriſt?*

*A.* It is to be diſcharged and cleared from all the guilt of Sin, and puniſhment due to it by the Law, upon the account of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs imputed by God, and received by Faith. *Rom.* 5. 1. *Therefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Rom. 8. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Q. 2. *How many ways are Believers acquitted?*

*A.* They are acquitted now in the Court of Heaven. *Rom.* 8. 33. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It is God that juſtifieth.* In the Court of their own Conſciences. 1 *John* 3. 21. *Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* And in the Day of Judgment. Both particular; *Heb.* 9. 27. *As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.* And general. *Acts* 3. 19. *Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out.* Their Sins are then blotted out.

Q. 3. *How doth Chriſt's acquittance now, differ from that at Judgment?*

*A.* They differ in reſpect of Publickneſs; this is ſecret in the Believer's boſom, and that open before Men and Angels. *Rev.* 3. 5. *I will confeſs his name before my Father, and before his Angels.*

Q. 4. *What is the ſecond Difference?*

*A.* They differ in reſpect of ſubjective certainty and aſſurance. A Believer may doubt of this, but not of that. 1 *Cor.* 4. 4, 5. *For I know nothing of my ſelf, yet am I not hereby juſtified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord; therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.*

Q. 5. *What is the third Difference betwixt them?*

*A.* They differ in point of Conſolation. This always bears proportion to the certainty of it. Hence that day is called the time of refreſhing; when Chriſt blots out their Sins by Sentencial

Juſtification. *Acts* 3. 19. *Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord.*

Q. 6. *Do Believers then lie under condemnation till that day?*

*A.* No, they are truly and fully juſtified now. *John* 5. 24. *He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation; but is paſſed from death unto life.* But this Sentence is not yet publiſht by Chriſt's own mouth, as it ſhall be then.

Q. 7. *On what account ſhall they be acquitted in that Day?*

*A.* On the very ſame account and ſcore they are now, *viz.* For the imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt in the way of Free-grace. *Eph.* 1. 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace.*

Q. 8. *Muſt the Saints be ſummoned to Chriſt's Bar in that Day?*

*A.* Yes, they muſt appear as well as others. 2 *Cor.* 5. 10 *For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt.* But not to the ſame end. *John* 5. 29. *And ſhall come forth, they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life: and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation.*

Q. 9. *What is the firſt Inference hence?*

*A.* How ſure is a Believer's Juſtification, being ſo ratified privately and publickly, in this World, and that to come!

Q. 10. *What is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* Though the Day of Judgment be awfully ſolemn, it ſhould not be dreadful to Believers. They ſhould look for, and haſten to the coming of the Day of God. 2 *Pet.* 3. 12. *Looking for, and haſtening unto the coming of the day of God,* &c.

Q. 11. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* That Faith is a Grace of abſolute neceſſity, and unſpeakable excellency. *Rom.* 5. 1, 2. *Therefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. By whom alſo we have acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we ſtand.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inference?*

*A.* All unbelievers are in a miſerable State now. *John* 3. 18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already.* And worſe in the World to come. *Mat.* 25. 41. *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

## *Of the full Enjoyment of God.*

Queſt. 1. WHat *doth perfect Bleſſedneſs ſuppoſe and imply?*

*A.* It ſuppoſes the total Freedom of Believers from all the moral evil of Sin. *Eph.* 5. 27. *That he might preſent you to himſelf a glorious Church, not having ſpot nor wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, but that it ſhould be holy, and without blemiſh.* And from all the penal evils of ſuffering. *Rev.* 21. 4. *And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain, for the former things are paſſed away.*

Q. 2. *What elſe is implied in perfect Bleſſedneſs?*

*A.* It implies the full and perfect enjoyment of God. 1 *Cor.* 15. 28. *And when all things ſhall be ſubdued unto him, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

Q. 3. *What is it for God to be all in all?*

*A.* It implies three things in it. *Firſt,* That all the Saints ſhall be filled and ſatisfied from God alone. *Secondly,* That there ſhall be no need of other things out of which they were wont to fetch comfort. *Thirdly,* That all other things, as Heaven, Angels, Saints, ſhould be loved and enjoyed in God.

Q. 4. *In what reſpect ſhall they Enjoy God in Heaven?*

*A.* They ſhall have the glorious and immediate preſence of God with them. *Rev.* 21. 3. *God himſelf ſhall be with them, and be their God.*

Q. 5. *In what other reſpects ſhall they Enjoy God?*

*A.* They ſhall ſee him as he is. 1 *John* 3. 2. *We ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

Q. 6. *What will ſuch a viſion of God produce?*

*A.* It will produce perfect conformity in them to God. 1 *John* 3. 2. *When he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* And perfect joy will reſult from hence. *Pſal.* 16. 11. *In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy, at thy right hand there are pleaſures for evermore.*

Q. 7. *Do not the Saints enjoy God here?*

*A.* Yes, they do; but not ſo as they ſhall enjoy him in Heaven. 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. *Now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part; but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known.*

Q. 8. *What are the ſpecial differences between the Saints Communion with God here, and that in Heaven?*

*A.* Their Communion with God here is clogg'd with Sin. *Rom.* 7. 21. *I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.* Here it is not conſtant. *Pſal.* 22. 1. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Nor is it ſatisfying: but in Heaven it will be pure, conſtant and ſatisfying.

Q. 9. *How long ſhall they there enjoy God?*

*A.* Not for days, years, ages, but for ever and ever. 1 *Theſ.* 4. 17. *And ſo ſhall we be ever with the Lord.*

Q. 10. *What is the firſt Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That the World is not the place of the Saints reſt and ſatisfaction. *Heb.* 4. 9. *There remaineth therefore a reſt to the people of God.* 2 *Cor.* 5. 2, 6. *For in this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be cloathed upon with our houſe which is from heaven; therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.*

Q. 11. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That Death is a ſingular benefit to the Saints; and though it be an enemy to Nature, yet it is the *medium* to *Glory.* 2 *Cor.* 5. 4. *For we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burthened, not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life.*

Q. 12. *What is the third Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* The neceſſity of Faith and Regeneration in this World. None ſhall be raiſed up in glory, acknowledged, acquitted, and made perfectly bleſſed in the full enjoyment of God, but Believers. *Rom.* 8. 30. *Moreover whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called; and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified; and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.* Heb. 12. 14. *Follow peace with all men, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

### *Of Man's Duty to God.*

Queſt. 39. **What is the Duty that God requireth of Man?**

**A. The Duty which God requireth of Man, is Obedience to his revealed will.**

Q. 1. *Is Obedience to God's will the Duty of every Man?*

*A.* It is unqueſtionably the Duty of every man to obey the will of God, ſo far as he hath made it known to him. *Micah* 6. 8. *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.*

Q. 2. *On what account is Man's Obedience due to God?*

*A.* 'Tis due to him, *Firſt*, As he is our Creator, *In whom we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts 17. 27, 28. *Secondly*, As he is our Benefactor, from whom we receive all our Mercies. *Deut.* 28. 47. *Becauſe thou ſerveſt not the Lord thy God with joyfulneſs, and with gladneſs of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore ſhalt thou ſerve thine enemies, which the Lord ſhall ſend againſt thee, in hunger, thirſt, and nakedneſs, and in want of all things. Thirdly*, As he is our Lord, and Law-giver. *Jam.* 4. 12. *There is one Law-giver, who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy.*

Q. 3. *Is Obedience due to none but God only?*

*A.* Yes, ſubjects muſt obey their lawful Magiſtrates. *Rom.* 13. 1. *Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God.* People their Miniſters. *Heb.* 13. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give an account.* Children their Parents. *Eph.* 6. 1. *Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right.* But not as they are to obey God.

Q. 4. *What is the difference betwixt our obedience to God's Commands, and Men's?*

*A.* We are to obey God chiefly and ſupreamly, for his own ſake. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. *Submit your ſelves to every ordinance of man, for the Lords ſake.* And *Eph.* 6. 1. *Children obey your parents [in the Lord] for this is right.*

Q. 5. *What muſt we do when the Commands of God and Men fall croſs to one another?*

*A.* In that caſe we muſt yield our obedience to God; and not to man, whatever we ſuffer for it. *Acts* 4. 19. *Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.*

Q. 6. *Why muſt we obey God rather than Man?*

*A.* Becauſe God is the Supream and Sovereign Lord of our Conſciences, and no Creature hath power to command our Obedience, but in, and from him. *Iſa.* 33. 22. *For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will ſave us.*

Q. 7. *Have the People Liberty to compare the Laws of God and Men, and judge how they agree, or differ?*

*A.* Yes, their Judgment of Diſcretion is both commanded; 1 *Cor.* 10. 15. *I ſpeak as to wiſe men, judge ye what I ſay.* And commended; *Acts* 17. 11. *Theſe were more noble than thoſe in Theſſalonica, in that they received the word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearched the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo.*

Q. 8. *What is the only Rule for our Obedience to God?*

*A.* The will of God revealed in the Scriptures, is our only Rule of Obedience. *Iſa.* 8. 20. *To the law, and to the teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them.*

Q. 9. *But if a man have a voice, a viſion, or a dream, ſeeming to hint the ſecret will of God, may he not obey it?*

*A.* Yes; if it be conſonant to the revealed will of God in the word, otherwiſe not. *Deut.* 29. 29. *The ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God, but thoſe things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

Q. 10. *What is the firſt Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* That it's highly ſinful and dangerous to diſobey the known will of God in any thing. *Rom.* 1. 18. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs.* Luke 12. 47. *And that ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.*

Q. 11. *What is the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* That's a bleſſed man, who conſcienciouſly labours to obey the will of God ſo far as he can diſcover it. *John* 13. 17. *If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Gal. 6 16. *And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy.*

Q. 12. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* It is highly ſinful and dangerous to command others, or obey commands from others, which are not according to God's Command. *Hoſ.* 5. 11. *Ephraim is oppreſſed, and broken in judgment, becauſe he willingly walketh after the commandment.* Jer. 7. 31. *And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, to burn their ſons and their daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.*

### *Of the Moral Law.*

Queſt 40. and 41. **What did God at firſt reveal to Man for the Rule of his Obedience?**

**A. The Rule which God at firſt revealed to Man for his Obedience, was the Moral Law.**

**Where is the Moral Law ſummarily comprehended?**

**A. The Moral Law is ſummarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments.**

Q. 1. *Is every man under the Direction and Obligation of a Law?*

*A.* Yes; Man being a reaſonable Creature, is capable of, and fitted for Government by Law, which other Creatures are not; and being an accountable Creature to God, muſt needs be under a Law. *Rom.* 2. 15. *Which ſhew the works of the Law written in their hearts; their conſciences alſo bearing witneſs, and their thoughts the mean while accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another?*

Q. 2. *How could man be under a Law before the Law was given by* Moſes?

*A.* Before ever the Law was given at *Sinai*, all the race of *Adam* had a Law written in their Hearts, *viz.* the Light of Reaſon, and Dictates of Natural Conſcience. *Rom.* 2. 14. *For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things*

*things contained in the Law, theſe having not the aw, are a law unto themſelves.* And beſides this, the Church had the revealed will of God to direct them. 2 *Pet.* 1. 19, 20. *We have alſo a more ſure word of Propheſy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts. Knowing this firſt, that no propheſy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.*

Q. 3. *What is the meaning of the Moral Law?*

*A.* 'Tis not a Law to direct and order our Manners; but a Law that binds univerſally and perpetually, as the Ten Commandments do thoſe to whom they are promulged, and the Light of Nature doth all others. *Rom.* 2. 14. *For when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, theſe having not the Law, are a Law unto themſelves.* Luke 16. 17. *It is eaſier for heaven and earth to paſs, than one tittle of the Law to fall.*

Q. 4. *VVhy is it ſaid to be ſummarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments?*

*A.* Becauſe much more is included in every Command, than is expreſt, as our Saviour ſhews in his expoſition of it. *Mat.* 22. 40. *On theſe two Commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

Q. 6. *Doth the Moral Law bind Chriſtians under the Goſpel?*

*A.* Yes, it doth, as a Rule to order their Converſations by. *Jam.* 2. 8, 9, 10. *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf; ye do well: but if ye have reſpect to perſons, ye commit ſin, and are convinced of the law as tranſgreſſors; for whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all?*

Q. 6. *Is the Moral Law the ſame thing with the Covenant of Works, and impoſed for the ſame end?*

*A.* God never deſigned the Law to be the way of Man's Juſtiſication ſince the Fall. *Gal.* 3. 21, 22. *Is the law then againſt the promiſes of God? God forbid! for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs would have been by the law; but the Scripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.* But it was promulged to convince Men of Sin. *Rom.* 7. 7. *VVhat ſhall we ſay then? Is the law ſin? God forbid! Nay, I had not known ſin, but by the law; for I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhall not covet.* And bring them to Chriſt. *Gal.* 3. 24. *VVherefore the law was our School-maſter to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith.*

Q. 7. *VVhat is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* Hence we learn the abominable Nature of Popery. The Pope being that lawleſs One, who will not be bound to the Laws of God himſelf. 2 *Theſ.* 2. 8. *Then ſhall that wicked one be revealed whom the Lord ſhall conſume with the ſpirit of his mouth, and ſhall deſtroy with the brightneſs of his coming,* But aſſumes Power to diſpence with God's Laws to others.

Q. 8. *VVhat is the ſecond Inference hence?*

*A.* That man dieth not as Beaſts die; which re under no Moral Law, and therefore capable of no ſin; but muſt come to Judgment after Death. *Eccleſ.* 3. 21. *Who knoweth the ſpirit of man that goeth upward, and the ſpirit of the Beaſt that goeth downward to the earth?* Heb. 9. 27. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*

Q. 9. *What is the third Inference hence.*

*A.* That though the actions of men naturally conſidered are tranſcient, yet their conſequences and effects are permanent; An act is ſoon done, a word ſoon ſpoken, a thought ſoon thought; but when done, ſpoken or thought, they are placed to account. *Gal.* 6. 7, 8. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap; for he that ſoweth to the fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption; but he that ſoweth to the ſpirit, ſhall of the ſpirit reap life everlaſting.*

Q. 10. *What is the fourth Inference from hence?*

*A.* That God will proceed with men by different rules in the Day of Judgment, according to the different Laws they lived under in this World. *Rom.* 2. 12. *For as many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law; and as many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law.*

Q. 11. *What is the fifth Inference from hence?*

*A.* That thoſe who have ſinned againſt the cleareſt Light, and beſt Helps, will, if they die impenitent, be judged to the greateſt Miſery. *Matt.* 11. 23. *And thou Capernaum which are exalted unto heaven, ſhalt be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained untill this day.* Heb. 2. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?*

Q. 12. *What is the ſixth Inference from hence?*

*A.* That as we are to prize the Moral Law highly, as a Rule of Life; *Pſal.* 119. 105. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* So are we to bleſs God for the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, by which only we can attain to Juſtification and Salvation. *Heb.* 12. 22. *But we are come to Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, to an innumerable company of Angels.*

## *Of Love to God and Man.*

Queſt. 42. **What is the ſum of the Ten Commandments?**

A. **The ſum of the Ten Commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, with all our ſoul, with all our ſtrength, and with all our mind; and our Neighbour as our ſelves.**

Q. 1. *What is the ſum of the Ten Commandments?*

*A.* To love the Lord our God with a Sincere love, in and for him. *Matt.* 22. 37. 38. *Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind. This is the Firſt and Great Commandment; The Second is like unto it, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.*

Q. 2. *What is the firſt thing contained in our ſupream Love to God?*

*A.* It implies the loving of God purely and abſolutely for himſelf. The Excellencies that are in him. *Cant.* 1. 3. *Thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love thee.* And the benefits we receive from him. *Pſal.* 116. 1. *I love the Lord becauſe he hath heard my voice and my ſupplication.*

Q. 3. *What is the Second Property of this Supream Love?*

*A.* Supream love devotes the whole man to God and Chriſt: So that in life and death that man deſigns the Glory of God as his main end. *Rom.* 14. 7, 8. *For none of us liveth to himſelf, and* *no man dieth to himſelf; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.*

Q. 4. *What is the third Property of Supream Love?*

*A.* It cauſes the Soul to depreciate and ſlight all other things in compariſon of God's Glory, and an Intreſt in Chriſt. *Acts* 20. 24. *But none of theſe things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my ſelf, ſo that I may finiſh my courſe with joy.* Phil. 3. 8, 9 *I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord.*

Q. 5. *What is the fourth Property of Supream Love?*

*A.* It centers the Soul in God as its only reſt. *Pſal.* 116. 7. *Return unto thy reſt, O my ſoul.* And cannot be ſatisfied till it come to the full enjoyment of him. 2 *Theſ.* 3. 5. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and patient waiting for Chriſt.*

Q. 6. *Why muſt we love God with a ſupream Love?*

*A.* Becauſe ſuch a love only ſuits the tranſcendent Excellency of God. Commands all we are and have for God, and is the only love that will continue to the end. *Rom.* 8. 35. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt?*

Q. 7. *What is it to love our Neighbour as our ſelves?*

*A.* It is the exact Obſervation and Practice of the golden Rule of Chriſt. *Matt.* 7. 12. *Therefore all things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them, for this is the law and the prophets.*

Q. 8. *Are all men to be loved alike, and with the ſame degree of Love;*

*A.* No; tho we muſt love all men with the love of Benevolence; yet the Saints only with the love of Complancency. *Pſal.* 16. 3. *But to the ſaints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.* And to ſuch we muſt eſpecially do good. *Gal.* 6. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of faith.*

Q. 9. *VVhat is the firſt Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* Hence we learn the excellency of Divine love. *Moſes* expreſſes the Whole Duty of Man in Ten Commandments. Chriſt hangs the Whole Law upon theſe Two, Love to God and our Neighbour. *Mark* 12. 30, 31. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſtrength. This is the firſt Commandment. And the Second is like, namely, this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf; there is none other Commandment greater than theſe.* And the Apoſtle reduces theſe Two into One. *Gal.* 5. 14. *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.*

Q. 10. *VVhat is the ſecond Inference from hence?*

*A.* It convinces the holieſt of men how far ſhort they come in their Obedience to the rule of duty, and therein *the law is our School-maſter to bring us to Chriſt. Gal.* 3. 24.

Q. 11. *VVhat is the third Inference from hence?*

*A.* It diſcovers the excellency and perfection of the Law of God. *Pſal.* 19. 7. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul.* And that we are highly to honour and magnify it as a rule of duty, though we muſt utterly renounce it as the way of our Juſtification.

Q. 12. *VVhat is the laſt Inference from hence?*

*A,* That there is nothing too dear for a Chriſtian in this world, but he muſt give it up by ſelf-denial, when it comes in competition with his ſupream love to God. *Luke* 14. 26. *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple.* ( *i. e.* ) Love them leſs than me.

### *Of the Perface to the Commandments.*

Queſt. 43. and 44. **What is the Preface to the Ten Commandments?**

**A. The Preface to the Ten Commandments is in theſe words, I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the Houſe of Bondage.**

**What doth the Preface to the Ten Commandments teach us?**

**A. The Preface to the Ten Commandments teacheth us, that becauſe God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his Commandments.**

Q. 1 *VVhy doth God uſe arguments and inducements to win men to the obedience of his laws?*

*A.* Becauſe he loves to work on man as a rational Creature, according to the principles of his Nature. *Hoſ.* 11. 4. *I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.* And becauſe he delights in none but free and chearful Obedience. *Pſal.* 110. 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.*

Q. 2. *What is the firſt argument in this Preface?*

*A.* It is the ſovereignty of the Law-giver [ I am the Lord ] which ſhould awe the heart of every man to obedience. *Jam.* 4. 12. *There is one law-giver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy.*

Q. 3. *What is the ſecond argument to Obedience?*

*A.* One propriety in God by Covenant [ I am the Lord thy God ] This obligeth to Obedience and aggravateth diſobedince. *Pſal.* 50. 7. *Hear, O my people, and I will ſpeak; O Iſrael, and I will teſtify againſt thee; I am God, even thy God.* Hoſ. 9. 1. *Thou haſt gone a whoring from thy God.*

Q. 4. *What is the third argument unto Obedience?*

*A.* The benefits of Redemtion that they receive from God. Benefits perſwade to duty; and *the goodneſs of God leads to repentance.* Rom. 2. 4.

Q. 5. *How can deliverance out of Egypt, be an argument to them that never were in Egypt?*

*A.* As that Deliverance was a Type of our Deliverance, ſo 'tis an argument to us, and an argument from the leſs to the greater; ſo it obligeth us more than them. *Luke* 1. 74, 75. *That he would grant us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might ſerve him without ſear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of our life.*

Q 6. *What is that deliverance we have? and how doth it oblige us to Obedience?*

*A.* Our Deliverance is not from *Egypt,* but from Hell. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.* Col. 1. 13. And our perſons are bought by the Redeemer to glorify God. 1 *Cor* 6. 1 *What, know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, which is in you; for ye are bought with a price; wherefore glorify God in your body, and in your ſpirits which are Gods.*

Q 7. *Is it not mercenary to ſerve God upon the account of benefits received, or to be received?*

*A.*

*A.* He that makes religious Duties *Mediums* t attain carnal Advantages only, is of a worſe than mercenary Spirit. *Hoſe.* 7. 14. *And they have not cried unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds; they aſſembled themſelves for corn and wine, and they rebelled againſt me.* But to be quickened by Mercy to Duty is not mercenary, but Evangelical. *Hoſ.* 3. 5. *They ſhall fear the Lord and his goodneſs.*

Q. 8. *What is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* That great is the condeſcention of God to Man, that he will uſe arguments to induce him to obedience, who might exact it only by his Sovereignty, and juſtly damn us for our diſobedience. 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *Now then we are embaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.*

Q. 9. *What is the ſecond Inference from hence?*

*A.* That the more mercy any receive from God, the more obligations are laid on them to obey him. *Pſal.* 116. 1, 2. *I love the Lord becauſe he hath heard my voice, and my ſupplication; becauſe he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.*

Q. 10. *What is the third Inference from hence?*

*A.* The more mercies and favours any man ſins againſt, the greater is that man's ſin, and the ſorer will be his puniſhment. *Amos* 3. 1. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; wherefore I will puniſh you for all your iniquities.*

Q. 11. *What is the fourth Inference from hence?*

*A.* That God's expectations are greater, where his mercies and favours have been ſo. *Iſa.* 5. 4. *What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it ſhould bring for grapes, brought it forth wild grapes.*

Q. 12. *What is the laſt Inference from hence;*

*A.* That memorials of God's Mercies are to be kept by us, to provoke us to conſtant and chearful duties of obedience *Exod.* 17. 14. *And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearſe it in the ears of Joſhua.* Pſal. 103. 2, 3. *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul. forget not all his benefits.*

*Of the First Commandment.*

Queſt. 45. **Which is the Firſt Commandment?**

A. **The Firſt Commandment is, Thou ſhalt have no other Gods before me.**

Q. 1. *What is the firſt duty enjoin'd in the firſt Commandment?*

*A.* It is to know and acknowledge the Exiſtence or Being of God, and conſequently condemns all Atheiſm, both in judgment and practice. *Heb.* 11. 6. *He that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* Pſal. 14. 1. *The fool hath ſaid in his heart, there is no God.*

Q. 2. *What is the ſecond duty of the Firſt Commandment?*

*A.* It requires all men to know and acknowledge the unity of God. *Deut.* 6. 4. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord.* And condemns Polytheiſm, or plurality of Gods. 1 *Cor.* 8. 5, 6. *For tho' there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be Gods many, and Lords many; but to us there is but one God.*

Q. 3. *Whence ſprang the Opinion of more Gods than one at firſt in the world?*

*A.* It ſprang from ignorance of God's Omnipreſence and Omnipotence. Hence came their vain imaginations. *Rom* 1. 21. *Becauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened.* They thought the preſence and power of God might reach one place, and not another. 1 *Kings* 20. 23. *And the ſervants of the King of Aſſyria ſaid unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills, therefore they were ſtronger than we; but let us fight againſt them in the plain, and ſurely we ſhall be ſtronger than they.*

Q. 4. *What were the firſt Creatures worſhipped as Gods?*

*A.* Probably the heavenly Bodies, Sun, Moon and Stars, becauſe of their ſplendor and influences? theſe as Heralds, do proclaim God to the World. *Pſal.* 19. 1, 2. *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament ſheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth ſpeech, and night unto night ſheweth knowledge.* And theſe meſſengers of God were miſtaken for God himſelf; *Job* 31. 26, 27. *If I beheld the ſun when it ſhined, or the moon walking in brightneſs, and my heart hath been ſecretly inticed, or my mouth hath kiſſed my hand; This alſo were an iniquity, for I ſhould have denied the God that is above.*

Q. 5. *What do theſe words* [ before me ] *import?*

*A.* It notes God's perfect knowledge and abhorrance of all Idolatry, or worſhipping of another God, as what he cannot endure to behold. *Jer.* 44. 3, 4. *Becauſe of their wickedneſs which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incenſe to ſerve other Gods, whom they knew not, neither they, you, nor your fathers; howbeit I ſent unto you all my ſervants the prophets, riſing early, and ſending them, ſaying, O do not this abominable thing that I hate.*

Q. 6. *Are none guilty of this ſin but heatheniſh Idolaters?*

*A.* Yes, all that place their ſupream love or truſt in any creature, make their creature their God, and in Scripture are called Idolaters. *Col.* 3. 5. *And covetouſneſs which is Idolatry.*

Q. 7. *How doth the Idolatry forbidden in the firſt, differ from that forbidden in the ſecond Commandment?*

*A.* The Idolatry forbidden in the firſt Commandment is a ſin reſpecting the object of worſhip, when we ſet up any thing in the place of God, which by nature is not God. *Gal.* 4. 8. *Howbeit then when ye knew not God, ye did ſervice unto them which by nature are no gods.* But that againſt the ſecond Commandment is, when we pretend to worſhip the true God, but do it by ſuch means, and in ſuch a manner as he hath not required, or hath forbidden. *Exod.* 32. 4, 5. *And he received them at their hands, and faſhioned it with a graving tool, after he had made a molten calf, and they ſaid, Theſe be thy Gods, O Iſrael, which brought thee up out of the houſe of Egypt.*

Q. 8. *What is the firſt inference from the firſt Commandment?*

*A.* That it is a ſpecial mercy to be brought forth in a land where the true God is known and worſhipped. *Pſal.* 147. 20. *He hath not dealt ſo with any nation; and as for his judgments they have not known them; praiſe ye the Lord.*

Q. 6. *What is the ſecond inference from the* 1ſt *Commandment?*

*A.* That it is a great and dreadful ſin to live without the worſhip of God in the world. *Eph.* 2. 12. *That at that time ye were without Chriſt,---and without God in the world.*

Q. 10. *What's the third inference from the 1ſt Commandment ?*

*A.* That Chriſtians muſt not comply with Idolatrous or Superſtitious worſhip, when they are caſt into Idolatrous places, how great ſoever the danger be. *Pſal.* 16. 4: *Their ſorrows ſhall de multiplied, that haſten after another God ; their drink offering of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.*

Q. 11. *What is the fourth inference from hence ?*

*A.* That the ſupream love, fear, and truſt of the Soul is God's peculiar right and due. Whoſoever places them on any other beſides God is guilty of a very heinous and great ſin againſt him. 1 *John* 2. 15. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ; if any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.* Compar'd with *Job* 31. 24, 28. *If I have made gold my hope, or have ſaid to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence ; this alſo were an iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judge, for I ſhould have denied the God that is above.*

Q. 12. *What is the fifth inference hence ?*

*A.* That God's eye diſcovers the cloſeſt Idolatry in the world, whether it be in ſecret actions ; *Ezek.* 8. 12. *Haſt thou ſeen what the ancients of the houſe of Iſrael do in the dark ? Every man in the chambers of his imagery ; for they ſay, the Lord ſeeth us not, the Lord hath forſaken the earth.* Or inward affections. Col. 3. 5. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry.*

Q. 13. *What is the ſixth inference from hence ?*

*A.* That an high and full condition in the world, is a dangerous condition, and lies moſt expoſed to to the danger of Heart-idolatry. *Prov.* 30. 9. *Leſt I be full, and deny thee, and ſay, Who is the Lord ?* Mark 10. 24. *How hard is it for them that truſt in riches to enter into the kingdom of heaven ?*

Q. 14. *What is the laſt Inference ?*

*A.* That in covenanting with God, and avouching him for our God, we muſt wholly renounce all others, and take God alone for our portion ; and the object of our love and dependance. *Hoſ.* 3. 3. *Thou ſhalt not be for another man. So will I alſo be for thee.* Luke 14. 33. *So likewiſe whoſoever he be of you, that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple.*

### *Of the ſecond Commandment.*

Queſt. 49. **Which is the ſecond Commandment ?**

A. **The ſecond Commandment is,** [ Thou ſhalt not make unto thee any graven Image, or any likeneſs of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the Earth beneath, or that is in the Water under the Earth ; thou ſhalt not bow down thy ſelf to them, nor ſerve them : For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, viſiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth generation, of them that hate me, and ſhewing mercy unto thouſands of them that love me, and keep my Commandments ]

Queſt. 50. **What is required in the ſecond Commandment ?**

A. **The ſecond Commandment requireth, the receiving, obſerving, and keeping pure and entire all ſuch Religious Worſhip and Ordinances, as God hath appointed in his Word.**

Queſt. 51. **What is forbidden in the ſecond Commandment ?**

A. **The ſecond Commandment forbiddeth the Worſhipping of God by Images, or any other way, not appointed in his word.**

Queſt. 52. **What are the Reaſons annexed to the ſecond Commandment ?**

A. **The Reaſons annexed to the ſecond Commandment are, Gods Sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and his zeal he hath to his own Worſhip ?**

Q. 1. *What is the Sin eſpecially forbidden in the ſecond Commandment ?*

*A.* The Sin here forbidden is the corruption of God's Worſhip, by making any ſimilitude of any Perſon in the Godhead, and performing Divine Worſhip before it, or to it, *Exod.* 32. 8. *They have turned aſide quickly out of the way which I commanded them : they have made them a molten calf, and have worſhipped, and have ſacrificed thereunto, and ſaid, theſe be thy Gods, O Iſrael, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* Deut. 4. 15, 16. *Take ye therefore good heed unto your ſelves, ( for ye ſaw no manner of ſimilitude on the day that the Lord ſpake unto you in Horeb, out of the midſt of the fire ; ) leſt ye corrupt your ſelves, and make you a graven image, the ſimilitude of any figure, the likeneſs of male or female.*

Q. 2. *What is the ſecond Sin forbidden in this Commandment ?*

*A.* The ſecond Sin againſt this Commandment is Will-worſhip, conſiſting in the addition of mans inventions to the Worſhip of God as a part thereof, *Matth.* 15. 9. *But in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* Col. 2.20,21,22,23. *Wherefore if ye be dead with Chriſt from the rudiments of the world ; why, as though living in the world, are ye ſubject to ordinances, ( Touch not, taſte not, handle not : Which all are to periſh with the uſing ) after the commandments and doctrines of men : which things have indeed a ſhew of wiſdom in will-worſhip and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the ſatisfying of the fleſh.*

Q. 3. *But if thoſe additions be for the more decent worſhipping of God, is it not allowed by* 1 Cor. 14. 40. Let all things be done decently and in order ?

*A.* No ; That Scripture commands that Gods Inſtitutions be regularly and decently performed, but not that we invent Ceremonies that are ſymbolical, to make them more decent than Chriſt left them.

Q. 4. *Why is the ſecond Commandment left out in all the publick Offices of the Popiſh Church ?*

*A.* Becauſe it expreſly condemns their Idolatrous Images, kneeling, at the Sacrament, Prayers to Saints, and all their Superſtitious Croſſes, Surplices, Chriſme, as ſinful.

Q. 5. *Do they not clear themſelves from Idolatry, by telling us they only worſhip God before, or by them, but not the Images themſelves ?*

*A.* No, they do not ; for the uſe of Images in Gods Worſhip is expreſly condemned in this Commandment ; and if this would excuſe the Papiſts, it had alſo excuſed the *Iſraelites* in worſhipping the Calf. *Exod.* 32. 4. *---And they ſaid, theſe be thy Gods, O Iſrael, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

Q. 6. *What's the firſt Reaſon annexed to the ſecond Cammandment ?*

*A.* The firſt Reaſon annexed is Gods Sovereignty, *I the Lord*; which ſhews that it belongs to God only in inſtiture his own Worſhip, and make it effectul; and therefore to do that in his Worſhip which he never commanded, is ſinful and dangerous; *Jer.* 7. 31. *And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, to burn their ſons and their daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not, neither, came it into my heart.*

Q. 7. *What's the ſecond Reaſon annexed to the ſecond Commandment?*

*A.* The ſecond Reaſon is Gods Propriety in us! he is our God, and we belong to him; and therefore to corrupt his Worſhip, greatly aggravates our Sin, *Hoſ.* 9. 1. *Rejoyce not, O Iſrael, for joy as other people; for thou haſt gone a whoring from thy God,* &c.

Q. 8. *What's the third Reaſon annexed to the ſecond Commandment?*

*A.* The jealouſie of God over his Worſhip and Worſhippers; ſo that this ſin of corrupting his Worſhip, will dreadfully incenſe his wrath, as it did, *Levit.* 10. 1, 2. *And Nadab and Abihu the ſons of Aaron, took either of them his cenſer, and put fire thereon, and offered ſtrange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they dyed before the Lord.*

Q. 9. *What's the firſt Inſtruction from the ſecond Commandment?*

*A.* That it is an hainous ſin to neglect the Worſhip of God, in that manner he hath appointed us to Worſhip him, as in Prayer, *Jer.* 10. 25. *Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name.* ---Hearing the Word, *Prov.* 28. 9. *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law even his prayer ſhall be abomination.*

Q. 10. *What's the ſecond Inſtruction from the ſecond Commandment?*

*A.* That thoſe that ſuffer for endeavouring to preſerve the purity of Gods Ordinances, and nonconformity to the contrary injunctions of men, have a good warrant to bear them out in all ſuch Sufferings; *Deut.* 4. 2. *Ye ſhall not add unto the word which I command you, neither ſhall you diminiſh ought from it, that ye may keep the Commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you,* &c.

Q. 11. *What's the third Inſtruction from the ſecond Commandment?*

*A.* That it is higly ſinful and dangerous to innovate and preſcribe by Humane Authority, ſuch ſymbolical Rites in the Worſhip of God, as he never appointed or allowed in his Word, *Matth.* 15. 9. *But in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

Q. 12. *What's the fourth Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* Hence we learn how much Parents and Children are obliged to worſhip God conſtantly, ſpiritually, and agreeably to his Will revealed in his Word, otherwiſe the jealouſie of God will viſit them both in the way of Judgment. For as Obedience entails a Bleſſing, ſo Diſobedience entails a Curſe on Poſterity, *Exod.* 34. 14. *For thou ſhalt worſhip no other God; for the Lord, whoſe name is jealous, is a jealous God.*

## *Of the third Commandment.*

Queſt. 53. **Which is the third Commandment?**

A. **The third Commandment is,** [Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs, that taketh his Name in vain.]

Queſt. 54. **What is required in the third Commandment?**

A. **The third Commandment requireth the holy and reverend uſe of Gods Names, Titles, Attributes, Ordinances, Word and Works.**

Queſt 55. **What is forbidden in the third Commandment?**

A. **The third Commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abuſing of any thing, whereby God maketh himſelf known.**

Queſt. 56. **What is the Reaſon annexed to the Third Commandment?**

A. **The Reaſon annexed to the third Commandment is, that however the breakers of this Commandment may eſcape puniſhment from men, yet the Lord our God will not ſuffer them to eſcape his Righteous Judgment.**

Q. 1. *How doth this Commandment differ from the firſt and ſecond?*

*A.* The firſt hath reſpect to the object of Worſhip, forbidding us to worſhip any other but God. The ſecond reſpects the means of Worſhip, forbidding us to worſhip God by any other means than what he hath preſcribed. But the third reſpects the manner of his Worſhip, forbidding all careleſs or profane uſe of his Name, and commanding an holy reverence from us in all our ſolemn addreſſes to him, or ordinary mention of his Name. *Mal* 1. 6. *A ſon honoureth his father, and a ſervant his Maſter: If I then be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a maſter, where is my fear? ſaith the Lord of hoſts unto you, O Prieſts, that deſpiſe my name: And ye ſay, wherein have we deſpiſed thy name?*

Q. 2. *What is the firſt thing eſpecially required in the third Commandment?*

*A.* It requires the moſt aweful and reverential frame of our hearts in all our approaches to God? *Pſal.* 89. 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of the ſaints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.* And in his Worſhip, *Joh.* 4. 24. *God is a ſpirit; and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth.*

Q. 3. *What's the ſecond thing required in this Commandment?*

*A.* It requires truth in our witneſs-bearing, as knowing God ſeeth our heartes, and is witneſs to all that we think or ſpeak; *Zech.* 5. 4. *I will bring it forth, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of the thief, and into the houſe of him that ſweareth falſly by my name,* &c.

Q. 4. *What's the third thing required in this Commandment?*

*A.* That in all our Appeals to God in ſecret or doubtful matters, we be ſure that the Appeal be neceſſary, aweful and true: *Jer* 17. 16. *As for me, I have not haſtened from being a paſtour to follow thee, neither have I deſired the woful day, thou knoweſt: that which came out of my lips was right before thee.* Pſal. 139. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And ſee if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlaſting.*

Q. 5. *What doth this Commandment eſpecially forbid?*

*A.* It forbids and condemns all profane Oaths as moſt injurious to the Name of God. *Mat.* 5. 34, 37. ---*Swear not at all, neither by heaven for it is Gods throne,* &c. *but let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay,; for whatſoever is more than theſe, cometh of evil.*

Q. 6. *What is the danger of profane or falſe Swearing!*

*A.* Such are reckoned Enemies to God, *Pſal.* 139. 20. ---*Thine enemies take thy name in vain.* The Curſe of God enters into ſuch Families, *Zech.* 5. 4. *I will bring it forth, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of the chief, and into the houſe of him that ſweareth falſly by my name,* &c. And the Lord will not hold them guiltleſs.

Q. 7. *What elſe is forbidden in this Commandment?*

*A.* It forbids and condemns all heedleſs, wandering, and drowſie performance of Gods Worſhip: *Iſa.* 29. 13, 14. *Wherefore the Lord ſaid, foraſmuch as this people drew near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work amongſt this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wiſdom of their wiſe men ſhall periſh, and the underſtanding of their prudent men ſhall be hid.* And 2 *Kings* 10. 31. *But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Iſrael, with all his heart: for he departed not from the ſins of Jeroboam, which made Iſrael to ſin?*

Q. 8. *What other ſin is forbidden in this Command?*

*A.* It forbids all light and irreverent uſe of the Scriptures, eſpecially in our jeſts, or by way of ſcoffing. *Jer.* 17. 15. *Behold, they ſay unto me, where is the word of the Lord? let it come now,* Jer. 6. 10. ---*Behold the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach: they have no delight in it.*

Q. 9. *By what Argument doth God enforce the third Commandment on men?*

*A.* That the breakers of this Command ſhall ſurely be puniſhed by the Lord, either in this life, *Deut.* 28. 58, 59. *If thou wilt not obſerve to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book, that thou mayſt fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God: Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy ſeed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and ſore ſickneſs, and of long continuance:* Or in that to come, *Rom.* 2. 5. *But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God:* Except they repent and reform.

Q. 10. *What's the firſt Inſtruction from the third Commandment?*

*A.* That great and infinite is the Patience of God in forbearing provoking Sinners ſo long as he doth; *Rom.* 9. 22. *What if God willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction?*

Q. 11. *What's the ſecond Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That God is to be juſtified in the ſevereſt of his Judgments, by which at any time he manifeſts his diſpleaſure againſt the profaneneſs of the World. *Hoſ.* 4. 1, 2, 3. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Iſrael: for the Lord hath a controverſie with the inhabitants of the land, becauſe there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore ſhall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh, with the beaſts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, yea the fiſhes of the ſea alſo ſhall be taken away.*

Q. 12. *What's the third Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That God takes ſpecial notice of, and greatly delighteth in them that fear and reverence his Name; *Iſa.* 66. 5. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word: Your brethren that hated you, that caſt you out for my names ſake, ſaid, let the Lord be glorified; but he ſhall appear to your joy, and they ſhall be aſhamed.* Mal. 3. 16. ---*And a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.*

Q. 13. *What's the laſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* That thoſe Parents have much to anſwer for, that by their Examples teach, or by their Negligence encourage their Children to profane Gods Name. *Jer.* 5. 7. *How ſhall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forſaken me, and ſworn by them that are no Gods,* &c.

## *Of the Sabbath.*

Queſt 57. **Which is the fourth Commandment?**

A. **The fourth Commandment is,** [Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy: Six days ſhalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the ſeventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou ſhalt not do any work, thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, thy Man-ſervant, nor thy Maid-ſervant, nor thy Cattle, nor thy Stranger which is within thy Gates: For in ſix dayes the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and reſted the ſeventh day, wherefore the Lord bleſſed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.]

Queſt. 58. **What is required in the fourth Commandment?**

A. **The fourth Commandment requireth the keeping holy to God, ſuch ſet time as he hath appointed in his Word, expreſly one whole day in ſeven, to be an holy Sabbath unto the Lord.**

Queſt 59. **Which day of the ſeven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?**

A. **From the beginning of the World to the Reſurrection of Chriſt, God hath appointed the ſeventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the firſt day of the week ever ſince, to continue to the end of the World, which is the Chriſtian Sabbath.**

Q. 1. *What ſpecial marks of honour hath God ſet upon this fourth Commandment?*

*A.* God hath ſet four peculiar marks of honour on it.

(1.) It is the largeſt of all the Commands.

(2.) It hath a ſolemn Memento prefixed to it.

(3.) It is delivered both poſitively and negatively, which the reſt are not. And,

(4.) It is enforced with more Arguments to ſtrengthen the Command on us, than any other.

Q. 2. *Why will God have a Sabbath obſerved on Earth?*

*A.* God will have a Sabbath on Earth, to give us therein an Emblem of that Eternal Sabbath in Heaven, wherein his people ſhall be ſerving him and praiſing him without interruption, or mixture of any other buſineſs throughout Eternity;

*Heb.* 4. 9. *There remaineth therefore a reſt to the people of God.*

Q. 3. *For what other Reaſons will God have a Sabbath?*

*A.* He will have a Sabbath for the honour of his name, *Iſa.* 58. 13 *If thou turn away thy foot from the ſabbath, from doing thy pleaſure on my holy day, and call the ſabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and ſhalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleaſure, nor ſpeaking thine own words.* For the good of Mens Souls; *Mark* 2. 27. *And he ſaid unto them, the ſabbath was made for man, not man for the ſabbath.* And in mercy to the Bodies of Men and Beaſts.

Q. 4. *Is this Commandment Moral and Perpetual, or Ceremonial and Temporary?*

*A.* It is, and muſt needs be Moral, and not Ceremonial; becauſe all the Reaſons that enforce it, are perpetual, and the Sabbath continued, when the Ceremonial Law ceaſed, and was vaniſhed; *Mat.* 24. 20. *But pray ye, that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the ſabbath day.*

Q. 5. *What day of the ſeven is the Chriſtian Sabbath?*

*A.* The firſt day of the Week is our Sabbath, ſince the Reſurrection of Chriſt. This is the day which was foretold to be our Sabbath; *Pſal.* 118. 24. *This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoyce and be glad in it.* The Lord hath marked it for himſelf by ſetting his own Name on it; *Rev.* 1. 10. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.* And the Apoſtles and Primitive Church conſtantly ſet it apart to Religious uſes and ends; *Acts* 20. 7. *And upon the firſt day of the week, when the diſciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them,* &c. 1 Cor. 16. 2. *Upon the firſt day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in ſtore, as God hath proſpered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

Q. 6. *When doth the Chriſtian Sabbath begin?*

*A.* It appears that this day is not to be reckoned from evening to evening, but from morning to morning; becauſe the Chriſtian Sabbath muſt begin, when the Jewiſh Sabbath ended, but that ended towards the morning; *Mat.* 28. 1. *In the end of the ſabbath, as it began to dawn, towards the firſt day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary to ſee the ſepulchre.*

Q. 7. *What is the ground of changing the day?*

*A.* The ſolemn commemoration of our Redemption by the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead, is the ground of tranſlating the Sabbath from the ſeventh to the firſt day of the Week; *Pſal.* 118. 24. *This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoyce, and be glad in it.* Mark 16. 9. *Now when Jeſus was riſen early the firſt day of the week, he appeared firſt to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had caſt ſeven devils.*

Q. 8. *Is it the whole day, or only ſome hours of the day that are ſet apart for God?*

*A.* Not a part, but the whole day is the Lords; and it is as dangerous to halve it with God in point of time, as it was for *Annanias* and *Sapphira* to halve their dedicated Goods, and bring in but a part. *Remember that thou keep holy the ſabbath day,* is the Command.

Q. 9 *Is there any other day holy beſides this?*

*A.* No day but this is holy by Inſtitution of the Lord; yet days of Humiliation and Thankſgiving may be lawfully ſet apart by men on a Call of Providence; but Popiſh Holy dayes are not warrantable, nor to be obſerved; *Gal.* 4. 10. *Ye obſerve dayes, and months, and times, and years.*

Q. 10. *But ſeeing every day ſhould be a Sabbath to a Chriſtian, what needs any other ſet time?*

*A.* Though Chriſtians muſt walk every day with God, yet every day cannot be a Sabbath, becauſe God calls us to other Duties on thoſe dayes, but will have this to be a ſolemn and entire day to himſelf.

Q. 11. *But if a man ſcruple the change of the Sabbath, may he not keep both dayes weekly?*

*A.* No; for then by doing more than God requires, he breaks a plain Command, *Six days ſhalt thou labour.*

Q. 12. *At what time ſhould Chriſtians be up, and at their Duties on the Lords day?*

*A.* As early in the morning as their ſtrength will permit, to prepare by private for publick Duties; yet the publick are not to be entrenched on by private Duties; *Acts* 10. 33. ---*Now therefore are we all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.*

### *Of the Sabbath.*

Queſt. 60. **HOw is the Sabbath to be Sanctified?**

A. **The Sabbath is to be Sanctified by an holy reſting all that day, even from ſuch worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and ſpending the whole time in the publick and private exerciſes of Gods Worſhip, except ſo much as is to be taken up in the works of neceſſity and mercy.**

Queſt. 61. **What are the Sins forbidden in the fourth Commandment?**

A. **The fourth Commandment forbiddeth the omiſſion or careleſs performance of the Duties required, and the profaning the day by Idleneſs, or doing that which is in it ſelf ſinful, or by unneceſſary thoughts, words or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.**

Queſt. 62 **What are the Reaſons annexed to the fourth Commandment?**

A. **The Reaſons annexed to the fourth Commandment are, Gods allowing us ſix dayes of the week for our own employment, his challenging a ſpecial propriety in the ſeventh, his own example, and his bleſſing the Sabbath day.**

Q. 1. *What is the Reſt which God requires on the Sabbath?*

*A.* It is not a meer natural or civil, but an holy reſt, reſembling the reſt in Heaven, wherein the Mind is moſt active and buſie in the work of God, though the Body be at reſt, and the Spirit not wearied with its work; *Rev.* 4. 8. *And the four beaſts had each of them ſix wings about him, and they were full of eyes within, and they reſt not day and night, ſaying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

Q. 2. *May not any works of our civil Calling be ordinarily done on that day?*

*A.* No; it is ſinful to put our hands ordinarly to our Callings on that day, and God uſually puniſhes it; *Neh.* 13. 15, 16, 17, 18. *In thoſe days ſaw I in Judah, ſome treading wine-preſſes on the ſabbath, and bringing in ſheaves, and lading aſſes, as alſo wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jeruſalem on the ſabbath day; and I* *teſtified againſt them in the day wherein they ſold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre alſo therein, which brought fiſh and all manner of ware, and ſold on the ſabbath, unto the children of Judah, and in Jeruſalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and ſaid unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the ſabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Iſrael by profaning the ſabbath.*

Q. 3. *May we not refreſh our Bodies by Recreations, or our Minds by thoughts of Earthly Buſineſs or Diſcourſes on that day?*

*A.* Recreations of the Body which are lawful on other days, are ſinful on this day; and all the Recreations of the Mind allowed on this day, are Spiritual and Heavenly; *Iſa.* 58. 13, 14. *If thou turn away thy foot from the ſabbath, from doing thy pleaſure on my holy day, and call the ſabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and ſhalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleaſure, nor ſpeaking thine own words: Then ſhalt thou delight thy ſelf in the Lord, and I will cauſe thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it.*

Q. 4. *What works may lawfully be done on that day?*

*A.* Chriſts example warrants works of neceſſity, and works of mercy, but no other, *Mat.* 12. 3, 4. *But he ſaid unto them, have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him, How he entered into the houſe of God, and did eat the ſhew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the prieſts.* And *ver.* 7. *But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice,* &c.

Q. 5. *What are the holy Duties of the Sabbath?*

*A.* The Publick Worſhip of God in reading and hearing the Word Preached; *Iſa.* 66. 23. *And it ſhall come to paſs that from one new moon to another, and from one ſabbath to another, ſhall all fleſh come to worſhip before me, ſaith the Lord.* Luke 4. 16. ---*And as his cuſtom was, he went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath day, and ſtood up for to read.* And Prayer; *Acts* 16. 13, 14. *And on the ſabbath day we went out of the city by a river ſide, where prayer was wont to be made,* &c. And receiving the Sacrament; *Acts* 20. 7. *And upon the firſt day of the week, when the diſciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them,* &c.

Q. 6. *Are private Duties in our Families required, as well as publick on the Sabbath?*

*A.* Yes; it is not enough to ſanctifie the Sabbath in publick Ordinances, but God requires it to be ſanctified in Family and private Duties; *Lev.* 23. 3. ---*But the ſeventh day is the ſabbath of reſt, an holy convocation, ye ſhall do no work therein: it is the ſabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.*

Q. 7. *With what frame of Spirit are all Sabbath duties, both publick and private to be performed?*

*A.* They are to be performed with Spiritual delight; *Iſa.* 58. 13. *If thou turn away thy foot from the ſabbath, from doing thy pleaſure on my holy day, and call the ſabbath a delight,* &c. And all grudging at, and wearineſs of Spiritual exerciſes is a ſin forbidden; *Mal.* 1. 13. *Ye ſaid alſo, behold what a wearineſs is it, and ye have ſnuffed at it ſaith the Lord of hoſts, and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the ſick: thus ye brought an offering; ſhould I accept this of your hand ſaith the Lord?* Amos 8. 5. *When will the new moon be gone that we may ſell corn? and the ſabbath that we may ſet forth wheat?* &c.

Q. 8. *What is the firſt Reaſon annexed to this Command?*

*A.* The firſt Reaſon is the ſufficient and large allowance of time God hath given us for our civil Callings and earthly buſineſs. Six days in the week is a large allowance.

Q. 9. *What is the ſecond Reaſon annexed to this fourth Command?*

*A.* The ſecond Reaſon is God's ſanctifying and ſeparating this day by a ſpecial Command and Inſtitution for his ſervice; ſo that to profane this time is to ſin againſt an expreſs Divine Statute.

Q. 10. *What's the third Reaſon annexed to this Command?*

*A.* The third Reaſon is God's own Example, who reſted the ſeventh day from all his works, and bleſſed this day, by vertue of which Bleſſing we are encouraged to ſanctifie it.

Q. 11. *Is it not enough to ſanctifie this day in our own perſons?*

*A.* No; if God hath put any under our Authority, their profaning the Sabbath will become our ſin, though we be never ſo ſtrict in the obſervation of it our ſelves.

Q. 12. *May we continue our civil Employments to the laſt moment of our common time?*

*A.* Except Neceſſity or Mercy urge us, we ought to break off before, and allow ſome time to prepare for the Sabbath; *Luke* 23. 54. *And that day was the preparation, and the ſabbath drew on.*

Q. 13. *What is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* That we have all great cauſe to be humbled for our Sabbath Tranſgreſſions, either in our unpreparedneſs for it, our want of delight and ſpirituality in it, or the due government of our Families, as God requires.

Q. 14. *What is the ſecond Inference from hence?*

*A.* That Chriſtians on the Sabbath day have a fair occaſion and help to reallize to themſelves the Heavenly ſtate, in which they are to live abſtract from the World, and God is to be all in all to them.

### *Of the fifth Commandment.*

Queſt. 63. **Which is the fifth Commandment?**

A. **The fifth Commandment is,** [Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.]

Q. 64. **What is required in the fifth Commandment?**

A. **The fifth Commandment requireth the preſerving the Honour, and performing the Duties belonging to every one in their ſeveral places and relations, as ſuperiors, inferiors, or equals.**

Queſt. 65. **What is forbidden in the fifth Commandment?**

A. **The fifth Commandment forbiddet the neglecting of, or doing any thing again the honour and duty which belongeth to e very one in their ſeveral places and relation**

Queſt. 66. **What is the Reaſon annexe to the fifth Commandment?**

A. **The Reaſon annexed to the fifth Com mandment is, a promiſe of long life and pro ſperit**

**ſperity (as far as it ſhall ſerve for Gods glory, and their own good) to all ſuch as keep this Commandment.**

Q. 1. *What Relatives are directly and more eſpecially concerned in this fifth Commandment ?*

*A.* All Superiours and Inferiours are concerned in it. Eſpecially (1) Political Fathers and their Children; that is, Kings and Subjects: *Mark* 11. 10. *Bleſſed be the kingdom of our father David*, &c. (2.) Spiritual Fathers and their Children; that is, Miniſters and their People: 1 *Cor.* 4 15. *For though you have ten thouſand inſtructers in Chriſt, yet have ye not many fathers, for in Chriſt Jeſus I have begotten you through the goſpel.* (3.) Natural Parents and their Children; *Epheſ.* 6. 1. *Children obey your parents in the Lord.* (4.) All Civil Superiours and Inferiours, as Husbands and Wives, Maſters and Servants; *Epheſ.* 5. 22.. *Wives ſubmit your ſelves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.* And *Epheſ.* 6. 5. *Servants be obedient to them are your maſters accordings to the fleſh*, &c.

Q. 2. *What is the Duty of Political Fathers or Magiſtrates, to their Political Children or Subjects ?*

*A.* It is to rule and govern the people over whom God hath ſet them with Wiſdom; 2 *Chron.* 1. 10. *Give me now wiſdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people.* Juſtice, 2 *Chron.* 16. 5. 6, 7. *And he ſet judges in the land, throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city. And he ſaid to the judges, Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it*, &c. And Piety, 2 *Sam.* 23. 3. ---*He that ruleth over men muſt be juſt, ruling in the fear of God.* Carefully providing for their Souls in every place of their dominion; 2 *Chron.* 17. 9. *And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.* And for their common outward peace and ſafety? 2 *Chron.* 17. 12.. *And Jehoſhaphat waxed great exceedingly, and he built in Judah caſtles and cities of ſtore.*

Q. 3. *What are the Duties of Subjects to their Rulers ?*

*A.* It is to pray for them: 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. *I exhort therefore, that firſt of all ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: For kings, and for all that are in authority*, &c. To honour them, 1 *Pet.* 2. 17. ---*Fear God, honour the King.* To obey their juſt Laws, *Rom.* 13. 1. *Let every ſoul be ſubject unto the higher powers*, &c. And to pay them the Tribute that is due to them, *Rom.* 13. 7. *Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom*, &c.

Q. 4. *What are the Duties of Miniſters to their people. ?*

*A.* Their Duty is, (1) To feed their flock conſtantly with wholeſom food, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. *Preach the word, be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, rebuke, reprove, exhort, with all long-ſuffering and doctrine.* (2.) To be full of bowels of tender Affection to them, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 7, 8. *But we were gentle, among you, even as a nurſe cheriſheth her children: So being affectionately deſirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Goſpel of God only, but alſo our own ſouls, becauſe ye were dear unto us*, (3.) To pray for them, *Eph* 1. 15, 16. *Wherefore I alſo, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jeſus, and love unto all the ſaints, Ceaſe not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.* (4.) To watch over them, 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the overſight thereof not by conſtraint, but willingly*, &c. And (5.) To walk as an Example of Godlineſs before them, *Tit.* 2. 7. *In all things ſhewing thy ſelf a pattern of good works*, &c. All which Duties require their reſidence among them, 1 *Pet.* 5. 2 *Feed the flock of God which is among you*, &c.

Q. 5. *What are the peoples Duties towards their Miniſters ?*

*A.* Their Duty, is, (1.) To eſteem and love them dearly for their works ſake, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 12, 13. *And we beſeech you, Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord and admoniſh you; and to eſteem them very highly in love for their works ſake.* (2.) To attend on the Word preached by them, as the Word of God, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. *For this cauſe alſo thank we God without ceaſing, becauſe when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God.* (3) To pray for them and the ſucceſs of their labours, *Heb.* 13. 18. *Pray for us*, &c. (4.) Not to receive light and malicious reports againſt them. 1 *Tim.* 5. 19. *Againſt an elder receive not an accuſation but before two or three witneſſes.* (5.) To make a competent and comfortable proviſion for them, *Gal.* 6. 6. *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things.*

Q. 6. *What are the Duties of Natural Parents to their Children ?*

*A.* It is their Duty, (1.) To be tenderly, but not fondly affectionate to, and tender over them, *Iſa.* 40. 15. *Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb?* (2) To educate them for God, *Epheſ.* 6. 4. *And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* (3.) To reſtrain their Sins by Correction, *Prov.* 29. 15. *The rod and reproof give wiſdom, but a child left to himſelf, bringeth his mother to ſhame.* (4.) To provide for their livelyhood, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. *But if any provide not for his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an infidel.* (5.) To pray dayly for them, *Job* 1. 5. *And it was ſo when the days of their feaſting were gone about, that Job ſent and ſanctified them, and roſe up early in the Morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all: For Job ſaid, it may be that my ſons have ſinned, and curſed God in their hearts: Thus did Job continually.* (6.) To encourage them with endearing language in the way of Godlineſs, *Prov.* 31. 1, 2, 3. *The words of King* Lemuel, *the propheſie that his mother taught him. What, my ſon! and what the ſon of my womb! and what the ſon of my vows! Give not thy ſtrength unto women, nor thy wayes to that which deſtroyeth Kings.*

Q. 7. *What are the Duties of Children to Parents ?*

*A.* Their Duty is, (1.) To obey them only in the Lord, *Eph.* 6. 1. *Children obey your parents in the Lord.* (2.) To reverence and honour them, *Levit.* 19. 3. *Ye ſhall fear every man his mother and his father*, &c. (3) To ſubmit to their Reproofs and Corrections, *Heb.* 12. 9. *Furthermore we have had fathers of our fleſh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence.* (4.) To provide for them, if they be poor and needy, and we have ability, *Gen.* 47. 12. *And Joſeph nouriſhed his father and his brethren,*

*thren, and all his fathers houſhold with bread, according to their families.*

Q. 8. *What ſhall Children do, when Parents abuſe their Authority, by forbidding Duty or commanding Sin?*

*A.* In ſuch caſes Children are to obey God rather than their Parents, *Acts* 4. 19. *But Peter and John anſwered, and ſaid unto them, Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye.* But yet to manage their refuſals of Obedience with all Meekneſs and Humility.

Q. 9. *What is the firſt duty of Husbands to their Wives?*

*A.* The firſt Duty, on which all other Duties depend, is cohabitation with them, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. *Likewiſe ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge,* &c. And nothing can make this Duty void, but a lawful divorce for Adultery, *Matth.* 5. 31, 32. ---*But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, ſaving for the cauſe of fornication, cauſeth her to commit adultery,* &c.

Q. 10. *What's the Husbands ſecond Duty to his Wife?*

*A.* True and hearty love to Soul and Body, *Eph.* 5. 25. *Husbands love your wives, even as Chriſt alſo loved the church, and gave himſelf for it.* Evidencing it ſelf in careful proviſion for them. 2 *Cor.* 7. 33. *But he that is married, careth for the things of the world, how he may pleaſe his wife.* But eſpecially to their Souls in winning them to Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 7. 16. ---*Or how knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy wife?* And building them up in Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. *Likewiſe, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker veſſel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindred.*

Q. 11. *What are the Duties of Wives to their Husbands?*

*A.* 'Tis their Duty, (1.) To be in ſubjection to their own Husbands; *Eph.* 5. 22, 23. *VVives ſubmit your ſelves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord: For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Chriſt is the head of the Church.* (2.) To reverence them; *Eph.* 5. 33. ---*And the wife ſee that ſhe reverence her husband.* (3.) To expreſs their Reverence in ſuitable Words and Actions; 1 *Pet.* 3. 6. *Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him, Lord,* &c. (4.) To be faithful to them; *Prov.* 31. 12. *She will do him good and not evil, all the dayes of her life.* (5.) To adorn their Relation with meekneſs and quietneſs of Spirit; 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. *But let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is in the ſight of God of great price.*

Q. 12. *What are the Duties of Servants to their Maſters?*

*A.* 'Tis their Duty, (1.) To be faithful in all things committed to their charge; *Tit.* 2. 10. *Not purloining, but ſhewing all good fidelity,* &c. (2.) To honour them in all reſpectful Words and Carriages; 1 *Tim.* 6. 1. *Let as many ſervants as are under the yoke, count their own maſters worthy of all honour,* &c. (3.) To bear patiently their rebukes; 1 *Pet.* 2. 18, 19. *Servants, be ſubject to your maſters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conſcience toward God, endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully.*

Q. 13. *What is the Firſt Duty of Maſters to their Servants?*

*A.* Their firſt Duty is to rule over them with gentleneſs, and not with terrour and rigour; *Eph.* 6. 9. *And ye maſters, do the ſame things unto them, forbearing threatning: Knowing that your maſter alſo is in heaven, neither is there reſpect of perſons with him.*

Q. 14. *What's the ſecond Duty of Maſters to their Servants?*

*A.* To pay them their Wages fully and without delay; *Deut.* 24. 14, 15. *Thou ſhalt not oppreſs an hired ſervant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy ſtrangers that are in thy land within thy gates. At his day thou ſhalt give him his hire, neither ſhall the ſun go down upon it, for he is poor, and ſetteth his heart upon it; leaſt he cry againſt thee unto the Lord, and it be ſin unto thee.* And to provide Food for them convenient; *Prov.* 27. 27. *And thou ſhalt have goats-milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy houſhold, and for the maintenance for thy Maidens.*

Q. 15. *What's the third Duty of Maſters to their Servants?*

*A.* The third and principal Duty is to engage them as much as in them lies, to the wayes of God, and Duties of Religion, as *Abraham* did, *Gen.* 18. 19. *For I know him that he will command his children, and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord,* &c. And *Joſhua,* Joſh. 24. 15. ---*But as for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.*

### *Of the ſixth Commandment.*

Queſt. 67. **Which is the ſixth Commandment?**

A. **The ſixth Commandment is,** [Thou ſhalt not kill.]

Queſt. 68. **What is required in the ſixth Commandment?**

A. **The ſixth Commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preſerve our own life, and the life of others.**

Queſt. 69. **What is forbidden in the ſixth Commandment?**

A. **The ſixth Commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our Neighbour unjuſtly, or whatſoever tendeth thereunto.**

Q. 1. *What is the natural order of theſe Commandments in the ſecond Table?*

*A.* In theſe Commands God begins with the neareſt concern of Man, which is Life, *Job* 2. 4. ---*Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath, will he giv for his life.* Next to that his Command guards his neareſt Relative, from whom the beſt outward comfort is to riſe, his Wife, *Mark* 10. 8. *And they twain ſhall be one fleſh,* &c. After that his good Name, which is very precious to him, *Eccleſ.* 7. 1. *A good name is better than precious oyntment* And then his Goods, which ſupport his life, *Iſa.* 3. 1. *For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hoſts, doth take away from Jeruſalem, and from Judah, the ſtay and the ſtaff, the whole ſtay of bread, and the whole ſtay of water.*

Q. 2. *How far doth this Command extend it ſelf?*

*A.* It prohibits all Cruelty, and commands all Help, Care, and Pity, ſo far as Mens hearts and hands can go, for the relief and preſervation of others, *Pſal.* 119. 96. ---*But thy commandment exceeding broad.*

Q. 3. *Doth this Command reſpect only the outward action, or alſo the inward paſſion of the Soul?*

*A.* It reſpects and bridles the inward Paſſion of the Soul, as well as outward Actions; as Hatred, 1 *John* 3. 15. *Whoſoever hateth his brother is a murderer*, &c. And cauſleſs Anger, *Matth.* 5. 22. *But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment*, &c.

Q. 4. *Doth this Command only reſpect the lives of others?*

*A.* No, it primarily reſpects our own lives, and forbids us all things that tend to the ſhortening and ruin of them, *Eph.* 5. 29. *For no man ever yet hated his own fleſh, but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it, even as the Lord the church.*

Q. 5. *How many ways may men ſin againſt this Command, with reſpect to their own lives?*

*A.* A Man ſinneth againſt his own Life, not only by deſtroying himſelf, as the Jaylour would have done. *Acts* 16. 27. *And the keeper of the priſon awaking out of his ſleep, and ſeeing the priſon doors open, he drew out his ſword, and would have killed himſelf ſuppoſing that the priſoners had been fled*; But by refuſing Food or Phyſick to preſerve Life, or macerating our Bodies with exceſſive Sorrows, 2 *Cor.* 7. 10. ---*But the ſorrow of the world worketh death, or envy at others felicity*: Prov. 14. 30. ---*But envy the rottenneſs of the bones.*

Q. 6. *How are men guilty of murther with reſpect to others?*

*A.* Murther with reſpect to others, may be either with relation to their Bodies; *Numb.* 35. 30. *Whoſo killeth, any perſon, the murtherer ſhall be put to death*, &c. Or to their Souls, which is the moſt henious murder in the World? *Ezek.* 3. 18. *When I ſay unto the wicked, thou ſhalt ſurely dye, and thou giveſt him not warning, nor ſpeaketh to warn the wicked from his way to ſave his life; the ſame wicked man ſhall dye in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.*

Q. 7. *Is all deſtruction of anothers Life, murder in the account of God?*

*A.* No, it is not, if the Life of a Perſon be taken away in the courſe of Juſtice, *Gen.* 9. 6. *Whoſo ſheddeth mans blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed.* Or in a juſt and neceſſary War, *Judges* 5. 23. *Curſe ye Meroz (ſaid the Angel of the Lord) curſe ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; becauſe they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord againſt the mighty.* Or by pure Accident, *Deut.* 19. 5. *As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a ſtroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head ſlippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour that he dye, he ſhall flee unto one of thoſe cities, and live.* Or in ſelf defence, Exod. 22. 2. *If a thief be found breaking up and be ſmitten that he dye, there ſhall no blood be ſhed for him.*

Q. 8. *Is there no other way of breaking this Command?*

*A.* Yes, there is: Innocents may be murdered under the forms and ſolemnities both of Juſtice and Religion. So *Naboth* was murdered by *Jezebel.* 1 Kings 21. 12. 13. *They proclaimed a faſt, and ſet Naboth on high among the people. And there came in two men children of Belial, and ſat before him: And the men of Belial witneſſed againſt him, even againſt Naboth, in the preſence of the people ſaying, Naboth did blaſpheme God and the King. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and ſtoned him with ſtones that he dyed.* And the Martyrs by bloody Papiſts. And this ſtrongly proves a day of Judgment. *Eccleſ.* 3. 16, 17. *And moreover, I ſaw under the ſun the place of Judgment, that wickedneſs was there; and the place of rightouſneſs, that iniquity was there. I ſaid in mine heart, God ſhall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time there for every purpoſe, and for every work.*

Q. 9. *Are Duels forbidden in this Commandment;*

*A.* Yes, they are, for whatever Point of Honour be touched, or whatever Provocation be given, we are not to he our own avengers; *Rom.* 12. 19. *Dealy beloved, avenge not your ſelves*, &c.

Q. 10. *What's the firſt Inference hence?*

*A.* That we have great cauſe to bleſs God for his protecting Law, and for Humane Laws grounded upon his Law for the protection of our Lives; Rom. 13. 4. ---*For he is the miniſter of God, a revenger to execute wrath, upon him that doth evil.*

Q. 11. *What's the ſecond Inference hence?*

*A.* That all that are guilty of this Sin, have great cauſe to be humbled and afflicted: For it's a crying Sin, *Gen.* 4. 10. --- *The voice of thy brothers blood cryeth unto me from the ground.* Yet not to deſpair of Mercy upon true Repentance. *Manaſſeth* ſhed innocent blood, and yet was pardoned upon Repentance, 2 *Kin.* 21. 16. *Moreover Manaſſeth ſhed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jeruſalem from one end to another*, &c.

Q. 12. *What's the third Inference hence?*

*A.* Let all Men watch againſt Pride, Paſſion, Malice and Revenge, the Sin of the Heart, from which this horrid Sin proceeds, *Matth.* 15. 18, 19. ---*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders*, &c.

## *Of the ſeventh Commandment.*

Queſt. 70. **Which is the ſeventh Commandment?**

A. **The ſeventh Commandment. is,** [Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.]

Queſt. 71. **What is required in the ſeventh Commandment?**

A. **The ſeventh Commandment requireth the preſervation of our own and our Neighbours chaſtity in heart, ſpeech, and behaviour.**

Queſt. 72. **What is forbidden in the ſeventh Commandment?**

A. **The ſeventh Commandment forbiddeth all unchaſt thoughts, words and actions.**

Q. 1. *What is the Duty required in this Comandment?*

*A.* The firſt Duty required in this Commandment is, the preſervation of our own Chaſtity in heart, lip, and life; 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 3, 4. *For this is the will of God, even your ſanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from fornication. That every one of you ſhould know how to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour.* And *Eph.* 4. 29 *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth*, &c.

Q. 2. *Why muſt we preſerve our own Chaſtity?*

*A.* Becauſe our Bodies are, or ought to be the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt; 1 *Cor.* 6. 15, 19. *Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Chriſt? Shall I then take the members of Chriſt, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?* And it is the expreſs charge of God that they be kept pure and clean, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 3, 4. *For this is the will of God, even your ſanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from fornication. That every one of you ſhould know how to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour.*

Q. 3. *What*

Q. 3. *What is the ſecond Reaſon ?*

*A.* The ſecond Reaſon is, becauſe of the evil of it to our ſelves : As ( 1 ) It injures the Body, 1 *Cor.* 6. 18. *He that committeth fornication, ſinneth againſt his own body.* ( 2. ) It levels us with the Heathen, *Eph.* 4. 17, 19. *This I ſay therefore, and teſtifie in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, ——Who being paſt feeling, have given themſelves over unto laciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs.* ( 3. ) Diſhonours our Names ; *Prov.* 6. 32, 33. *But whoſo committeth adultery with a woman, —— a wound and diſhonour ſhall he get,* &c. ( 4. ) Scatters our Eſtates, *Prov.* 5. 10. *Leſt ſtrangers be filled with thy wealth, and thy labours be in the houſe of ſtrangers.* ( 5. ) Deſtroyeth the Soul ; *Prov.* 6. 32. —— *He that doth it, deſtroyeth his own ſoul.*

Q. 4. *What Age is moſt incident to this Sin ?*

*A.* The Youthful Age is moſt apt to be drawn into this Sin ; *Prov.* 7. 7. *And behold among the ſimple ones, I diſcerned among the youths, a young man void of underſtanding.* And 2 *Tim.* 2. 22. *Flee alſo youthful luſts,* &c.

Q. 5. *How far doth this Command extend it ſelf ?*

*A.* It extends it ſelf to the Heart, Mind and Fancy, as well as to the Body and external Actions, *Matth.* 5. 28. *But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever looketh on a woman, to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

Q. 6. *What are the uſual inducements to this Sin ?*

*A.* The uſual inducements to this Sin are, ( 1. ) Idleneſs and fulneſs of the Creatures, *Ezek.* 16. 49, 50. *Behold, this was the iniquity of thy ſiſter Sodom ; Pride, fulneſs of bread, and abundance of idleneſs was in her, and in her daughters,* &c. ( 2. ) Wanton Geſtures, *Iſa.* 3. 16. *Moreover, the Lord ſaith, becauſe the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with ſtretched forth necks, and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet.* ( 3. ) Filthy Communication, *Eph.* 5. 4. *Neither filthineſs, nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, which are not convenient,* &c.

Q. 7. *What's the firſt Remedy againſt this ſin ;*

*A.* The firſt Remedy, and the moſt effectual is, to get the Spirit of God within us, to ſanctifie and rule us, Gal. 5. 16. ——*Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh.*

Q. 8. *What is the ſecond Remedy ?*

*A.* The keeping of a ſtrict watch over the Heart, *Prov.* 4. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence,* &c. And over the external Senſes, *Job.* 31. 1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes ; why then ſhould I think upon a maid ?*

Q. 9. *What's the third Remedy againſt it.*

*A.* Deep and ſerious conſideration of the danger of this Sin, and what God threatens againſt Adulterers, *Heb.* 13. 4 ——*Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. —— *Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, —— ſhall inherits the Kingdom of God.* And how he deſcribes them, *Prov.* 22. 14. *The mouth of a ſtrange woman is a deep pit ; he that is abhorred of the Lord ſhall fall therein.*

Q. 10. *What's the fourth Remedy againſt it ?*

A. Prayer, *Pſal.* 119. 37. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity,* &c. And to evidence our ſincerity in Prayer, we muſt ſtudy to ſhun all occaſions of this Sin, *Pſal.* 18. 23. *I was alſo upright before him : and I kept my ſelf from mine iniquity.*

Q. 11. *What is the firſt Inference from hence ?*

*A.* What cauſe thoſe have to bleſs God, that have been kept from this Sin ; though the beſt ought to be humbled for their pollutions,

Q. 12. *What's the ſecond Inference from hence ?*

*A.* Let it warn Parents to do what in them lyes to prevent the ruin of their Children by this Sin, ( 1. ) By filling their heads and hands with lawful buſineſs. ( 2. ) By ſerious Admonitions and Prayers for them. ( 3. ) By keeping them from vain and tempting Company. ( 4. ) By diſpoſing them ſeaſonably in ſuitable Marriage.

Q. 13. *What's the third Inference from hence ?*

*A.* Let thoſe that are defiled with this Sin, repent ſeriouſly of it, as *David* did, *Pſal.* 51. 8. *Make me to hear joy and gladneſs, that the bones which thou haſt broken may rejoyce.* And apply the Blood of Chriſt by Faith ; for in ſo doing, it may be pardoned, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. *And ſuch were ſome of you : but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by the ſpirit of our God.*

### *Of the eighth Commandment.*

Queſt. 73. **Which is the eighth Commandment ?**

A. **The eighth Commandment is,** [ Thou ſhalt not ſteal. ]

Queſt. 74. **What is required in the eighth Commandment ?**

A. **The eighth Commandment requires the lawful procuring and furthering the Wealth, and outward Eſtate of our ſelves and others.**

Que

Queſt. 75. **What is forbidden in the eighth Commandment ?**

A. **The eighth Commandment forbiddeth whatſoever doth or may, unjuſtly hinder our own, or our Neighbours Wealth, or outward Eſtate.**

Q. 1. *What is preſuppoſed in this Commandment.*

*A.* It preſuppoſeth that God hath given every Man a propriety in his Eſtate, and that no Mans Goods are common to others, except by his conſent in times and caſes extraordinary, *Acts* 2. 44. *And all that believed were together, and had all things common.*

Q. 2. *What is required in this Commandment ?*

*A.* It requires of every Man diligence in a lawful Calling, to get and preſerve an Eſtate for his own and others good, *Prov.* 13. 11 — *He that gathereth by labour, ſhall increaſe.* Eph. 4. 28 —— *But rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

Q. 3. *What elſe is required in this Commandment ?*

*A.* It requires us not only to get and keep the things of the World in a lawful manner, but to to diſtribute and communicate them to thoſe that are in want, and not caſt them into temptations of ſin or inevitable ruin, *Iſa.* 58. 10. *And if thou draw out thy ſoul to the hungry, and ſatisfie the afflicted ſoul: then ſhall thy light riſe in obſcurity, and thy darkneſs be as the noonday.* 1 John 3. 17. *But whoſo hath this worlds good, and ſeeth his brother hath need and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?*

Q. 4. *What elſe is required is this Commandment ?*

*A.* It requires in every Man a publick Spirit to procure and promote the good and proſperity of others, 1 *Cor.* 10. 24. *Let no man ſeek his own; but every man anothers wealth ?*

Q. 5. *What elſe is required in this Command ?*

*A.* It requires reſtitution of all Goods unjuſtly gotten, or taken from others, *Levit.* 6. 4. *Then it ſhall be becauſe he hath ſinned and is guilty, that he ſhall reſtore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten,* &c. And the reſtoring of Pawns, and Pledges, when it's due, *Ezek.* 18. 7. *And hath not oppreſſed any, but hath reſtored to the debtor his pledge,* &c. Or things loſt, if we can diſcover the true Owners.

Q. 6. *What's the firſt Sin forbidden in this Command ?*

*A.* It forbids all couzening and cheating of others in our dealings and civil commerce with them, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 6. *That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter,* &c. *Prov.* 26. 28. *A lying tongue hateth thoſe that are afflicted by it, and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.*

Q. 7. *What's the ſecond thing forbidden in this Command ?*

*A.* It forbids all exaction and oppreſſion of our Neighbour, by going beyond them, or working on their neceſſities, or detaining their dues; *Lev.* 25. 14. *And if thou ſell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyeſt ought of thy neighbours hand ye ſhall not oppreſs one another.* Prov. 24. 28, 29. *Be not a witneſs againſt thy neighbour without cauſe: and deceive not with thy lips. Say not, I will do ſo to him, as he hath done to me. I will render to the man according to his work.*

Q. 8. *What's the third thing forbidden in this Command ?*

*A.* It forbids all unlawful Weights and Meaſures, which is no better than Theft in Gods account, *Mic.* 6. 10, 11. *Are there yet the treaſures of wickedneſs in the houſe of the wicked, and the ſcant meaſure that is abominable ? Shall I count them pure with the wicked ballances, and with the bag of deceitful weights ?*

Q. 9. *What's the fourth Sin forbidden in this Command ?*

*A.* It forbids all Family frauds by Children, *Prov.* 28. 24. *Whoſo robbeth his father, or his mother, and ſaith, it is no tranſgreſſion, the ſame is the companion of a deſtroyer.* Or Servants, *Tit.* 2. 9, 10. *Exhort ſervants to be obedient unto their own Maſters,* —— *Not purloining, but ſhewing all good fidelity,* &c.

Q. 10. *What's the fifth thing, forbidden in this Command ?*

*A.* It forbids all tempting of, or encouraging others to defraud thoſe who have any truſt committed to them. *Pſal.* 50. 18. *VVhen thou ſaweſt a thief, then thou conſentedſt with him,* Prov. 29. 24. *VVhoſo is partner with a thief, hateth his own ſoul,* &c.

Q. 11. *VVhat's the ſixth thing forbidden in this Command?*

*A.* It forbids the taking away of anothers Goods by open Robbery by Sea or Land, *Job* 5. 5. —— *And the robber ſwalloweth up their ſubſtance.* Or clandeſtinely and privately, 1 *Pet.* 4. 15. *But let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or as a thief,* &c.

Q. 12. *VVhat is the danger of this Sin?*

*A.* It brings Mens Souls, Bodies and Eſtates under the Curſe of God, *Zech.* 5. 2, 4. *Then ſaid he unto me, This is the curſe that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that ſtealeth ſhall be cut off, as on this ſide, according to it: —— I will bring it forth ſaith the Lord of hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of the thief.*

Q. 13. *VVhat's the firſt Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* Let all that are guilty of this ſin repent, and reſtore, as they expect Mercy from God, *Eph.* 4. 28. *Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more,* &c. *Luke* 19. 8. *And Zacheus ſtood, and ſaid unto the Lord, Behold Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken away any thing from any man by falſe accuſation I reſtore him four fold.*

Q. 14. *VVhat's the laſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* To excite all to whom God hath given a competency of the things of the World, that they bleſs God for keeping them from the temptations of this ſin, *Prov.* 30. 8, 9. —— *Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me: leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay, who is the Lord? or leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of my God in vain.*

### *Of the ninth Commandment.*

Queſt. 76. **Which is the ninth Commandment?**

**A. The ninth Commandment is,** [Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy Neighbour.]

Queſt. 77. **What is required, in the ninth Commandment?**

**A. The ninth Commandment requireth, the maintaining and promoting of Truth between man and man, and of our own and our Neighbours good names, eſpecially in witneſs-bearing.**

Queſt 78. **What is forbidden in the ninth Commandment?**

**A. The ninth Commandment forbiddeth whatſoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own, or our Neighbours good name.**

Q. 1. *VVhat is the general ſcope and aim of the ninth Commandment?*

*A.* The ninth Command aims chiefly at the preſervation and promoting of Truth amongſt Men, *Zech.* 8. 16. —— *Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour,* &c. This being of indiſpenſable neceſſity to the ſubſiſtence and welfare of Humane Society, *Eph.* 4. 25. *VVherefore putting away lying, ſpeak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.*

*Q.* 2. *VVhat is the firſt thing required particularly in this Command?*

*A.* This Command requires every Man to take care of preſerving his own good Name, by ordering his Converſation in univerſal Integrity. 1 *Pet.* 3. 15, 16. *But ſanctifie the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an anſwer to every man that asketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear; Having a good conſcience, that whereas they ſpeak evil of you as of evil doers, they may be aſhamed that falſly accuſe your good converſation in Chriſt.*

*Q.* 3. *VVhat's the ſecond thing required in this Commandment?*

*A.* It requires all due care to preſerve the good Name and Honour of other Men, as well as our own; for Chriſtians are not to be of narrow and private Spirits, which center only in their own intereſts and concernment, *Phil.* 2. 4. *Look not every man on his own things; but every man alſo on the things of others.*

*Q.* 4. *How*

Q. 4. *How are we to preſerve the good Names of others?*

*A.* We are to preſerve the good Names of others by an inward eſteem of all the good that is in them, *Phil.* 2. 3. ---*In lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem other better than themſelves.* And manifeſting our inward eſteem of them by a wiſe and ſeaſonable expreſſion thereof for their encouragement in the ways of Godlineſs, *Rom.* 1. 8. *Firſt, I thank my God through Jeſus Chriſt for you all, that your faith is ſpoken of throughout the whole world.*

Q. 5. *How elſe are we to defend other Mens Names?*

*A.* By our readineſs to receive with joy the reports of that good that is in them, 3 *Epiſt. John* 3. *For I rejoyced greatly when the brethren came and teſtified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkeſt in the truth.* And diſcountenancing all reproaches maliciouſly vented againſt them, *Pſal.* 15. 3. ---*Not taketh up a reproach againſt his neighbour.*

Q. 6. *But what if the report be evidently true?*

*A.* In that caſe we are to grieve for their miſcarriages, as the effect and fruit of our love to their Souls, 2 *Cor.* 2. 4. *For out of much affliction and anguiſh of heart, I wrote unto yon with many tears, not that ye ſhould be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.* And to diſcharge our Duties privately and faithfully in order to their recovery, *Mat.* 18. 15, 16, 17. *Moreover, if thy brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone,* &c. Winking at and concealing in love their leſſer and common infirmites; 1 Pet. 4 8. *And above all things have fervent charity among your ſelves: for charity ſhall cover the multitude of ſins.*

Q. 7. *What is forbidden in the ninth Commandment.*

*A.* It forbids us to injure others, by raiſing or receiving Lyes and falſe Reports, which are highly injurious to their good Names, *Col.* 2. 9. *Lye not one to another,* &c.

Q. 8. *What elſe is forbidden in the ninth Commandment?*

*A.* It eſpecially forbids Perjury or falſe Swearing, whereby not only the Names, but Eſtates and Lives of the innocent are injured and ruined, *Pſal.* 35. 11. *Falſe witneſſes did riſe up: they laid to my charge things that I knew not.* Prov. 19. 5. *A falſe witneſs ſhall not be unpuniſhed: and he that ſpeaketh lies ſhall not eſcape.* A ſin which God will puniſh, *Mal.* 3. 5. *And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a ſwift witneſs againſt the ſorcerers, and againſt the adulterers, and againſt falſe ſwearers,* &c.

Q. 9. *What elſe is forbidden in this Commandment.*

*A.* It forbids all whiſpering and back-bitings of others ſecretly, 2 *Cor.* 12. 20. ---*Leſt there be debates, envying, wraths, ſtrifes, back-bitings, whiſperings,* &c. And all Tale-carrying from one to another to our Neighbours injury, *Levit.* 19. 16. *Thou ſhalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among the People,* &c. And 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. --*And not only idle, but tatlers alſo and buſie-bodies, ſpeaking things which they ought not.*

Q. 10. *What elſe doth the ninth Commandment forbid?*

*A.* It forbids all raſh and unwarrantable judging of other Mens Hearts and final Eſtates, which is uſually accompanied with ignorance of our own, *Matth.* 7. 6, 3. *Judge not that ye be not judged.* ---*And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

Q. 11. *What elſe is forbidden in this Commandment.*

*A* It forbids the eclipſing of the true word and honour of others, by a proud exalting of our ſelves, *Cor.* 13. 4, 5. *Charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not ſelf, is not puff up,* &c. Or by crying up one to the diſparagement of another good Man, 1 *Cor.* 3. 4, 5. *For while one ſaith, I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollo, are ye not carnal?* &c.

Q. 12. *What is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* That the beſt Chriſtians have cauſe to be humbled for the ſins of the Tongue, whereby God is diſhonoured, and others are injured, *Jam.* 3. 2. *If any man offend not in word, the ſame is a perfect man, and able alſo to bridle the whole body.* And *ver.* 5. 6 *Even ſo the tongue is a little member, and boaſteth great things: behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: ſo is the tongue amongſt our members, that it defileth the whole body, and ſetteth on fire the courſe of nature, and it is ſet on fire of hell.*

Q. 13. *What's the ſecond Inference from hence?*

*A.* 'Tis our great concernment to walk with that Piety and Juſtice towards God and Men, as to cut off all juſt occaſions of reproach from our Names, 2 *Cor.* 11. 12. *But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occaſion from them which deſire occaſion,* &c. 1 *Tim.* 5. 14. *I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the houſe, give none occaſion to the adverſary to ſpeak reproachfully.*

Q. 14. *What's the third Inference from this Commandment?*

*A.* To bleſs God that our Names are kept ſweet and honourable in the World among good Men, 3 *Epiſ. John.* 12. *Demetrius hath a good report of all men,* &c. Or if we be reproached, it is by none but wicked Men, and that for our Duty to God, *Dan.* 6. 5. *Then ſaid theſe men, we ſhall not find any occaſion againſt this Daniel, except we find it againſt him concerning the law of his God.*

### *Of the tenth Commandment.*

Queſt, 79. **Which is the tenth Commandment.**

A. **The tenth Commandment is,** [Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbours Houſe, thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbours Wife, nor his Man-ſervant, nor his Maid-ſervant, nor his Oxe, nor his Aſs, nor any thing that is thy Neighbours.]

Queſt. 80. **What is required in the tenth Commandment?**

A. **The tenth Commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of Spirit towards our Neighbour, and all that is his.**

Queſt, 81. **What is forbidden in the tenth Commandment?**

A. **The tenth Commandment forbiddeth all diſcontentment with our eſtate, envying or grieving at the good of our Neighbour, and all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.**

Q. 1. *What is the principal ſcope and aim of the tenth Commandment?*

*A.* It is to prevent all occaſions of tranſgreſſing the other Precepts of the ſecond Table, by reſtraining this ſin of Covetouſneſs in the heart, *Pſal.* 119. 35, 36. *Make me to go in the path of thy Commandments: for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy teſtimonies; and not to covetouſneſs.*

Q. 2. *What doth this tenth Command require of us in reference to our ſelves?*

*A.* It requires of us perfect contentment and ſatisfaction with that eſtate and condition, wherein God hath placed us in the World, *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs: and be content with ſuch things as ye have,* &c. Reckoning it to be good for us to be in that ſtate we are, though never ſo low or afflicted, *Pſal.* 119. 67. *Before I was afflicted,* *I went aſtray; but now have I kept thy word.* And *ver.* 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy ſtatutes.*

*Q.* 3. Is contentment with Gods appointments attainable in this life?

A. Some Chriſtians have attained to a very great meaſure and eminent degree of Contentment in the midſt of changeable and afflictive Providences, *Phil.* 4. 11. --I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am therewith to be content. *Pſal.* 16. 5, 6. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintaineſt my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleaſant places: yea, I have a good heritage.

*Q.* 4. Is there no danger of the ſin of diſcontent in a full and proſperous condition?

A. Fulneſs of the World ſecures no Man from the ſin of Diſcontentment with his own, or coveting that which is anothers, becauſe the deſires enlarge as the Eſtate doth, *Pſal.* 62. 10. --If riches increaſe, ſet not your hearts upon them. An inſtance whereof we have in *Ahab*, 1 *Kings* 21. 4. And *Ahab* came into his houſe heavy and diſpleaſed, becauſe of the word, which *Naboth* the *Jezreelite* had ſpoken to him: for he had ſaid, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers, and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

*Q.* 5. Whence doth Diſcontent with our condition ſpring?

*A.* It ſprings partly from our ignorance of Gods wiſdom and love in ordering all for our good, *Rom.* 8. 28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, *&c.* Partly from our inconſiderateneſs of the vanity of the Creature, 1 *Tim.* 6. 7, 8. For we brought nothing into this world: and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. And partly from our Unbelief, *Matth.* 6. 31, 32. Therefore take no thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or where withal ſhall we be cloathed? (for after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek) for your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe things.

*Q.* 6. Is contentment with our own eſtate all that this Commandment requires?

*A.* No, it requires a charitable frame of Spirit towards our Neighbours alſo, *Rom.* 12. 10, 15. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another. Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and weep with them that weep?

*Q.* 7. What's the firſt Sin forbidden in this Commandment?

*A.* It directly and eſpecially forbids all ſinful and inordinate deſires and motions after other Mens enjoyments, *Col.* 3. 5. Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry.

*Q.* 8. What's the ſecond Sin forbidden in this Commandment?

*A* It forbids all cruelty and incompaſſionateneſs to others in neceſſity, and keeping back from them that relief which is made theirs by Gods command, *Prov.* 12. 24. There is that with-holdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty, *Lev.* 19. 9, 10. And when ye reap the harveſt of your land, thou ſhalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither ſhalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harveſt. And thou ſhalt not glean thy vineyard, neither ſhalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard: thou ſhalt leave them for the poor and the ſtranger: I am the Lord your God.

*Q.* 9. What is the third ſin forbidden in this Commandment?

*A.* It forbids the detaining of the Hirelings Wages, when it is due, *Hab.* 2. 9, 10, 11. Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetouſneſs to his houſe that he may ſet his neſt on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil. Thou haſt conſulted ſhame to thy houſe, by cutting off my people, and haſt ſinned againſt thy ſoul. For the ſtone ſhall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber ſhall anſwer it.

*Q.* 10. What's the fourth Sin forbidden in this Commandment?

*A.* It forbids all inward grudgings at, and envyings of the enjoyments of others, whether they be inward Goods of the Mind, or outward belonging to the Body; 1 *Cor.* 13. 14. Charity envieth not, *&c.*

*Q.* 11. What's the miſchief of Covetouſneſs.

*A.* It diſtracts the Heart in Duties, *Ezek.* 33. 31. And they come unto thee as thy people cometh, and they ſit before thee, as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they ſhow much love, but their heart goeth after their covetouſneſs. Provokes the wrath of God, *Iſa.* 57. 17. For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him, *&c.* And where it reigns, it becomes Idolatry, *Col.* 3. 5. And covetouſneſs which is Idolatry.

*Q.* 12. What's the firſt Inference hence?

*A.* It calls all men to humiliation for the inordinacy of their Affections towards the World, their diſcontent with their own, and envyings of others conditions.

*Q.* 13. What's the ſecond Inference hence?

*A.* As ever we would keep clear from this ſin, let us make God our portion, *Pſal.* 16. 5, 6. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintaineſt my lot. And labour to get the Soul-ſatisfying comforts of his Spirit, *John* 4. 14. But whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt, *&c.* 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. As having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things.

*Q.* 14. What's the laſt Inference hence?

*A.* If God have given us a ſufficiency of the things of this life for our neceſſity, let us be ſatisfied, though we want other things for our delight, 1 *Tim.* 6. 8. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. And relieve our ſelves by an expectation of thoſe better things laid up in Heaven for us, if we be believers, *Jam.* 2. 5. Hath not God choſen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promiſed to them that love him.

### *Of keeping the Law.*

Queſt. 82. **IS any man able perfectly to k the Commandments of God?**

A. **No meer man ſince the fall, is abl this life perfectly to keep the Commandme of God, but doth dayly break them in Thoug Word, and Deed.**

*Q.* 1. Wherein doth the perfect keeping of G Law conſiſt?

*A.* It conſiſts in the perfect and conſtant confo ty of the internal and external Actions of Heart Life, to every Command of God, *Gal.* 3. 10. Cu is every one that continueth not in all things, w are written in the book of the law to do them, 22. 37, 38, 39. Jeſus ſaid unto him, thou ſhalt the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with al ſoul, and with all thy mind. This is the firſt great Commandment. And the ſecond is like it, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf.

Q. 2. *But if a man commit no external act againſt the Law, may he not be ſaid perfectly to keep it, although in mind or thought he ſhould tranſgreſs?*

*A.* No, for an inward motion of ſin in the Heart, that never breaks forth into act, is a violation of the Law, and brings the Soul under the curſe of it, *Matth.* 5. 21, 22. Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not kill: and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in danger of the judgment, But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment, *&c.* And *ver.* 27, 28. Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery. But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever looketh after a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Q. 3. May not a man keep the Law, if he keep ſome of its Commands, though he cannot keep every one of them punctually?

*A.* No he cannot; for the tranſgreſſion of any one Command in the leaſt degree, is a breach of all, and brings the curſe of the whole upon a Mans Soul, *Jam.* 2. 10. For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Q. 4. *Was the Law never kept by any ſince it was made?*

*A.* Yes, *Adam* in his innocent ſtate kept it, for he was made upright, *Eccleſ.* 7. 29. God made man upright, *&c.* And Chriſt perfectly kept it, *Matth.* 5. 17. Think not that I am come to deſtroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil.

Q. 5. What's the firſt Reaſon why no meer man in this life can fulfil and keep the law of God perfectly?

*A.* It is becauſe the Law of God is perfect, and the beſt of Men in this life are imperfect, *Pſal.* 19. 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, *&c.* *Eccleſ.* 7. 20. For there is not a juſt man upon earth, that doeth good, and ſinneth not.

Q. 6. But may not Men perfectly keep it, when regenerate, and born of God?

*A.* No, becauſe even in the regenerate there is a law of Sin which was againſt the Law of God, *Gal.* 17. For the Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh, *&c.* *Rom.* 7. 22, 23. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I ſee another law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind, *&c.* And though they are ſaid not to ſin, 1 *John* 3. 9. (whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin, *&c.*) that is not to be taken abſolutely; but comparatively, as they once did, and others ſtill do.

Q. 7. But did not Chriſt command the young man to keep the Law?

*A.* 'Tis true that Chriſt did put the young man upon this task, *Mat.* 19. 17. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: But it was not on a ſuppoſition that he was able to do it, but to convince him of the impoſſibility of Juſtification that way.

Q. 8. But doth not the Apoſtle ſay that the righteouſneſs of the law is fulfilled in Believers?

*A.* 'Tis true that the Apoſtle doth ſay ſo, *Rom.* 8. but the meaning is not, that we fulfil it in our own perſons by our compleat obedience to it, but it is fulfilled in us by our union with Chriſt, who perfectly kept it; and the Righteouſneſs of the Law which is in Chriſt, becomes ours by Gods imputation of it to us, *Rom.* 4. 23, 24. Now it was not written for his ſake alone, that it was imputed to him. But for us alſo to whom it ſhall be imputed, if we believe on him, that raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead.

Q. 9. What is the firſt Inference from hence?

*A.* That Juſtification by our own Works is utterly impoſſible to the holieſt of Men, *Gal.* 2. 16. For by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified. *Pſal.* 103. 3. *If thou Lord, ſhould mark iniquities: O Lord who ſhall ſtand?*

Q. 10. What's the ſecond Inference from hence?

*A.* Hence we learn what an infinite Mercy it is, that God ſent Jeſus Chriſt made under the Law, *Gal.* 4. 4, 5. But when the fulneſs of time was come, God ſent forth his ſon made of a woman, under the Law, *&c.* To do that for us we could never do for our ſelves, *Rom.* 8. 3, 4. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh: That the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.

Q. 11. What's the third Inference from hence?

*A.* That the dreadful Curſe muſt needs lye on all Unbelievers that are out of Chriſt, *John* 3. 36. He that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. And ſeek their Juſtification by the deeds of the Law, *Gal.* 3. 10. For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe, *&c.*

Q. 12. What's the fourth Inference from hence?

*A.* What a deluge of ſin and miſery brake in upon the whole World by the fall of *Adam*, and all his Poſterity being by him plunged under both, *Rom.* 5. 12. Wherefore, as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin: and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.

Q. 13. What's the fifth Inference from hence?

*A.* That the Popiſh Doctrines of Merits, and Works of Supererogation are falſe and groundleſs Doctrines, ſpringing out of the ignorance and pride of mans heart.

Q. 14. What's the laſt Inference from hence?

*A.* That all Gods people ſhould ſigh under their unhappy neceſſity of ſinning, *Rom.* 7. 24. O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death! And long to be with Chriſt in the perfect ſtate, *Heb.* 12. 23. And to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.

### *Of the inequality of Sin.*

Queſt. 83. **ARe all Tranſgreſſions of the Law equally hainous?**

A. **Some Sins in themſelves, and by reaſon of ſeveral Aggravations, are more hainous in the ſight of God than others.**

*Q.* 1. Whence ariſeth the firſt difference of ſin?

*A:* The firſt difference betwixt one ſin and another, ariſeth from the immediate object, againſt which the ſin is committed; on this account ſins immediately commited againſt God, are more heinous than ſins committed immediately againſt Man; 1 *Sam.* 2. 25. If one man ſin againſt another, the Judge ſhall judge him: but if a man ſin againſt the Lord, who ſhall intreat for him? And all ſins of the Firſt Table are greater than thoſe of the Second; yet there are crying ſins againſt the Second.

*Q.* 2. What's the firſt ſin noted for an heinous ſin?

*A.* The ſin of Murder is in Scripture ſet down for an heinous and crying ſin in its own nature, *Gen.* 4. 10. The voice of thy brothers blood cryeth unto me from the earth.

*Q.* 3. What other ſin is noted for a crying ſin?

*A.* The ſin of oppreſſion is noted in Scripture for a crying ſin, *Hab.* 2. 11. For the ſtone ſhall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber ſhall anſwer it. Eſpecially the oppreſſion of the Widow and Fatherleſs, *Exod.* 22. 22, 23. Ye ſhall not afflict any widow or fatherleſs child. If thou afflict them in any wiſe, and they cry at all unto me, I will ſurely hear their cry.

*Q.* 4. *What is reckoned in Scripture an heinous ſin againſt the Firſt Table.*

*A.* The ſin of *Atheiſm*, or denying the being of God, is a ſin of the firſt magnitude, *Job.* 31. 28. This alſo were an iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judge: for I ſhould have denied the God that is above. This was the ſin of *Pharaoh*, Exod. 5. 2. And Pharaoh ſaid, who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey his voice, to let Iſrael go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Iſrael go.

*Q.* 5. *What other ſin is heinous in Gods account?*

*A.* The ſin of Idolatry is a moſt heinous ſin, and goes nearer to the heart of God than other ſins do, *Ezek.* 6. 9. And they that eſcape of you, ſhall remember me among the nations whither they ſhall be carried captives, becauſe I am broken with their whoriſh heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols, and they ſhall loath themſelves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. *Jer.* 44. 4. Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate.

*Q.* 6. *What's the moſt heinous of all the ſins in the world?*

*A.* The ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt is the moſt heinous of all other ſins, and ſhall never be forgiven by Him, *Matth.* 12. 31. All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men: but the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men.

*Q.* 7. *From whence doth this Scripture aggravate ſin?*

*A.* The Spirit of God in Scripture aggravates and eſtimates ſin from the degree of light and knowledge Men ſin againſt, *Luke* 12. 27. And that ſervant which knew his Lords will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes. *John* 15. 22. If I had not come, and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin: but now they have no cloak for their ſin.

*Q.* 8. *What's the ſecond thing that aggravates ſin?*

*A.* The more Mercies any man ſins againſt, the greater is his ſin, *Rom.* 2. 4. Or deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance? And eſpecially when 'tis againſt Spiritual Mercies and Means of Salvation, *Heb.* 2. 3. How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation. *&c.*

*Q.* 9. *Are heinous and crying ſins capable of forgiveneſs?*

*A.* Yes, great and heinous ſins are capable of forgiveneſs upon true Repentance, *Iſa.* 1. 18. Tho your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; tho' they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wooll.

*Q.* 10. *From what fountains doth the pardon of all ſins both great and ſmall flow?*

*A.* They all flow from the Free Grace of God, *Luk.* 7. 41, 42. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. And through the Meritorious ſatisfying Blood of Chriſt, *Eph.* 1. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace.

*Q.* 11. *What's the firſt Inference hence?*

*A.* Though ſome ſins are more heinous than others, yet no Sinner ſhould abſolutely deſpair of Mercy; for the vileſt have been pardoned, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified, *&c.*

*Q.* 12. *What's the ſecond Inference hence?*

*A.* That there are different degrees of torments in hell, proportioned to the different degrees of ſins on earth, *Mat.* 11. 21, 22. Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethſaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in ſackcloth and aſhes. But I ſay unto you, it ſhall be no more tollerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you.

*Q.* 13. *What's the third Inference hence?*

*A.* That great Sinners when pardoned and received to Mercy, ſhould excel all others in love to Chriſt, *Luke* 7. 42, 43. Which of them will love him moſt? Simon anſwered and ſaid, I ſuppoſe that he to whom he forgave moſt. And he ſaid unto him thou haſt rightly judged.

*Q.* 14. *What's the laſt Inference hence?*

*A.* Let no Man neglect Chriſt, becauſe his Sins are not ſo heinous as others, becauſe the leaſt Sin without Chriſt is damning, *Rom.* 6. 23. For the wages of ſin is death, *&c.* And greater Sinners are often called, when leſſer are not, *Mat.* 21. 31, 32. The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

### *Of the demerit of Sin.*

Queſt. 84. **What doth every Sin deſerve?**

**A. Every Sin deſerveth Gods Wrath and Curſe, both in this Life, and that which is to come.**

Q. 1. *Wherein doth the evil of Sin principally conſiſt?*

*A.* It conſiſts principally in the offence it gives, and the wrong it doth to God, *Pſal.* 15. 4. Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight.

Q. 2. *What's the firſt offence and wrong Sin doth to God?*

*A.* It conſiſts in its enmity to God, *Rom.* 8. 7. Becauſe the carnal mind is enmity againſt God, *&c.* Expreſt in Scripture by walking contrary to him, *Levit.* 26. 40. They have alſo walked contrary to me. Fighting againſt God, *Acts* 5. 39. Leſt haply ye be even found to fight againſt God. And reſiſting his Spirit, *Acts* 7. 51. Ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt.

Q. 3. *Wherein is its enmity to God further diſcovered in Scripture?*

*A.* It's diſcovered under the names and notions of hatred of God, *Rom.* 1. 30. Back-biters, haters of God, *&c.* Rebellion againſt God, 1 *Sam.* 15. 23. For rebellion is as the ſin of witchcraft, *&c.* And deſpiſing the Commandment of God, 2 *Sam.* 12. 9. Wherefore haſt thou deſpiſed the commandment of the Lord?

Q. 4. *What are the Attributes of God that Sin wrongs?*

*A.* It wrongs all his Attributes, for it ſlights his Sovereignty, *Exod.* 5. 2. And Pharaoh ſaid, who is the Lod, that I ſhould obey his voice, to let Iſrael go? Reſiſts his Power, 1 *Cor.* 10. 22. Are we ſtronger than he? Deſpiſeth his Goodneſs, *Rom.* 2. 4. Or deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, *&c.* Taxeth his Juſtice, *Ezek.* 18. 25. Yet ye ſay the way of the Lord is not equal, *&c.* And clouds his Holineſs, *Jam.* 2. 7. Do not they blaſpheme that worthy name, by the which ye are called?

Q. 5. *What doth Sin deſerve in the courſe of Juſtice from God?*

*A.* It deſerves all temporal and eternal effects of Gods Wrath, on the Souls and Bodies of Sinners, all which in Scripture go under the name of Death, *Rom.* 6. 23. For the wages of ſin is death, *&*.

Q. 6. *Can theſe ſufferings ſatisfie God for all this wrong?*

*A.* No, they cannot, and therefore they muſt, and ſhall be eternal on the damned, *Matth.* 5. 26. Verily I ſay unto thee, Thou ſhalt by no means come out thence till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing. *Mark.* 9. 44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Q. 7. *Shall all Sinners bear the deſert of their Sins?*

*A.* No, all that are out of Chriſt ſhall, but Chriſt hath freed Believers from it, *John* 3. 18. He that believeth on him is not condemned, *&c.*

Q. 8. *But is it not hard that Sinners ſhould ſuffer eternally for the ſins of a few years?*

*A.* No, it is not; for the evil of Sin is not to be meaſured by the time in which, but by the object againſt which it is committed, *Pſal.* 51. 4, 5. *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight*, &c.

Q. 9. *What learn we from hence?*

*A.* Hence in the firſt place we learn the impoſſibility of ſatisfying Gods Juſtice for the leaſt Sin that ever we committed, *Job* 7. 20. I have ſinned, what ſhall I do unto thee, *&c. Pſal.* 130. 3. If thou Lord ſhouldſt mark iniquity, O Lord, who ſhall ſtand?

Q. 10. *What's the ſecond Inſtruction hence* ?

*A.* Hence we ſee the *neceſſity* of a *Mediatour* betwixt God and us, *Pſal.* 40. 6, 7. *Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire*, &c. *Then ſaid I, lo, I come in the volume of the book it is written of me.*

Q. 11. *What's the third Inſtruction hence* ?

*A.* That the *greateſt ſuffering* is rather to be choſen than the *leaſt ſin*, Heb. 11. 25. *Chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.*

Q. 12. *What's the fourth Inſtruction hence* ?

*A.* It teacheth us what an invaluable Mercy the *full*, *free* and *final* remiſſion of Sin is, *Pſal.* 32. 1, 2. *Bleſſed is he whoſe wickedneſs is forgiven, and whoſe ſins is covered*, &c.

Q. 13. *What's the fifth Inſtruction hence* ?

*A.* It vindicates God in his ſevereſt ſtrokes on Sinners, *Hoſ.* 6. 5. *Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets: I have ſlain them by the words of my mouth, and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.*

Q. 14. *What's the laſt Inſtruction ?*

*A.* Hence we learn the infinite nature of Chriſts ſuffering, *Rom.* 8. 32. *He that ſpareth not his own ſon, but delivered him up for us all: how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things* ?

*Of what God requires of us.*

Queſt. 85. **What doth God require of us that we may eſcape his Wrath and Curſe due to us for Sin?**

A. **To eſcape the Wrath and Curſe of God due to us for Sin, God requireth of us Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, Repentance unto Life, with the diligent uſe of all the outward means, whereby Chriſt communicateth to us the benefits of Redemption.**

Q. 1. *What are the things required of us to eſcape Gods Wrath and Curſe due to us for Sin ?*

*A.* The things required of us, are, (1.) *Faith* in Jeſus Chriſt, *Acts* 17.31. *And they ſaid, believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thine houſe.* (2.) *Repentance* from Sin, *Acts* 3.19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out*, &c. (3.) Diligent ſtriving in the uſe of all Gods appointed means, *Luke* 13.24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: for many, I ſay unto yon, ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.*

Q. 2. *Are theſe things in Mans power to perform that God requires of him*?

*A.* Though they are our Duties, yet we have no power in our ſelves by Nature to perform them, but the power is of God, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. *Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves to think any thing as of our ſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God.*

Q. 3. *But if Men be in Chriſt, and juſtified from Eternity, what need of this?*

*A.* Though God from Eternity decreed, and Chriſt long ſince purchaſed the Salvation of the Elect; yet have they no union with Chriſt, till they believe, *Epheſ.* 3. 17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love.* Nor remiſſion of Sin, *Acts* 3. 19. *That your ſins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord*; but lye under the wrath as others do, *Eph.* 2. 3, 12. *And were by nature the children of wrath even as others.* Ver. 12. *That at that time ye were without Chriſt, being aliens from the common wealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world.*

Q. 4. *If it be God that can only work theſe Graces in us, to what purpoſe is our ſtriving* ?

*A.* Gods working doth not exclude Mans ſtriving, but more excites and obliges us to it, *Phil.* 2. 12, 13. *Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own good pleaſure.*

Q. 5. *To what purpoſe is it to ſtrive in the uſe of means, except we knew we were elected?*

*A.* The knowledge of our Election is not antecedent to our diligence, but our diligence is required antecedently to that knowledge, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election ſure*, &c.

Q. 6. *Is it not legal to put Natural Men upon ſtriving in the uſe of means* ?

*A.* No, it is not; for Chriſt himſelf enjoyns it, *Luke* 13. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*, &c. And ſo did the Apoſtles after him, *Acts* 8. 22. *Repent therefore of this thy wickedneſs, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.*

*Q.* 7. *Is there no eſcaping Gods Wrath and Curſe without Faith and Repentance* ?

*A.* No, it is impoſſible to eſcape them, *John* 3.18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already.* Heb. 2. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation.*

*Q.* 8. *But if a man reform his life, and live ſoberly and juſtly for time to come, may he not that way eſcape Gods Wrath and Curſe?*

*A.* No, Sobriety and Reformation are Duties, but its Faith and Regeneration that puts Men into Chriſt, and out of danger, *Matth.* 5. 20. *Except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Titus. 3. 5. *Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.*

*Q.* 9. *Do all believing and penitent Sinners eſcape Gods Wrath and Curſe?*

*A.* Yes, they do, and ſhall for ever eſcape it, *Rom.* 8. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them, which are in Chriſt Jeſus*, &c. Col. 1. 12, 13. *Giving thanks unto God the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear ſon.* Joh. 5. 24. *He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation: but is paſſed from death unto life.*

*Q.* 10. *What is the firſt Inference hence?*

*A.* Hence it appears how falſe and dangerous the *Antinomian* Doctrine is, which teaches that our Sins are pardoned before they are committed, or we either believe or repent, contrary to *Acts* 26. 18. *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of ſatan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them, which are ſanctified by faith, that is, in me.* James 5. 20. *He which converteth the ſinner from the error of his way, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death*, &c. Acts 10. 43. *To him give all the prophets witneſs, that through his name whoſoever believeth in him ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.*

*Q.* 11. *What's the ſecond Inference from hence* ?

*A.* Hence it follows that it is dangerous on the one ſide not to ſtrive in all the ways of Duty for Chriſt and Salvation, contrary to *Luke* 13. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, for many I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.* And as dangerous on the other ſide to reſt in, and depend on our own Works and Duties. *Phil.* 3.9. *And be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs which is of the law; but that which is through* *the Faith of Chriſt : The Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith.*

Q. 12. *What's the third Inference hence ?*

*A.* Hence we learn the miſerable ſtate of all unbelievers, and impenitent Perſons ; the Curſe and Wrath of God lies upon them, *Gal.* 3. 10. *For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curſe*, &c. And their *Mittimus* for Hell is already made, *John* 3. 18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already.*

Q. 13. *What's the fourth Inference hence ?*

*A.* Hence we the learn the happy ſtate into which Faith and Repentance brings the Souls of Men, *Acts* 13.38,39. *By him all that believe are juſtified from all things from which ye could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes.*

### *Of Saving Faith.*

Queſt. 86. **What is Faith in Jeſus Chriſt?**

**A. Faith in Jeſus Chriſt is a ſaving Grace, whereby we receive and reſt upon him alone for Salvation, as he is offered to us in the Goſpel.**

Q. 1. *What's the root or cauſe of Faith ?*

*A.* Not the Power of Mans Will, *Eph.* 2. 8. *For by Grace ye are ſaved through Faith, and that not of your ſelves: It is the Gift of God.* But the Spirit of God, *Gal.* 5. 22. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith.* John 1. 12, 13. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his Name ; which were born, not of blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.*

Q. 2. *How doth the Spirit of God ordinarily produce Faith?*

*A.* By the *Preaching* of the Word he ordinarily begets it, *Rom.* 10.17. *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God* ; tho' ſometimes he doth it immediately.

Q. 3. *Who are the proper Subjects of Faith ?*

*A.* Convinced and ſenſible *Sinners* are the proper ſubjects of Faith, *John* 16. 8, 9, 10. *And when he is come he will reprove the World of Sin, of Righteouſneſs, and of Judgment. Of Sin, becauſe they believe not on me : Of Righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more : Of Judgment, becauſe the Prince of this World is judged.*

Q. 4. *What is the ſeat or habitation of Faith ?*

*A.* Not only the Head or Underſtanding, but principally the Heart and Will, *Rom.* 10. 10. *With the Heart Man believeth unto Righteouſneſs*, &c. Acts 8. 37. *And Philip ſaid, if thou believeſt with all thine Heart, thou mayeſt.*

Q. 5. *But is not the aſſent of the Underſtanding true Faith?*

*A.* The meer Aſſent of the Underſtanding to the Truths of Scripture, is not ſuch a Faith as will ſave the Soul, *James* 2. 19. *Thou believeſt that there is one God, thou doeſt well ; the devils alſo believe and tremble.*

Q. 6. *What's the act of Faith that juſtifies a Sinner ?*

*A.* 'Tis the receiving of Chriſt by the full and hearty Conſent of the Heart that juſtifies us ; *John* 1.12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.*

Q. 7. *What is the object of Faith ?*

*A.* The primary object of Faith is the Perſon of Chriſt, and the ſecondary are his Benefits, *Iſa.* 45. 22. *Look unto me, and be ſaved, all the ends of the earth*, &c. Phil. 3. 8, 9. *Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord : For whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but Dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own Righteouſneſs which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Chriſt : The Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith.*

Q. 8. *May not a man look partly to Chriſt, and partly to his own Works and Duties for Righteouſneſs ?*

*A.* No, he muſt eye Chriſt only, and exclude all others, or he cannot be juſtified, *Phil.* 3. 9. *And be found in him, not having mine own Righteouſneſs, which i of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Chriſt : The Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith.* Rom. 4. 5. *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteouſneſs.*

Q. 9. *Is it enough to eye the Perſon of Chriſt only in believing ?*

*A.* No, we muſt eye the Perſon of Chriſt, as cloathed with all his Offices, *Acts* 16.31. *And they ſaid, believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thine Houſe.* Our ignorance needs him, as a *Prophet*, our guilt as a *Prieſt*, our ſins and enmity as a *King*.

Q. 10. *Is true Faith excluſive of all fears and Doubts?*

*A.* No, it is not, but true Believers are troubled with many fears and doubtings, *Iſa.* 50. 10. *Who is he among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light*, &c. Mark 9. 24. *And ſtraightway the Father of the Child cried out with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*

Q. 11. *Is no Man actually juſtified till he believe?*

*A.* No, he cannot be juſtified actually till he believe actually, *Gal.* 3. 22. *But the Scripture hath concluded all under Sin, that the Promiſe by Faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.* John 3. 18. *He that believe on him, is not condemned : But he that believeth not is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Q. 12. *Is every Man that believes juſtified immediately and fully upon his believing ?*

*A.* Yes, he is, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Therefore being juſtified by Faith we have Peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* John 5.24. *He that heareth my Words, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting Life, and ſhall not come into Condemnation: But is paſſed from Death unto Life.*

Q. 13. *What's the true Character or Deſcription of a Believer ?*

*A.* He is one that having been convinced of his Sin and Miſery, and of his own and all other Creatures inability to ſave him, and of the ability and willingneſs of Chriſt to ſave him, lets go all hold, and dependance on Creatures, and his own Righteouſneſs, caſts himſelf entirely upon Chriſt for Righteouſneſs and Life.

### *Of the Properties, Signs and Means of Faith.*

Q. 1. WHat is the firſt Property of Faith?

*A.* 'Tis a moſt precious Grace, 2 Pet. 1. 1. *To them that have obtained like precious Faith with us*, &c. And muſt needs be ſo, ſeeing 'tis the bond of our Union with Chriſt, *Eph.* 3. 17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your Hearts by Faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love.* That by which we are juſtified, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Therefore being juſtified by Faith*, &c. And that by which our Souls do live, *Heb.* 2. 4. *The juſt ſhall live by his Faith.*

Q. 2. *What's the ſecond Property of Saving Faith?*

*A.* The ſecond Property of Faith is this, that it is the moſt uſeful Grace in this World to a Believer, it being the Souls Eye, *Heb.* 11. 27. *By Faith he forſook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King : for he endured as ſeeing him, who is inviſible*, &c. It's hard to apprehend Chriſt, *Phil.* 3.12. *That I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.* It's Cordial in a fainting ſeaſon, *Pſalm* 27. 3. *I had fainted unleſs I had believed*, &c.

Q. 3. *What are the Foundations that ſupport Faith?*

*A.* The firſt foundation or prop of Faith is the power of God, *Rom.* 40. 20, 21. He ſtaggered not at the promiſe through unbelief : but was ſtrong in faith giving glory to God. And being fully perſwaded that what he had promiſed, he was able alſo to perform. *Heb.* 7. 25. He is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, *&c.*

*Q.* 4. What's the ſecond prop of Faith?

*A.* The truth and faithfulneſs of God in his promiſes, *Heb.* 10. 23. Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promiſed, *Heb.* 6. 18. That by two immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for God to lye, we might have a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us.

*Q.* 5. What encourages the Faith of the Saints?

*A.* The manifold ſweet and ſenſible experiences of others, *Pſal.* 74. 14. Thou breakeſt the heads of *Leviathan* in pieces, and gaveſt him to be meat for the people inhabiting the wilderneſs. And eſpecially their own experiences, *Joſhua* 23. 14. Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your ſouls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you: all are come to paſs unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

Q. 6. What's the firſt ſign of a weak Faith?

A. Staggerings in our aſſent to Divine Truths argue the weakneſs of Faith, *Rom.* 4. 10. He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief, but was ſtrong in Faith, *&c.*

Q. 7. What's the ſecond ſign of weak Faith?

A. Inability to truſt God in time of danger, evidenced by ſinful haſte to avoid it, *Iſa.* 28. 16. He that believeth ſhall not maſte haſte.

Q. 8. What's the third ſign of a weak Faith?

A. When we cannot live purely by Faith, except we have ſome ſenſible encouragement, *John* 20. 25. Except I ſhall ſee in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thruſt my hand into his ſide, I will not believe.

Q. What's the fourth ſign of a weak Faith?

A. When a new temptation makes us eaſily let go our former confidence, *Luke* 24. 21. But we truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed *Iſrael*: and beſides all this, to day is the third day ſince theſe things were done.

Q. 10. What's the fifth ſign of a weak Faith?

A. The prevalence of carnal fears in time of trouble argues weak Faith, *Matth.* 8. 26. And he ſaith unto them, why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? *&c.*

Q. 11. What's the ſixth ſign of a weak Faith?

A. Too much carefulneſs and anxiety about the things of this Life, *Matth.* 6. 30. Wherefore if God ſo clothe the graſs of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the oven, ſhall he not much more cloath you, O ye of little faith?

Q. 12. What's the firſt benefit of a ſtrong Faith?

A. A ſtrong Faith gives much Glory to God, *Rom.* 4. 19, 20. And being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadneſs of Sarahs womb: He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief: but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God.

Q. 12. What's the ſecond benefit of a ſtrong Faith?

A. It gives the Soul the raviſhing foreſight and foretaſts of Heaven upon Earth, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. Whom having not ſeen, ye love; in whom though now ye ſee him not, yet believing ye rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

Q. 14. What's the laſt office Faith doth for a Believer in this World?

A. It ſupports and encourages him at Death by the promiſes, when all other Comforts fail, *Heb.* 11. 13. Theſe all dyed in faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſwaded of them, and embraced them, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth.

## *Of Saving Repentance.*

Queſt. 87. **What is Repentance unto Life?**

**A. Repentance unto Life is a ſaving Grace, whereby a Sinner out of a true ſenſe of his ſin, and apprehenſion of the Mercy of God in Chriſt doth with grief and hatred of his ſin, turn from it unto God with full purpoſe of, and endeavour after new obedience.**

Q. 1. Who is the Authour of ſaving Repentance?

A. The Spirit of God is the Author of it; the Heart by Nature is ſo hard, that none but the Spirit can break it, *Ezek.* 36. 26, 27. A new heart alſo will I give, and a new ſpirit will I put within you; and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh. And I will put my ſpirit within you, *&c.*

Q. 2. In what act doth all true Repentance begin?

A. It begins in a true ſight and ſenſe of ſin, and the danger and miſery we are in by ſin, *Acts* 2. 37. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, *&c.*

Q. 3. Why doth God work ſuch a ſenſe of ſin and miſery?

A. He doth it to make Chriſt deſirable in the ſinners eyes, that he may fly to him, *Matth.* 9. 12, 23. But when Jeſus heard that, he ſaid unto them they that be whole need not a Phyſician, but they that are ſick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not ſacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

Q. 4. Is the ſight of ſin ſufficient to Repentance?

A. No; there muſt be apprehenſion of Mercy and Forgiveneſs with God, or elſe no man can ſincerely, repent, *Rom.* 2. 4. Not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance. And this Mercy muſt be diſcerned in and through Chriſt, *Zech.* 12. 10. And they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only ſon, and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt-born.

Q. 5. Wherein doth Repentance chiefly conſiſt?

A. It conſiſts in real inward ſorrow for ſin, as committed againſt God, *Pſal.* 51. 3, 4. For I acknowledge my tranſgreſſions, and my ſin is ever before me. Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight, *&c.* A loathing of our ſelves for it, *Ezek.* 36. 31. And ſhall loath your ſelves in your own ſight for your iniquities, and for your abominations. And of our beſt Duties as ſinful and inſufficient things, *Iſa.* 64. 5, 6. We are all as an unclean thing; and all our righteouſneſs are as filthy rags, *&c.*

Q. 6. Wherein elſe doth it conſiſt?

A. In turning from ſin as well as grieving for it, *Iſa.* 55. 5. Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, *&c.* *Prov.* 28. 13. He that covereth his ſins, ſhall not proſper, but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have mercy.

Q. 7. Is turning from ſin ſufficient?

A. No, that is but the negative part of Religion, there muſt be alſo a ſincere turning to God, *Pſal.* 119. 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies. *Acts.* 11. 23. And exhorted them all that with purpoſe of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord.

Q. 8. Is all ſorrow for ſin ſaving?

A. No, there is a Repentance that doth no good, *Matth.* 27. 3. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he ſaw that he was condemned, repented himſelf, *&c.* And a Repentance unto Life, *Acts* 11. 18. Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

*Q.* 9. What are the ſigns of true repentance?

*A.* Fear of ſin, care to preſerve our ſelves from it, and Zeal to honour God by new obedience, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. For behold, this ſelf ſame thing that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of your ſelves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement deſire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge? in all things you have approved your ſelves to be clear in this matter.

*Q.* 10. Is there a neceſſity of Repentance in order to forgiveneſs?

*A.* Yes, there is, and they are therefore conjoyned in Scripture, *Acts* 5. 31. For to give repentance to *Iſrael*, and forgiveneſs of ſins. And deſtruction threatned to the impenitent, *Luk.* 13. 3. Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

*Q.* 11. What's the firſt Inference hence?

*A.* That its a falſe Doctrine, which teaches us that ſins are actually forgiven from Eternity, and therefore no need either of Repentance or Prayer, ſave only for the manifeſtation of Pardon.

*Q.* 12. What's the ſecond Inference hence?

*A.* That an hard Heart is a dreadful ſign of a loſt ſtate of Soul, *Rom.* 2. 5. But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

*Q.* 13. What's the laſt Inference hence?

*A.* That there is no cauſe to deſpair of the vileſt ſinner, ſeeing there is power enough in the Spirit of God to break the hardeſt heart, *Ezek.* 36. 26. I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you a heart of fleſh.

### *Of Chriſts Ordinances.*

Queſt. 88. **What are the outward means whereby Chriſt communicateth to us the benefits of Redemption?**

A. **The outward and ordinary means whereby Chriſt communicateth to us the benefits of Redemption, are his Ordinances, eſpecially the Word, Sacraments and Prayer, all which are made effectual to the elect for Salvation.**

*Q.* 1. What makes any thing become a Divine Ordinance?

*A.* The inſtitution or appointment of God, is that alone which makes a Divine Ordinance, *Matth.* 28. 20. Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you, *&c.*

*Q.* 2. Are the inſtitutions of all Ordinances alike clear in Scripture.

*A.* No, ſome are more explicitly and clearly revealed in Scripture than others; as the Lords Supper more clear than Baptiſm, but whatever hath Scripture warrant in the words or conſequence, is of divine appointment.

*Q.* 3. May not Men inſtitute Ordinances of Divine Worſhip?

*A.* No, this in Scripture is condemned as Will-worſhip, *Col.* 2. 20, 22, 23. Wherefore if ye be dead with Chriſt from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world are ye ſubject to ordinances? *&c.* Which things indeed have a ſhew of wiſdom in will-worſhip, *&c.*

*Q.* 4. Why cannot Man inſtitute a Divine Ordinance?

*A.* He cannot do it, becauſe its the prerogative belonging to Chriſts Kingly Office, *Matth.* 28. 20. Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you.

*Q.* 5. For what other reaſon cannot man do it?

*A.* Becauſe he cannot bleſs them, and make them effectual to their ends, but they will be in vain, *Matth.* 15. 9. But in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men.

*Q.* 6. Why are the Ordinances called means of Salvation?

*A.* Becauſe by and through them, the Spirit of the Lord conveys Spiritual Graces into Mens Souls, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. It pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe. 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves to think any thing as of our ſelves: but our ſufficiency is of God.

*Q.* 7. Whence is the vertue of Ordinances?

*A.* 'Tis not in and from themſelves, or the gifts and abilities of him that adminiſters them, but from the Bleſſing and Spirit of the Lord, 1 *Cor.* 3. 7. Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increaſe.

*Q.* 8. Do all Gods Ordinances attain their end?

*A.* Yes, there is none of them in vain, but do attain their end, in the Salvation or Damnation of all that come under them, *Iſa.* 55. 10, 11. For as the rain cometh down, and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower and bread to the eater: So ſhall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it ſhall not return unto me void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſend it. 2 *Cor.* 2. 15, 16. For we are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt, in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh: To the one we are the ſavour of death unto death, and to the other the ſavour of life unto life, *&c.*

*Q.* 9. Are inſtituted Ordinances the only means of Salvation?

*A.* They are not the only means; for God ca convert Men to Chriſt without them, *Acts* 9. 4, 5. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice, ſaying unto him, *Saul*, *Saul*, why perſecuteſt thou me? And he ſaid, who art thou, Lord! and the Lord ſaid, I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt: It is hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks. But they are the ordinary ſtanding means, *Rom.* 10. 14, 15. How then ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how ſhall they hear without a preacher? and how ſhall they preach except they be ſent? *&c.*

*Q.* 10. To whom are the Ordinances made effectual to Salvation?

*A.* To all Gods elect they are effectual to Salvation, and to them only, *Acts* 13. 48. As many were ordained to eternal life, believed. *John* 10. 2 But ye believe not, becauſe ye are not of my ſhee *&c.*

*Q.* 11. What's the firſt inſtruction from hence?

*A.* That great preparation is due to all the Or nances before we engage in them, *Job* 11. 13, 14 thou prepare thine heart, and ſtretch out thy ha towards him. If iniquity be in thine hand, put far away, and let not wickedneſs dwell in thy tab nacles; 1 *Cor.* 29. 18. And prepare their heart u thee.

*Q.* 12. What's the ſecond Inference from hen

*A.* That great Reverence is due to Gods Or nances, when we are actually engaged in the uſe them, *Pſal.* 89. 7. God is greatly to be feared in aſſembly of the ſaints: and to be had in reverence all them that are about him.

*Q.* 13. Wh

Q. 13. *What's the third Inference from hence?*

A. That thoſe People that want Ordinances, are in a ſad and deplorable Condition, *Eph.* 2. 11, 12. *Wherefore remember that ye being in time paſſed Gentiles in the Fleſh, who are called uncircumciſion by that which is called the Circumciſion in the Fleſh made by Hands; that at that time ye were without Chriſt, being aliens from the Common-wealth of Iſrael, and Strangers from the Covenant of Promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the World.*

Q. 14. *What's the laſt Inſtruction hence?*

A. That thoſe that periſh in the midſt of Ordinances, and means of Salvation, periſh with aggravated Perdition, *Matth.* 11. 23. *And thou Capernaum, which are exalted unto Heaven, ſhalt be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this Day.*

### *Of the Word read and heard.*

Queſt. 89. **HOw is the Word made Effectual to Salvation?**

A. **The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but eſpecially the Preaching of the Word, an Effectual Means of convincing and converting Sinners; and building them up in Holineſs and Comfort, through Faith unto Salvation.**

Q. 1. *What mean you by the Word?*

A. By the Word is meant the Word of God, conſigned to writing in the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, which though it be miniſtred by Men, yet it is no other than the Word of God, and as ſuch to be received, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. *For this cauſe alſo thank we God without ceaſing, becauſe when ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the Word of Men: But (as it is in Truth) the Word of God,* &c.

Q. 2. *Whence is the Efficacy of this Word?*

A. It is wholly from the Spirit of God that it becomes Effectual to any Mans Salvation, 1 *Cor.* 3. 6, 7. *I have planted, and Apollo watered, but God gave the increaſe. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increaſe.*

Q. 3. *Is the reading of the Scripture an Ordinance of God for Mens Salvation?*

A. Yes, it is, *Deut.* 17. 19. *And it ſhall be with him, and he ſhall read therein all the Days of his Life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the Words of this Law, and theſe Statutes to do them.* And in reading of it, God ſometimes comes in by his Spirit to Mens Converſion, *Acts* 8. 27, 28, 29. *And he aroſe and went, and behold a Man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great Authority under Candace Queen of the Ethiopians, who had the Charge of all her Treaſure, and had come to Jeruſalem for to worſhip, was returning, and ſitting in his Chariot, read Iſaias the Prophet. Then the Spirit ſaid to Philip, go near, and join thy ſelf to his Chariot,* &c.

Q. 4. *Is the hearing of the Word a means of Salvation?*

A. Yes, it is, *Iſa.* 55. 3. *Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your Soul ſhall live,* &c. *Cor.* 1. 21. *It pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching to ſave them that believe?*

Q. 5. *To what end is the Word uſeful to Men?*

A. The firſt end and uſe of the Word is to convince Men of their Sin and Miſery out of Chriſt, *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. *But if all Propheſie, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned: He is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the ſecrets of his Heart made manifeſt,* &c.

Q. 6. *What is it uſeful for beſides Conviction?*

A. 'Tis uſeful for Converſion, as well as Conviction, *Pſalm* 19. 7. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul,* &c. Acts 26. 18. *To turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the Power of Satan unto God,* &c.

Q. 7. *Doth the Word convince and convert all that hear it?*

A. No, but thoſe only that are ordained to Eternal Life, *Acts* 13. 48. *As many as were ordained to Eternal Life believed.*

Q. 8. *What elſe is the Word uſeful for?*

A. To build up the Saints to Perfection in Chriſt, *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13. *And he gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt: Till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man; unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs in Chriſt.* Acts 20. 32. *And now Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an Inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.*

Q. 9. *May the common People read the Scriptures?*

A. Yes, 'tis a Duty commanded by Chriſt, *John* 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures,* &c. and commended by the Apoſtle, *Acts* 17. 11. *Theſe were more noble than thoſe in Theſſalonica, in that they received the Word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearched the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo.*

Q. 10. *Is it their Duty or Liberty alſo to Preach it?*

A. No, it is not, for beſides Abilities for that Work, there muſt be a call, *Rom.* 10. 14, 15. *How ſhall they hear without a Preacher, and how ſhall they preach except they be ſent?* &c.

Q. 11. *What's the firſt Inſtruction from hence?*

A. That the enjoyments of the Scripture, and an able faithful Miniſtry to expound and apply them, is a ſpecial Mercy to any People, *Pſalm* 147. 19, 20. *He ſheweth his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and Judgments unto Iſrael, he hath not dealt ſo with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them.*

Q. 12. *What's the ſecond Inſtruction?*

A. That Men cannot expect Special and Spiritual Bleſſings from God in the wilful neglect of the Ordinances, *Prov.* 28. 9. *He that turneth away his Ear from hearing the Law, even his Prayer ſhall be Abomination.*

Q. 13. *What's the third Inference?*

A. That ſad is their Condition, who ſit all their Days under the Word to no Purpoſe at all, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3, 4. *If our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt: In whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, leſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhould ſhine into them.*

Q. 14 *What's the laſt Inference?*

A. That Chriſts Ordinances and Miniſters ſhould be moſt welcome to the People to whom God ſends them, *Iſa.* 52. 7. *How beautiful upon the Mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publiſheth Peace, that publiſheth Salvation, that ſaith unto Zion, thy God reigneth.*

### *Of the manner of Hearing.*

Queſt. 90. **How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to Salvation?**

**A. That the Word may become effectual to Salvation, we muſt attend thereunto with Diligence, Preparation and Prayer, receive it with Faith and Love, lay it up in our Hearts, and practiſe it in our Lives.**

Q. 1. *If the matter we read or hear be good, is not that enough for our ſalvation?*

*A.* No, God requires that the Word be read and heard in a due manner, and the manner of hearing is of ſpecial regard with God, *Luke* 8. 18. Take heed therefore how ye hear, *&c.*

Q. 2. *How many things belong to the due manner of hearing?*

*A.* Three ſorts of Duties belong to it; ſome antecedent, as, preparation and prayer; ſome concomitant, as due diligence and retention; and ſome ſubſequent, as practiſe.

Q. 3. *What is due preparation for hearing?*

*A.* It conſiſts in ſerious conſideration of the greatneſs and holineſs of that God, whom we approach in hearing the Word, *Acts* 10. 33. Now therefore we are all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. And awing the heart even to a degree of holy trembling thereby, *Iſa.* 66. 2. To him will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.

Q. 4. *What's the principal conſideration thus to awe the heart?*

*A.* The Word is in its own nature an heart-ſearching Word, *Heb.* 4. 12. For the word of God is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joynts and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And that eventually 'twill be the ſavour of Life or Death to us, 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. To the one we are the ſavour of death unto death; and to the other the ſavour of life unto life, *&c.*

Q. 5. *What elſe belongs to due preparation to hear?*

*A.* The diſcharging of the heart from worldly cares, *Matth.* 13. 7. And fell among thorns, and the thorns ſprang up and choaked them. And carnal luſts, *Jam.* 1. 21. Wherefore lay apart all filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word, which is able to ſave your ſouls.

Q. 6. *What's the third Act of due preparation?*

*A.* Longing after the Word for further communications of Grace by it, 1 *Pet* 2. 2. As new born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. *Iſa.* 2. 3. And many people ſhall go and ſay, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the houſe of the God of *Jacob*, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion ſhall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem.

Q. 7. *What's the ſecond antecedent duty of hearing?*

*A.* Prayer is an antecedent duty to hearing the Word, and that both for the aſſiſtance of the Miniſter, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 1. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free courſe, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And our own illumination, *Pſal.* 119. 18. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

Q. 8. *What elſe ſhould we pray for?*

*A.* That God would pour out his Spirit with the Word according to that promiſe, *Prov.* 1. 23. I will pour out my ſpirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you.

Q. 9. *Doth unpreparedneſs for the Word always hinder its efficacy on the heart?*

*A.* No, God ſometimes is found of them that ſought him not, *Iſa.* 65. 1. I was found of them that ſought me not, *&c.* But it is a ſin to neglect it, and needs a pardon of God.

Q. 10. *What's the firſt motive to prepare for ſolemn duties?*

*A.* That it argues the ſincerity of the heart, and in that caſe God will be merciful to infirmities, 2 *Chron.* 30. 18, 19. For a multitude of the people, even a multitude of Ephraim and Manaſſeth, Iſſachar and Zebulun had not cleanſed themſelves, yet did eat the paſſover, but not as it is written: Wherefore Hezekiah prayed for them, ſaying, the good Lord be merciful towards him, that prepareth his whole heart to ſeek the Lord God, the God of his fathers, though he be not cleanſed according to the purification of the ſanctuary.

Q. 11. *What's the ſecond motive?*

*A.* 'Tis a ſweet ſign that God will make that duty ſucceſsful for which the heart is prepared, *Pſal.* 10. 17. Thou prepareſt their heart: thou bendeſt thine ear to them.

Q. 12. *What's the third motive to preparation?*

*A.* The majeſty and jealouſie of God, to whom we approach, obliges us to ſolemn preparation, *Heb.* 12. 28, 29. Whereby we may ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a conſuming fire.

Q. 13. *But muſt a man neglect the duty if his heart be not duly prepared for it?*

*A.* No, for that would be to add a new ſin to a former, and aggravate it the more.

Q. 14. *In what manner muſt the prepared heart go to the word?*

*A.* Not in dependance on its own preparations, but upon the Spirit's aſſiſtance, *Pſa.* 71. 16. I will go forward in the ſt rength of the Lord God, *&c.*

Q. 15. *What's the firſt act of Faith due to the Word?*

*A.* The aſſenting act of Faith is required to the Word read or preached, whereby we acknowledge it to be of Divine Authority, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. And without controverſie, great is the myſtery of godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the ſpirit, ſeen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. 2 *Pet.* 1. 21. For the propheſie came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God ſpake as thy were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.

Q. 16. *What's the ſecond act of Faith required us?*

*A.* An applying act of Faith is alſo required us, *Rom.* 15. 4. For whatſoever things were writt afore-time, were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the ſcriptu might have hope.

Q. 17. *What's the firſt end in applying the Word?*

*A.* It is firſt to be applyed to our conviction bo of ſin and miſery, *Acts* 2. 37. Now when th heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, a ſaid unto Peter, and to the reſt of the apoſtl men and brethren, what ſhall we do?

Q. 18. *What's the ſecond end, or uſe of applying*

A.

*A.* It muſt be applied for our Guidance and Direction to Chriſt, *John* 6. 4, 5. *Every Man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

Q. 19. *What's the Third Uſe to which it muſt be applied?*

*A.* We muſt apply it for our Direction through the whole Courſe of Chriſtian Duties, 2 *Pet.* 1. 19. *We have alſo a more ſure word of Propheſie; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that ſhineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day Star ariſe in your Hearts.*

Q. 20. *What other Uſe muſt we apply it to?*

*A.* It muſt be applied for our Comfort in all inward and outward Troubles, *Rom.* 15. 4. *For whatſoever things were written afore time, were written for our Learning, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

Q. 21. *On what Account are we to receive it with Love?*

*A.* We are to Love it for its Authors ſake, becauſe it's the Word of God, *Pſalm* 119. 159. *Conſider how I love thy Precepts,* &c.

Q. 22. *What's the ſecond Motive of Love to the Word?*

*A.* The Holineſs and Purity of it deſerves and engages our Love to it, *Pſalm* 119. 140. *Thy Word is very pure: Therefore thy Servant loveth it.*

Q. 23. *What's the Third Motive to engage our Love to it?*

*A.* The great and conſtant uſefulneſs of it to our Souls, as that we cannot ſubſiſt without, *Job* 23. 12. *I have eſteemed the Words of his Mouth more than my neceſſary Food.*

Q. 24. *How doth this Love to the Word manifeſt it ſelf?*

*A.* Our Love manifeſts it ſelf in our longing after it, *Pſalm* 119. 20. *My Soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy Judgments at all Times.* Our diligent Attendance on it, *Acts* 10. 33. *Immediately therefore I ſent unto thee, and thou haſt well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.*

Q. 25. *How is Faith and Love evidenced to the Word after hearing it?*

*A.* By preſerving it carefully in our Hearts and Memories, *Pſalm* 119. 11. *Thy Word have I bid in my Heart: That I might not Sin againſt thee.*

Q. 26. *What's the beſt Cure for a bad Memory?*

*A.* Labour to get an high eſteem of it, and an experimental feeling of it, and frequently meditate on it, *Pſalm* 119. 16. *I will delight my ſelf in thy Statutes: I will not forget thy Word.* Pſalm 119. 93. *I will never forget thy Precepts; for with them thou haſt quickened me.* Pſalm 119. 99. *Thy Teſtimonies are my Meditation.*

Q. 26. *How is Faith and Love principally manifeſted to the Word after hearing?*

*A.* 'Tis principally manifeſted by bringing forth the Fruits of it in our Lives, *Col.* 1. 5, 6. *For the Hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof ye heard before in the Word of the Truth of the Goſpel, which is come unto you, as it is in all the World, and bringeth forth Fruit, as it doth alſo in you, ſince the day ye heard of it, and knew the Grace of God in Truth.*

Q. 28. *What's the Uſe of all this?*

*A.* This ſerves to reprove our formal and dead hearing the Word, and excites us all to evidence and exerciſe more Faith, Love and Obedience in hearing it.

*Of Sacraments as means of Salvation.*

Queſt. 91. **HOw do the Sacraments become effectual means of Salvation?**

**A. The Sacraments become effectual means of Salvation, not from any Vertue in them, or in him that doth adminiſter them, but only by the Bleſſing of Chriſt, and the working of his Spirit in them, that by Faith receive them.**

Q. 1. *What's the firſt proper Senſe of this Word Sacrament?*

*A.* It primarily ſignifies a ſolemn Oath taken by Souldiers when they Liſt themſelves under a Prince or General; and this Oath was mutual.

Q. 2. *Why do we uſe it, ſeeing it is not a Scripture Word?*

*A.* Though the Word be not found in Scripture, yet the thing intended by it is, and that brings the Word in uſe, for in the Sacraments God obliges himſelf to us by confirming his Covenant by it, *Rom.* 4. 11. *And he received the Sign of Circumciſion, a ſeal of the Righteouſneſs of the Faith, which he had yet being uncircumciſed: That he might be the Father of all them that believe, though they be not circumciſed, that Righteouſneſs might be imputed unto them alſo.* And we oblige our ſelves to God, *Rom.* 6. 3, 4. *Know ye not that ſo many of us as were baptized into Chriſt, were baptized into his Death? Therefore we are buried with him in Baptiſm into Death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of Life.*

Q. 3. *What is here meant by Salvation?*

*A.* By Salvation is meant our compleat and final Deliverance from Sin and Miſery, both Temporal and Eternal. From Sin, *Math.* 1. 21. *For he ſhall ſave his People from their Sins.* From Miſery, 1 *Theſ.* 1. 10. *Even Jeſus which delivereth us from the wrath to come.*

Q. 4. *What is a mean of Salvation?*

*A.* A Mean of Salvation ſignifies any Appointment of God, whereby he promotes and accompliſhes his Deſign of ſaving our Souls, ſo the Word is a Mean, *Rom.* 1. 16. *For I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt, for it is the Power of God unto Salvation, to every one that believeth.*

Q. 5. *How doth the Word and Sacraments differ as means of Salvation?*

*A.* The Word is appointed to be the firſt means of begetting Faith, 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. *Who then is Paul? Or who is Apollo? but Miniſters by whom ye believed,* &c. Sacraments are to Seal and Confirm it, *Rom.* 4. 11. *And he received the Sign of Circumciſion, a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith,* &c.

Q. 6. *What is meant by an Effectual Mean of Salvation?*

*A.* By an Effectual Mean, is meant ſuch a mean as fully obtains and accompliſhes the end it was appointed for, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. *Becauſe when ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the Word of Men; but (as it is in Truth) the Word of God, which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe.*

Q. 7. *Don't all the means of Salvation prove Effectual to Men?*

*A.* Though the Means of Salvation prove Effectual to Gods Elect, yet they are ſo to no others, *Acts* 28. 23, 24. *And when they had appointed him a day,* *there came many to him into his Lodging, to whom he expounded and teſtified the Kingdom of God, perſwading them concerning Jeſus, both out of the Law of Moſes, and out of the Prophets from Morning till Evening. And ſome believed the Things which were ſpoken, and ſome believed not.*

Q. 8. *Do not the Sacraments ſave all that partake of them?*

*A.* No, they do not; Baptiſm may paſs on a caſt-away, *Acts* 8. 23. *For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of Iniquity.* And the Lords Supper may be received unworthily, 1 *Cor.* 11. 27. *Wherefore whoſoever ſhall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.*

Q. 9. *What's the Reaſon they prove not Effectual to all?*

*A.* Becauſe their Vertue and Efficacy is not in themſelves, but in God; for we ſee they Work as Gods Spirit concurs, or not concurs with them, as in the Inſtance before given.

Q. 10. *But is not that for want of Wiſdom, Holineſs or Zeal in the Miniſter, that they have no more Efficacy?*

*A.* No, it is not principally, or only from thence; for it's not in the Power of the holieſt Miniſter in the World to make them effectual, 1 *Cor.* 3. 7. *Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: But God that giveth the increaſe.*

Q. 11. *Whence is it that Sacraments become Effectual?*

*A.* 'Tis only from the Spirit of Chriſt working in them, and by them, on the Souls of Men, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, —— and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

Q. 12. *What's the firſt Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* That Men enjoying all the Ordinances of the Goſpel, and partaking of the Sacraments annexed to the Covenant of Grace, may yet periſh for ever, 1 *Cor.* 10. 3, 4, 5. *And did all eat the ſame ſpiritual Meat: And did all drink the ſame ſpiritual drink; (for they drank of that ſpiritual rock that followed them: And that Rock was Chriſt) but with many of them God was not well pleaſed: For they were overthrown in the Wilderneſs.* Luke 13. 26, 27. *Then ſhall ye begin to ſay, we have eaten, and drank in thy preſence, and thou haſt taught in our ſtreets. But he ſhall ſay, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity.*

Q. 13. *What's the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* That Men ſhould not idolize ſome Miniſters for the Excellency of their Gifts, and deſpiſe others, ſeeing 'tis not in them to make the Means Effectual.

Q. 14. *What's the laſt Inference?*

*A.* That in all our Attendance upon the Means of Salvation, we ſhould be careful to beg the Spirit and Bleſſing of Chriſt, without which they cannot be Effectual to our Salvation.

### *Of the Nature of Sacraments.*

Queſt. 92. **What is a Sacrament?**

A. **A Sacrament is an Holy Ordinance inſtituted by Chriſt; wherein by ſenſible ſigns, Chriſt and the Benefits of the New Covenant are repreſented, ſealed and applied to Believers.**

Q. 1. *How many ſorts of Sacraments are found in Scripture?*

*A.* Of Sacraments there are two Sorts, ſome *extraordinary* and *tranſient*, as the Fiery Pillar, Manna, and Water out of the Rock, 1 *Cor.* 10. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Moreover, Brethren, I would not that ye ſhould be ignorant, how that all our Fathers were under the Cloud, and all paſſed through the Sea: And were all baptized unto Moſes in the Cloud, and in the Sea: And did all eat the ſame ſpiritual Meat: And did all drink the ſame ſpiritual Drink (for they drank of that ſpiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Chriſt).* And ſome *ordinary* and *ſtanding*, as Circumciſion and the Paſſover, before Chriſt; and Baptiſm and the Lords Supper ſince Chriſts Death.

Q. 2. *How many things are to be conſidered in every Sacrament?*

*A.* In every Sacrament five Things muſt be conſidered, (1.) The *Author.* (2.) The *Parts.* (3.) The *Union* of thoſe *Parts.* (4.) The *Subjects.* (5.) The *Ends* and *Uſes* of it.

Q. 3. *Who is the Author of the Sacraments?*

*A.* The Lord Jeſus Chriſt as King of the Church, by whoſe ſole Authority Baptiſm was inſtituted, *Matth.* 28. 19, 20. *Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt: Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you,* &c. And the Lords Supper, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23, 24. *For I have received of the Lord that which alſo I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jeſus, the ſame Night in which he was betrayed, took Bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, Take, eat, this is my Body, which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me.*

Q. 4 *Are the old Sacraments yet in being and uſe in the Church?*

*A.* No, they are paſt away, and the new come in their room. Baptiſm takes place of Circumciſion, *Col.* 2. 11, 12. *In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the Circumciſion made without Hands, in putting off the Body of the Sins of the Fleſh by the Circumciſion of Chriſt: Buried with him in Baptiſm,* &c. And the Lords Supper of the Paſſover, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. *Purge out therefore the old Leaven, that ye may be a new Lump, as ye are unleavened, for even Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us.*

Q. 5. *Of what parts doth every Sacrament conſiſt?*

*A.* Every Sacrament conſiſts of two Parts, one external and earthly; another internal and Heavenly, or Spritual. Bread, Wine and Water, are the external, Chriſts Blood and Spirit the internal Parts, *Rom.* 6. 3. *Know ye not that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt were baptized into his Death* 1 Cor. 11. 25. *This Cup is the New Teſtament in my Blood,* &c.

Q. 6. *Wherein conſiſts the Sacramental Union of theſe Parts?*

*A.* It conſiſts by Vertue of Chriſts Inſtitution i Three Things, (1.) In apt *Signification.* (2.) Fir *Obſignation.* And (3.) Real *Exhibition* of the Ble ſings ſignified and ſealed.

Q. 7. *What are the Bleſſings ſignified by Water Baptiſm?*

*A.* It ſignifies our Implantation into Chriſt, an Communion with him in his Death and Reſurrecti on, *Rom.* 6. 4. *Therefore we are buried with him by ba tiſm into Death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed up fro the Dead by the Glory of the Father; even ſo we al ſhould walk in newneſs of Life.* And our ſolemn A miſſion into the viſible Church, *Gal.* 3 26, 27, 2 29. *For ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Chri Jeſus. For as many of you as have been baptized i Chriſt, have put on Chriſt. There is neither Jew, n*

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*Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither Male nor Female: For ye are all one in Chriſt Jeſus. And if ye be Chriſts, then are ye Abrahams ſeed, and Heirs according to the Promiſe.*

*Q.* 8. *What are the Bleſſings ſignified by Bread and Wine?*

*A.* They ſignifie Chriſts Body and Blood, broken and poured out for us, with all the Bleſſings of Remiſſion, Peace and Salvation purchaſed by his Blood, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17. *The Cup of Bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt? For we being many, are one Bread, and one Body: For we are all partakers of that one Bread.*

*Q.* 9. *Do the Sacraments ſeal, as well as ſignifie theſe Things?*

*A.* Yes, they do, *Rom.* 4. 11. *And he received the ſign of Circumciſion, a ſeal of the Righteouſneſs of the Faith,* &c. Their Uſe is to confirm Gods Covenant with Believers.

*Q.* 10. *Who are the proper Subjects of the Sacraments?*

*A.* Believers and their Seed are the Subjects of Baptiſm, but adult Chriſtians only of the Lords Supper, *Acts* 2. 38, 39. *Repent and be baptized every one of you, for the Promiſe is unto you, and to your Children, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.* 1 Cor. 11. 28. *But let a Man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

*Q.* 11. *What is the main Uſe and End of Sacraments?*

*A.* It is to ratifie and confirm Gods Covenant with Believers, *Rom.* 4. 21. *And he received the ſign of Circumciſion, a ſeal of the Righteouſneſs of the Faith, that he had yet being uncircumciſed,* &c. 1 Cor. 11. 26. *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's Death till he come.*

*Q.* 12. *What's the firſt Inſtruction from hence?*

*A.* That the abuſe of ſuch holy and ſolemn Myſteries, is a Sin of dreadful Aggravation, and ſuch as God will puniſh, 1 *Cor.* 11. 27. *Wherefore whoſoever ſhall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.*

*Q.* 13. *What's the ſecond Inſtruction?*

*A.* Hence we learn the tender care and love of Chriſt over the Church in inſtituting ſuch uſeful and comfortable Ordinances for us.

## *Of the Number of Sacraments.*

Queſt. 93. **Which are the Sacraments of the New Teſtament?**

A. **The Sacraments of the New Teſtament are Baptiſm, and the Lords Supper.**

*Q.* 1. *How many Sacraments hath Chriſt appointed in the New Teſtament?*

*A.* Chriſt hath appointed two and no more, theſe being ſufficient for our Initiation and Confirmation.

*Q.* 2. *How many have the Papiſts added to them?*

*A.* They have added Five more, *viz. Confirmation, Penance, Ordination, Marriage* and *Extream Unction.*

*Q.* 3. *What is their Sacrament of Confirmation?*

*A.* It is the anointing of the Baptiſed with Chriſm in the Forehead, with this Form of Words, *I ſign thee with the ſign of the Croſs, and confirm thee with the Chriſm of Salvation, in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt.*

*Q.* 4, *What's their ground for this Practice?*

*A.* The abuſe of that Scripture, *Heb.* 6. 2. *Of the Doctrine of Baptiſms, and laying on of Hands,* &c. Which by a figurative Speech, expreſſeth the whole ſtanding Miniſtry in the Church by laying on of Hands.

*Q.* 5. *What's their Sacrament of Penance?*

*A.* It is Repentance manifeſted by outward Signs; to which the word of Abſolution coming, makes it a Sacrament miſgrounded on, *John* 20. 23. *Whoſeſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſeſoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.*

*Q.* 6. *What is their Sacrament of Orders or Ordination?*

*A.* It is the laying on of Hands in Ordination of Miniſters, by which they conceive Spiritual Grace is given by miſtake of, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou ſtir up the Gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my Hands.*

Q. 7. *What's their fourth ſuperadded Sacrament?*

*A.* It is Marriage, grounded upon thoſe Words of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 5. 32. *This is a great Myſtery; but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and the Church. Which only ſhews a ſimilitude of our Union with Chriſt, not an inſtituted Sign to that End.*

Q. 8. *What is their fifth ſuperadded Sacrament?*

*A.* Extream Unction, or anointing the Sick near Death with conſecrated Oyl, grounded on *Mark* 6. 13. *And anointed with oyl many that were ſick and healed them.* And *James* 5. 14. *Is any ſick among you? Let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oyl in the Name of the Lord.* Which are neither Sacramental Rites, nor of ordinary ſtanding Uſe in the Church, but extraordinary and temporary for that Age.

Q. 9. *What learn we hence?*

*A* Hence we learn how apt Men are to corrupt Gods Ordinances by their Superſtitious Additions, *Matth.* 15. 9. *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.*

Q. 9. *What's the ſecond Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* How juſt and neceſſary our Separation from *Rome* is, who have groſly corrupted Gods Ordinances, and left Men no other Remedy, *Rev.* 13. 6. *And he opened his Mouth in blaſphemy againſt God, to blaſpheme his Name and his Tabernacles, and them that dwelt in Heaven.*

Q. 11. *What's the Third Inſtruction?*

*A.* That the Reformation of Religion is an invaluable Mercy, a great Deliverance from Spiritual Bondage, *Rev.* 11. 19. *And the Temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was ſeen in his Temple the Ark of this Teſtament, and there were Lightnings, and Voices, and Thunderings, and an Earthquake, and great Hail.*

Q 12. *What's the fourth Inſtruction?*

*A.* That *Rome* ſhall certainly fall, and all her Adherents, for the horrid injury done by them to Chriſt, and the Souls of Men, *Rev.* 18. 20, 21. *Rejoyce over her thou Heaven, and ye holy Apoſtles and Prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty Angel took up a Stone like a great Milſtone, and caſt it into the Sea, ſaying, thus with Violence ſhall that great City Babylon be thrown down, and ſhall be found no more at all.*

### *What is Baptiſm?*

*Queſt.* 94. **What is Baptiſm?**

**A. Baptiſm is a Sacrament, wherein the waſhing of Water, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, doth ſignifie and ſeal our ingrafting unto Chriſt, and partaking of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace and our engagement to be the Lords.**

*Q.* 1. What is the external part of Baptiſm?

*A.* It is pure unmixed Water, *Heb.* 10. 22. And our bodies waſhed with pure water. And therefore its a vile practice of Papiſts to add Oyl, Salt and Spittle to Water in Baptiſm.

*Q.* 2. What doth Water in Baptiſm ſignifie?

*A.* It ſignifies the Blood of Chriſt, *Rev.* 1. 5. Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.

*Q.* 3. What's the firſt reſemblance it hath to Chriſts Blood?

*A.* In the freeneſs of it to all, it repreſents the unpurchaſed Blood of Chriſt, *Iſa.* 55. 1. Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.

*Q.* 4. What's the ſecond reſemblance to Chriſts Blood?

*A.* It reſembles it in its refreſhing quality; Water refreſheth the thirſty; ſo doth Chriſts Blood, *John* 6. 35. He that believeth on me, ſhall never thirſt.

*Q.* 5. What's the third reſemblance it hath to Chriſts Blood?

*A.* The cleanſing property of Water ſhews the purifying vertue of Chriſt Blood, *Heb.* 9. 14. How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal ſpirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from dead works, to ſerve the living God.

*Q.* 6. What's the fourth reſemblance it hath to Chriſts Blood?

*A.* It reſembles it in the neceſſity of it; for as the Body cannot live without Water, ſo neither can the Soul without Chriſts Blood, *Heb.* 9. 23. It was therefore neceſſary, that the paterns of things in the heavens ſhould be purified with theſe, but the heavenly things themſelves with better ſacrifices than theſe.

*Q.* 7. What's the fifth reſemblance of Water to the Blood of Chriſt?

*A.* As Water neither refreſhes, nor purifies the Body without application; ſo neither doth Chriſts Blood refreſh or purifie the Soul till applyed, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification and redemption.

*Q.* 8. Is it neceſſary to plunge the whole body under water in Baptizing every perſon?

*A.* The word [Baptize] ſignifying as well to waſh, as to plunge: A perſon may be truly Baptized that is not plunged. And we cannot think by the circumſtances of time and place, that the Jaylor in the night was carryed to a River out of the City, *Acts* 16. 33. And he took them the ſame hour of the night, and waſhed their ſtripes, and was baptized, he, and all his, ſtraight-way.

*Q.* 9. But is it not ſaid, *John* 3. 23. That John was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, becauſe there was much water there; and they came and were baptized?

*A.* The word ſignifies many waters (that is) ſprings of waters there, which are known by Travellers to be ſmall, not capable of plunging into.

*Q.* 10. What are the benefits accruing to us by Baptiſm?

*A.* The benefits are twofold; ſome external, called the fatneſs of the Olive-tree, (*i.e.*) Ordinances and viſible Memberſhip, *Rom.* 11. 17. And thou being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them, partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive-tree. And ſome ſpiritual and ſaving, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. The like figure whereunto, even baptiſm, doth alſo now ſave us (not the putting away the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God) by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.

*Q.* 11. What engagements are laid on the Baptized?

*A.* They are engaged to be the Lords people, and walk ſuitable to that engagement, *Rom.* 6. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of Life.

*Q.* 12. Is Baptiſm to be reiterated as the Lords Supper?

*A.* No, for the Lords Supper is the Sacrament for nouriſhing, but this for implantation, *Rom.* 6. 4, 5. Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death, we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection.

*Q.* 13. Doth Baptiſm regenerate men, and confer ſaving Grace?

*A.* No, it doth not in its own vertue convey Grace, no more than the Lords Supper; but the Spirt of Go is the Author of Grace, and works it as he pleaſe before, or after Baptiſm.

### *Of the ſubjects of Baptiſm.*

*Queſt.* 95. **TO whom is Baptiſm to be adminiſtred?**

**A. Baptiſm is not to be adminiſtred to an that are out of the viſible Church, till they profeſs their Faith to Chriſt, and Obedience t him, but the infants of ſuch as are members o the viſible Church are to be Baptized.**

*Q.* 1. Who are to be Baptized?

*A.* Believers and their infant off-ſpring, *Acts* 2. 3 For the promiſe is to you, and your children, and t all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord ou God ſhall call.

*Q.* 2. How doth it appear that the infant ſeed o Believers ought to be Baptized?

*A.* It appears by this, that they being *Abrahan* Seed, were taken into Covenant with God, and ordered to have the ſign of the Covenant applied to the and that Grant was never reverſed, *Gen.* 17. 7, 1 And I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and the and thy ſeed after thee, in their generations for an verlaſting covenant to be a God unto thee, and thy ſeed after thee. This is my covenant which ſhall keep between me and you, and thy ſeed aft thee, every man-child among you ſhall be circumciſe

*Q.* 3. But was not that the Covenant of Wor and ſo will not hold to infer their priviledge und the Covenant of Grace?

*A.* No, it was not; for God never did, nor w become a God by way of ſpecial intereſt to any p ple, by vertue of the Covenant of Works, ſince breach of it by the fall.

*Q.* 4 But if it were the Covenant of Grace, how doth it appear the right of Believers Infants is ſtill the ſame it was before in Abrahams time?

*A.* It appears plainly from the Apoſtles own words and arguments, *Acts* 2. 39. For the promiſe is to you, and to your children, *&c.*

*Q.* 5. But though Infants then were members of Gods viſible Church among the Jews, how doth it appear they are ſo now when God hath caſt them off?

*A.* It appears the memberſhip and priviledges are as ſure and ample to them now, that are the Children of Gentile-believers, as ever they were to the Jewiſh Infants, *Rom.* 11. 17. And if ſome of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive-tree wert grafted in amongſt them, and with them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive-tree.

*Q.* 6. How elſe doth it appear they are within the Covenant?

*A.* It appears by this, that they are pronounced holy, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. Elſe were your children unclean, but now are they holy. Which is a fœderal holineſs; and none out of Covenant can be holy by Covenant.

*Q.* 7. But may not that place mean only their legitimacy?

*A.* No, it cannot; for then the Apoſtle muſt pronounce all the Infants in the World Baſtards, that deſcend not at leaſt from one believing Parent.

*Q.* 8. But Infants are not capable to Covenant with God, or perform Covenant Duties, and therefore why ſhould they be admitted to Covenant Priviledges?

*A.* A Child now of eight days old is as capable of being admitted into Covenant with God, as Children of the ſame age were in Abrahams days; and then its manifeſt they were admitted.

*Q.* 9. Though they were admitted by Circumciſion then, will it follow they may be ſo by Baptiſm now, ſeeing that Ordinance is aboliſhed?

*A.* Yes, it will; for though Circumciſion ceaſe, yet Baptiſm is come into its place, *Col.* 2. 10. 11, 12. And ye are compleat in him, which is the head of all principality and power. In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the circumciſion made without hands, in puting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh, by the circumciſion of Chriſt buried with him in baptiſm, *&c.*

*Q.* 10. Circumciſion was a Seal of the Covenant of Works, and the argument will not hold from a Seal of the Covenant of Works, to a Seal of the Covenant of Grace?

*A.* Circumciſion never was, nor was intended to be a Seal of the Covenant of Works, but of the Righteouſneſs of Faith, Rom. 4. 11. And he received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith that he had, yet being uncircumciſed, *&c.*

*Q.* 11. But have we no expreſs command in the New Teſtament to baptize Infants?

*A.* There needed no new command; their privi- dge had been ſetled many ages before upon them, d never reverſed by Chriſt, or his Apoſtles, but eir former right declared to continue ſtill to them, *Acts* 2. 39. For the promiſe is to you and your chil- ren, *&c.*

*Q.* 12. But if they have a right, we might expect find ſome examples of their baptizing?

A. 'Tis manifeſt that Believers houſhoulds were ptized with them, *Acts* 16. 15, 33. And when ſhe s baptized, and her houſhold, *&c.* Ver. 33. And took them the ſame hour of the night, and waſhed eir ſtripes, and was baptized, he, and all his ſtraight- y. And if Infants are not named, ſo neither are y of Age, born of Chriſtian Parents.

*Q.* 13. But many truſt to their Infant-baptiſm, as to their Regeneration, and ſo much miſchief's done?

*A.* They do ſo; yet the Duty is not therefore to be neglected. The preaching of Chriſt is to ſome a ſtumbling block, yet Chriſt muſt be preached for all that.

*Q.* 14. But many baptized Infants prove naught?

*A.* And ſo do many baptized at Age too. Duties are not to be meaſured by events.

### *What is the Lords Supper?*

Queſt. 96. **What is the Lords Supper?**

**A. The Lords Supper is a Sacrament, wherein by giving and receiving Bread and Wine according to Chriſts appointment, his Death is ſhewed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by Faith made partakers of his Body and Blood, with all his benefits to their ſpiritual nouriſhment, and growth in Grace.**

*Q.* 1. By whoſe authority is the Lords Supper inſtituted and appointed?

*A.* By the ſoveraign authority of Chriſt the King of the Church, and not by the pleaſure of man, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. For I have received of the Lord that which alſo I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jeſus, the ſame night in which he was betrayed, took bread.

*Q.* 2. Of what parts doth this Sacrament conſiſt?

*A.* It conſiſts of two parts, one earthly and viſible, to wit, Bread and Wine, the other ſpiritual and inviſible, the Body and Blood of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16. The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt?

*Q.* 3. How do theſe earthly and heavenly things become a Sacrament?

*A.* By the word of inſtitution and bleſſing coming from Chriſt upon them, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23, 24, 25. For I have received of the Lord that which alſo I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jeſus the ſame night in which he was betrayed, took bread. And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the ſame manner he took the cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying, This cup is the new teſtament in my blood: this do as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me.

*Q.* 4. When did Chriſt ordain and inſtitute this Sacrament?

*A.* He inſtituted it in the ſame night he was betrayed, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. The Lord Jeſus the ſame night in which he was betrayed, took bread. It could not be ſooner, becauſe the Paſſover muſt be firſt celebrated, and by the inſtitution of this abrogated. Nor later, for ſoon after he was apprehended.

*Q.* 5. What doth the time of its inſtitution teach us?

*A.* It teaches us how great Chriſts care and love to his people is, that he makes in his Ordinance ſuch proviſion for our comfort, though he knew his own bitter agony was juſt at hand.

*Q.* 6. What is the general uſe and end of this Sacrament?

*A.* It is to confirm, ſeal and ratifie the New Covenant to Believers, 1 *Cor.* 11. 35. This cup is the new teſtament in my blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

*Q.* 7. What are the particular ends and uſe of it?

*A.* The firſt particular end and uſe of it is, to bring Chriſt and his Sufferings afreſh to our remembrance, 1 *Cor.* 11. 24, 25. Thus do in remembrance of me.

*Q.* 8. What kind of remembrance of Chriſt is here intended?

*A.* Not a meer ſpeculative, but an effectionate heart-melting remembrance of him, like that of *Peter*, *Math.* 26. 75. And *Peter* remembred the words of Jeſus which ſaid unto him, before the cock ſhall crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly, Or of *Joſeph*, *Gen.* 43. 29, 30. And *Joſeph* made haſte: for his bowels did yern upon his brother, and he ſought where to weep, and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.

*Q.* 9. What doth this end of the Sacrament imply?

*A.* It implies this, that the beſt of Gods people are too apt to forget Chriſt, and what he hath endured and ſuffered for for them.

*Q.* 10. What elſe doth it imply?

*A.* It implies this, that none but thoſe that have the ſaving knowledge of Chriſt, and have had former acquaintance with Chriſt, are fit for this Ordinance; for no man can remember what he never knew, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

*Q.* 11. What's the ſecond particular uſe and end of this Sacrament?

*A.* It is to repreſent Chriſt to Believers, as an apt ſign of him, and of his Death; and that both memorative, ſignificative, and inſtructive.

*Q.* 12. How is it a memorative ſign of Chriſt?

*A.* It brings Chriſt to our remembrance, as his Death and bitter Sufferings are therein repreſented to us, by the breaking of Bread, and pouring forth of Wine, 1 *Cor.* 11. 26. For as often as yea eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew forth the Lords death till he come.

*Q.* 13. How is it a ſignificative Ordinance?

*A.* It is a ſignificative Ordinance, not only as it repreſents Chriſts ſufferings, but the Believers union with him as the head, and with each other as members of his body, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17. The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt? For we being many, are one bread, and one body, *&c.*

*Q.* 14. In what reſpect is it an inſtructive ſign?

*A.* It is an inſtructive ſign in divers reſpects; namely, Firſt, As it teaches us that Chriſt is the only nutritive bread by which our Souls live, *John* 6. 15. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: If any man eat of thisbread, he ſhall live for ever; and the bread that I ſhall give is my fleſh, which I ſhall give for the life of the world. And Secondly, As it inſtructs us that the New Teſtament is now in its full force by the death of Chriſt the Teſtator, *Heb.* 9. 16, 17. For where a teſtament is, there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the teſtator. For a teſtament is of force after men are dead; otherwiſe it is of no force at all, whilſt the teſtator liveth.

Thus much of the Author, Nature and Ends of the Lords Supper.

### *Of the Elements, Actions and Subjects of it.*

Q. 1. Are not Bread and Wine too ſmall and common things to repreſent the body and blood of Chriſt?

*A.* Though a bit of Bread, and a draught of Wine, be things of ſmall value in themſelves, yet they are great in reſpect of their uſe and end. A penny-worth of Wax is a ſmall thing in its ſelf; but being applyed to the Label of a Deed, may be advanced to the worth of thouſands of pounds, as it receives the ſeal to a great inheritance.

*Q.* 2. Is not the bread in the Sacrament turned into the very body of Chriſt it ſelf by Tranſubſtantiation?

*A.* No, it is not; but the Elements retain ſtill their own proper Nature of Bread and Wine after the Words of Conſecration, and are ſo called, 1 *Cor.* 11. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, *&c. Matth.* 26. 29. But I ſay unto you, I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Fathers kingdom.

*Q.* 13. What is the firſt argument by which Proteſtants confute the Popiſh Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation?

*A.* The firſt Argument againſt it, is taken from the end of the Sacrament, which is to bring Chriſts Body and Blood to our remembrance, 1 *Cor.* 11. 24, 25. This do in remembrance of me. Now ſigns for remembrance are of things abſent, not preſent.

*Q.* 4. What's the ſecond Argument?

*A.* Becauſe the language in which our Saviour ſpake, had no other property of expreſſion, there being no other word for *ſignifie* but is in ſtead thereof, as is manifeſt in both Teſtaments, *Gen.* 41. 27. And the ſeven ill-favoured kine that came up afte them, are ſeven years of famine. *Rev.* 1. 20. Th ſeven ſtars are the angels of the ſeven churches; an the ſeven candleſticks which thou ſaweſt are th ſeven churches.

Q. 5. What's the third Argument againſt Tranſubſtantiation?

*A.* The manifold groſs abſurdities that naturally and neceſſarily follow on this Doctrine, ſhew th falſeneſs of it, and that it is juſtly rejected and abhorred by all ſound Chriſtians.

Q. 6. What's the firſt abſurdity that follow it?

*A.* This Doctrine allows that to a ſilly Prieſ which is not to be allowed to all the Angels in He ven. It allows him power to make his Maker, a eat his God. And in juſtifying this by the O nipotency of God, they ſay no more than wha *Turk* may ſay to juſtifie the moſt ridiculous fooler of the *Alcoran*.

Q. 7. What's the ſecond abſurdity of Tranſu ſtantiation?

A. The ſecond abſurdity is this, that it de the truth of the teſtimony given by the ſe of all men, that it is real Bread and W

Wine after Conſecration, and not Fleſh and Blood. And if the teſtimony of ſenſe be not certain, then the being of God cannot be proved by the things that are made contrary to *Rom.* 1. 20. *For the inviſible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead,* &c. Nor the truth of Chriſt's Reſurrection, by ſeeing and feeling, contrary to *Luke* 24. 39. *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my ſelf; handle me and ſee,* &c.

Q. 8. *What's the third abſurdity of* Tranſubſtantiation?

*A.* The third abſurdity is this, that in affirming the accidents of Bread and Wine to remain, and their ſubſtance to vaniſh, they affirm that there is length, breadth, thickneſs, moiſture and ſweetneſs, and yet nothing long, broad, thick, moiſt or ſweet, which is a perfect contradiction.

Q. 9. *What's the fourth abſurdity of* Tranſubſtantiation?

*A.* It implies, that the entire living Body of Chriſt ſate at the Table, and at the ſame time was dead, and in the Diſciples Mouths and Stomachs in the firſt Sacrament; and that in all after Sacraments it is wholly in Heaven, and wholly in as many thouſand places in the World, as there are Sacraments adminiſtred.

Q. 10. *What doth the breaking of this Bread, and pouring out of Wine in the Sacrament ſignifie?*

*A.* It ſignifies the violent painful Death, and bitter Sufferings of Chriſt for us; 1 *Cor.* 11. 26. *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lords death till he come.*

Q. 11. *What doth the giving and taking of the Sacramental Bread and Wine ſignifie?*

*A.* Theſe actions ſignifie God's exhibiting, and the Believers applying of Chriſt and all his benefits to their Souls.

Q. 12. *Who are fit Subjects to receive the Lord's Supper?*

*A.* None that are groſly ignorant, ſcandalous, or unbelievers in their natural ſtate, for ſuch cannot examine themſelves as the Word requires; 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. *But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* But do eat and drink Judgment to themſelves, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lords body.*

Q. 13. *Are morally honeſt and ſober perſons qualified for this Sacrament?*

*A.* No; Civility and Morality do not qualifie perſons, they are not the Wedding-garment; but regenerating Grace and Faith doth in the ſmalleſt meaſure; *Matth.* 22. 12. *And he ſaith unto him, friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment,* &c. 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17. *The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt? For we being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

## *Of the Duties of Communicants.*

Queſt. 97. **What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lords Supper?**

A. **It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themſelves of their knowledge to diſcern the Lord's Body, of their Faith to feed upon him, of their Repentance, Love, and new Obedience, leſt coming unworthily, they eat and drink Judgment to themſelves.**

Q. 1. *What are the Duties of worthy receivers?*

*A.* There are three ſorts of Duties incumbent on them, ſome *antecedent* to it, ſome *concomitants* of it, and ſome *ſubſequent* to it.

Q. 2. *What are the antecedent Duties to it?*

*A.* They are two, (1.) Examination of their Graces. (2.) Preparation of their Souls. Examination of their Graces, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28, 29. *But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body.* And Preparation of their Souls, 1. *Cor.* 5. 8. *Therefore let us keep the feaſt, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedneſs, but with the unleavened bread of ſincerity and truth.*

Q. 3. *What's the firſt Grace to be try'd?*

*A.* Our ſaving knowledge of God in Chriſt, without which we cannot diſcern the Lord's Body, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body.*

Q. 4. *What are we to enquire of touching our knowledge of God in Chriſt?*

*A.* We are to examine whether it be competent for *quantity*, and ſavingly operative and influential on the Heart and Life for *quality*; *Hoſ.* 4. 6. *My people are deſtroyed for lack of knowledge,* &c. 1 *Cor.* 13. 1. *Though I ſpeak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a ſounding braſs or tinkling cymbal.*

Q. 5. *When is Knowledge competent and influential?*

*A.* When we truly underſtand by the teachings of the Father, the ſin and miſery of the Fall, the nature and neceſſity of Chriſt, and under theſe convictions come to him in the way of Faith; *John* 6. 45. —*Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* And ſubject our ſelves to him in ſincere obedience, *Mat.* 11. 28, 29. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls.*

Q. 6. *What are we to examine our ſelves about beſides Knowledge?*

*A.* We are obliged to examine our ſelves about our Faith, whether we have it in any ſaving degree; 2 *Cor* 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves, whether ye be in the Faith: prove your ſelves,* &c. For without Faith we cannot pleaſe God, *Heb.* 11. 6. *But without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God,* &c. Nor enjoy Spiritual Communion with Chriſt, *Eph.* 3. 17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love.*

Q. 7. *What other Grace muſt be examin'd and ſought for?*

*A.* We muſt examine our Love to Chriſt and all that are his, becauſe no gifts ſignifie any thing without Love; 1 *Cor.* 13. 2. *And though I have the gift of propheſie, and underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing.*

Q. 8. *What elſe muſt worthy receivers examine themſelves about?*

*A.* The ſincerity of their Hearts evidenced by their Obedience, without which they cannot worthily approach the Table; 1 *Cor.* 5. 8. *Therefore let us keep the feaſt, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedneſs, but with the unleavened bread of ſincerity and truth.*

Q. 9. *But if upon examination we are in doubts about our Faith and Sincerity, muſt we forbear?*

*A.* If our doubts ariſe from the weakneſs, and not the total want of Grace, ſuch doubts ſhould not hinder us; *Rom.* 14. 1. *Him that is weak in the faith receive you,* &c.

Q. 10. *What is the danger of coming to the Lord's Table without theſe Graces?*

*A.* The danger is exceeding great to Soul and Body. (1.) To the Soul, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf,* &c. And to the Body, 1 *Cor.* 11. 30. *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.*

Q. 11. *What are the Duties of worthy receivers at the Lord's Table?*

*A.* Their Duties at the Table are to diſcern Chriſt by the eye of Faith, under thoſe ſigns of his Body and Blood; 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lords body.* On the diſcovery of him to mourn bitterly for Sin; *Zech.* 12. 10. — *And they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only ſon, and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt-born.* And to excite all their Graces into vigorous acts for the applying Chriſt to themſelves; *Cant.* 4 16. *Awake, O north wind, and come thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out,* &c.

Q. 12. *What is the Duty of worthy receivers after the Sacrament?*

*A.* Their Duty is heartily to bleſs God for Chriſt and the benefits of his Blood; *Matth.* 26. 30. *And when they had ſung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.* To double their care and watchfulneſs againſt ſin, *Epheſ.* 4. 30. *And grieve not the holy ſpirit, whereby ye are ſealed to the day of redemption.* And to grow more fruitful in all ſpiritual obedience, *Col.* 1. 10. *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work, and encreaſing in the knowledge of God.*

Q. 13. *What is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* That the abuſe and profanation of this Ordinance, either by coming to it for carnal ends, or being forced upon it by fear of ſufferings, or approaching to it without due qualifications, is a dreadful ſin, which God will terribly avenge; *Matth.* 22. 11, 12, 13. *And when the king came in to ſee the gueſts, he ſaw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. And he ſaith unto him, friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? and he was ſpeechleſs. Then ſaid the king unto the ſervants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and caſt him into outer darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.*

Q. 14. *What's the ſecond Inference from it?*

*A.* That great and manifold are the Bleſſings and Advantages which Chriſtians duly prepared may reap by this Ordinance.

## *Of Prayer.*

Queſt. 98. **What is Prayer?**

**A. Prayer is an offering up of our Deſires unto God for things agreeable to his Will, in the name of Chriſt, with confeſſion of our ſins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.**

Q. 1. *Who is the proper and only Object of Prayer?*

*A.* God only is the proper Object of Prayer; it is a part of his Natural Worſhip; therefore 'tis peculiarly his Honour and Prerogative, and none elſe can hear and anſwer them, but God; *Pſal.* 65. 2. *O thou that heareſt Prayer, unto thee ſhall all fleſh come.*

Q. 2. *Through whom, or in whoſe name are our Prayers to be directed to God?*

*A.* Our Prayers are to be directed to God only through Chriſt and his Name, and not by the mediation of Angels or Saints; *Col.* 2. 18. *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and worſhipping of angels.* For the merit and ſatisfaction of Chriſt alone give ſucceſs and acceptance to our Prayers, *Rev.* 8. 3, 4. *And another angel came and ſtood at the altar, having a golden cenſer, and there was given unto him much incenſe, that he ſhould offer it with the prayers of all the ſaints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the ſmoke of the incenſe which came with the prayers of the ſaints aſcended up before God out of the angels hand.* 1 Tim. 2. 5. *For there is one God, and one mediatour between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus.*

Q. 3. *What's the firſt property or quality of acceptable Prayer?*

*A.* No Prayer can be acceptable to God, except the matter of it be agreeable to his Will, *Jam* 4. 3. *Ye ask and receive not, becauſe ye ask amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts.* 1 John 5. 14, 15. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatſoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we deſired of him.*

Q. 4. *Is it enough to make Prayer acceptable, that the matter is agreeable to God's will?*

*A.* No, it is not; for the manner as well as the matter, muſt be ſo too; *Pſal.* 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*

Q. 5. *What's the firſt qualification of an acceptable Prayer, reſpecting the manner of it?*

*A.* That it be ſincere, and flowing from the Heart of a regenerate perſon; *Prov.* 15. 29. *The Lord is far from the wicked, but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.* Jer. 29. 13. *And ye ſhall ſeek me, and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your heart.*

Q. 6. *What's the ſecond qualification of Prayer, reſpecting the manner?*

*A.* It muſt be perform'd in the Heart of a child of God by the Spirit of Adoption; *Gal.* 4. 6. *And becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the ſpirit of his Son in our hearts; crying, Abba Father.* Rom. 8. 26. *Likewiſe the ſpirit alſo helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but the ſpirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered.*

Q. 7. *What's the third qualification of an acceptable Prayer, reſpecting the manner?*

*A.* It muſt be fervent and importunate, not cold and formal; *Jam.* 5. 16. — *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* Matt. 7. 7. *Ask, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you.*

Q. 8. *Wherein doth true importunity with God in Prayer conſiſt?*

*A.* Not in the multitude of words, *Matth.* 6. 7. *But when ye pray, uſe not vain repetitions as the heathen do: for they think they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking.* But in an holy earneſtneſs of Spirit to be heard; *Pſal.* 143. 7. *Hear me ſpeedily, O Lord, my ſpirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, leſt I be like unto them that go down into the pit.* A prudent choice of prevalent Arguments; *Job* 23. 4. *I would order my cauſe before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.* And a reſolute perſiſtance in our requeſts till they be granted; *Iſa.* 62. 7. *And give him no reſt, till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth.*

Q. 9. *Do not Prayers thus qualified ſometimes miſcarry?*

*A.* God may delay and ſuſpend the anſwer of them for a time; *Pſal.* 22. 2 *O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou heareſt not,* &c. But ſooner or later, God will always anſwer them, either in the very thing we ask, 1 *John* 5. 15. — *We know that we have the petitions that we deſired of him*; Or in that which is equivalent or better, *Gen.* 17. 18, 19. *And Abraham ſaid unto God, O that Iſhmael might live before thee. And God ſaid, Sarah thy wife ſhall bear thee a ſon indeed, and thou ſhalt call his name Iſaac: and I will eſtabliſh my covenant with him, for an everlaſting covenant, and with his ſeed after him.*

Q. 10. *Is there no Prayer but what is ſtated and fixed?*

*A.* Yes, there is ſudden occaſional Prayer, which we call ejaculatory: ſuch was *Jacob's*, *Gen.* 49. 18. *I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord.* And this is exceeding uſeful to maintain conſtant communion with God, and keep the Heart in a ſpiritual frame.

Q. 11. *Is all ſtated and fixed Prayer publick in the Congregation or Church?*

*A.* No; ſtated Prayer ought to be in our Families with thoſe under our charge; and in our Cloſets betwixt God and us alone; *Joſh.* 24 15. — *But as for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.* And *Matth.* 6. 6. *But when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy father which is in ſecret, and thy father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.*

Q. 12. *What infer you from hence?*

*A.* The reſtraint of Prayer is not only a great ſin, but an ill ſign of a graceleſs Heart, *Job* 15. 4. *Yea, thou caſteſt off fear, and reſtraineſt prayer before God.* And that which entails a judgment and curſe upon men, and their Families; *Jer.* 10. 25. *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not; and upon the families that call not upon thy name.*

Q. 13. *What's the ſecond Inference from the Ordinance of Prayer?*

*A.* That the true reaſon why we enjoy not the Mercies we pray for, is not becauſe God is unwilling to grant Mercies, but becauſe we either neglect Prayer, or miſcarry in the manner of Prayer; *Jam.* 4. 2, 3. *Ye luſt, and have not; ye kill and deſire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not; becauſe ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, becauſe ye ask amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts.*

## *Of Direction in Prayer.*

Queſt. 99. **What Rule hath God given for our direction in the Duty of Prayer?**

A. **The whole Word of God is of uſe to direct us in Prayer; but the ſpecial Rule of Direction is that form of Prayer which Chriſt taught his Diſciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.**

Q. 1. *Do men need Directions, Rules and Helps in Prayer?*

*A.* They do greatly need them; for in and of our ſelves we know not what to pray for as we ought; *Rom.* 8. 26. *Likewiſe the ſpirit alſo helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we ſhall pray for as we ought,* &c. Nor how to pray in a right manner, and for right ends, and a miſtake in either fruſtrates our Prayer; *Jam.* 4. 3. *Ye ask and receive not, becauſe ye ask amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts.*

Q. 2. *When do men miſtake in the matter of their Prayer?*

*A.* They miſtake in the matter of Prayer, when they ask of God things that are not lawful, good and agreeable to his Will. So the Diſciples were ready to do in calling for fire from Heaven on the *Samaritans*, Luke 9. 54, 55. *And when his Diſciples, James and John, ſaw this, they ſaid, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and conſume them, even as Elias did? But he turned and rebuked them, and ſaid, ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of.*

Q. 3. *When do men miſtake in the manner of Prayer?*

*A.* They miſtake in the manner when they ask Mercies of God for carnal ends, to ſatisfie their luſts; *Jam.* 4. 3. *Ye ask and receive not, becauſe ye ask amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts.* Or in a drowſie and careleſs manner, *Iſa.* 64. 7. *And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee,* &c.

Q. 4. *What helps hath God afforded us to furniſh us to Prayer both in reſpect of the matter and manner?*

*A.* The Scriptures abundantly furniſh us with all ſorts of helps and directions for the matter of Prayer. It directs us both in confeſſion of ſins original and actual; *Pſal.* 51. 4, 5. *Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me. Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight,* &c. Petition and Thankſgiving; *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving, let your requeſt be made known unto God.*

Q. 5. *Doth it afford us any help or direction as to the manner of Prayer alſo?*

*A.* Yes, it doth; and that both as to (1.) our ſincerity in Prayer; *Heb.* 10. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed with pure water.* (2.) As to our humility in Prayer; *Pſal.* 10. 17. *Lord, thou haſt heard the deſire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cauſe thine ear to hear.* (3.) As to our Faith in Prayer; *Jam.* 1. 6. *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering,* &c. (4) As to our fervency in Prayer; *Jam.* 5. 16. — *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

Q. 6. *Are theſe external rules and directions ſufficient in themſelves to enable us to pray acceptably ?*

*A.* In reſpect of external direction they are ſufficient, and we need no other outward Rules than what the Scriptures furniſh, but beſides that the internal helps and aſſiſtances of the Spirit are neceſſary to the offering up acceptable Prayer, *Rom.* 8. 26. *Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought; but the Spirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us,* &c.

Q. 7. *But doth the Scripture only furniſh us with general rules of direction for Prayer ?*

*A.* No; it furniſhes us alſo with an excellent Pattern and Example of Prayer, compos'd by Chriſt for our direction, *Matth.* 6. 9. *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven,* &c.

Q. 8. *Are Chriſtians tied by a neceſſity to uſe that form of words ? or, was it only intended for a directory to them ?*

*A.* That form of words may be lawfully uſed; but it's plain its intention was to regulate our Petitions by it; and therefore they that uſe it in Spells and Charms, as the Papiſts, or thoſe that think nothing is Prayer, but that form of words, abuſe Chriſt's intention in it.

Q. 9. *How doth it appear it was not Chriſt's intention, ſtrictly to bind us to that very form of words in our Prayers ?*

*A.* Divines give us theſe Reaſons againſt it; (1.) Becauſe this Prayer is ſet down diverſly by the Evangeliſts, *Matth.* 6. 11, 12. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* And *Luke* 11. 3, 4. *Give us day by day our daily bread, and forgive us our ſins; for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* (2.) Chriſt and his Apoſtles did not always uſe this form of words afterwards, as appears by his Prayer at *Lazarus*'s Grave, *John* 11. and that for his Apoſtles, *John* 17. (3.) Becauſe theſe words, *Matth.* 6. 9. *After this manner,* &c. plainly ſhew its uſe was intended for a directory to us.

Q. 10. *What's the firſt Inference from hence ?*

*A.* Hence we learn the fulneſs and compleatneſs of the Scriptures, not only for the guiding and ſetling of our Faith in things that are to be believed, but alſo of our whole practice in every Duty we are to perform.

Q. 11. *What's the ſecond Inference hence ?*

*A.* Hence we are inform'd how neceſſary it is to acquaint our ſelves with the mind of God, revealed in his Word, that we may guide our ſelves in Prayer, both for mattter and manner thereby, and not utter to God words without knowledge.

Q. 12. *What's the laſt Inference from hence ?*

*A.* That thoſe who neglect all Prayer, and thoſe that ſatisfie themſelves with a form of Prayer, which they utter without knowledge or affection, do greatly ſin againſt God. And that it is the Duty of all Chriſtians, from a ſenſe of their own Sins, Wants and Mercies, to be often with God in *Prayer,* guiding themſelves in that ſpiritual Duty, by ſuch inward and outward helps as his *Word* and *Spirit* are able to furniſh them with.

## *Of the Preface to the Lord's Prayer.*

Queſt. 100. **What doth the Preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us ?**

A. **The Preface of the Lord's Prayer [which is,** Our Father, which art in Heaven] **teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as Children to a Father ready to help us, and that we ſhould pray with and for others.**

Q. 1. *What doth the word* Father *import in this Preface ?*

*A.* It imports the Spirit of Adoption to be the principal of all acceptable Prayers; *Gal.* 4. 6. *And becauſe ye are ſons, God hath given forth the ſpirit of his ſon into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

Q. 2. *What's the firſt Benefit or Help we have in Prayer from the Spirit of Adoption ?*

*A.* He excites our Spirits to ſeek God in Prayer, *Pſal.* 27. 8. *When thou ſaidſt, ſeek ye my face, my heart ſaid unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek.*

Q. 3. *What's the ſecond Aſſiſtance he gives us in Prayer ?*

*A.* He indites and ſuggeſts ſuitable and acceptable matter to us in Prayer; *Rom.* 8. 26. *Likewiſe the ſpirit alſo helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but the ſpirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us,* &c.

Q. 4. *What's the third Benefit we have by him in Prayer ?*

*A.* He fills our Souls with ſpiritual and holy affections in Prayer, and helps us to act his Graces in our Duties; *Rom.* 8. 26. *Likewiſe the ſpirit alſo helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we ſhould ask as we ought: but the ſpirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered.*

Q. 5. *What elſe doth this word* Father *import ?*

*A.* It imports that holy Confidence which Believers may and ought to draw near to God withal, as Children to a Father; *Eph.* 3. 12. *In whom we have boldneſs and acceſs, with confidence by the faith of him.*

Q. 6. *Doth it only ſignifie our Relation and Confidence ?*

*A.* No; it alſo ſignifies the reverential fear of God, which ought at all times to be on our hearts, eſpecially in Prayer; *Mal.* 1. 6. *A ſon honoureth his father, and a ſervant his maſter: If then I be a father, where is my honour ? and if I be a maſter, where is my fear ?*

Q. 7. *What is further imported in this word Father ?*

*A.* It imports God's willingneſs and readineſs to grant the beſt Mercies to his People, that ſeek them duly at his hand; *Matth.* 7. 11. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him.*

Q. 8. *Why is he here called our Father ?*

*A.* To ſignifie to us, that it is not only our Duty to pray ſecretly by and for our ſelves, but alſo with and for others; *Eph.* 6. 18. *Praying alwaies with all prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance, and ſupplication for all Saints.*

Q. *Why is God ſaid here to be in Heaven ?*

*A.* It is to note his ſoveraign power and dominion over all, as a groundwork of Faith in Prayer.

Q 9, 10.

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Q. 9, 10. *What elſe doth it import ?*
*A.* The great diſtance between God an
which ſhould fill our Hearts with an holy aw
him; *Eccleſ.* 5. 2. —*God is in Heaven, and thou*
*Earth, therefore let thy words be few.*
Q. 11. *What's the firſt Inference from hence?*
*A* It ſhews us what a ſad caſe all thoſe a
that have no ſpecial intereſt in God as a Fathe
Q. 12. *What's the ſecond Inference ?*
*A.* It ſhews us what a glorious Privilege
Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath purchaſed for and ſe
on his People; *Heb.* 4. 15, 16. *For we have n*
*high Prieſt which cannot be touched with the feelin*
*our infirmities: but was in all points tempted lik*
*we are, yet without ſin. Let us therefore come b*
*unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain m*
*and find grace to help in time of need.*
Q. 13. *What's the laſt Inference from hence ?*
*A.* That ſeeing Believers have a Father in
ven, they ſhould never fear wants whilſt they
nor be afraid to die, ſince Death brings the
Heaven, their Father's Houſe.

## *Of Sanctifying God's Name.*

Queſt. 101. **What do we pray for in**
**firſt Petition ?**
A. **In the firſt Petition [which is** hallo
be thy Name] **we pray that God would e**
**ble us and others, to glorifie him in**
**that, whereby he maketh himſelf kno**
**and that he would diſpoſe all things to**
**own glory.**
Q. 1. *Is there any word full enough perfectly to*
*preſs what God is ?*
*A.* No, his Name is ſecret; *Judg.* 13. 18.
*the Angel of the Lord ſaid unto him, why askeſt*
*thus after my name, ſeeing it is ſecret?* A N
which none can tell; *Prov.* 30. 4. — *what is*
*name, and what is his ſons name, if thou canſt*
A Name above every Name; *Phil.* 2. 9. *Where*
*God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a*
*which is above every name.* But the Name
which he more eſpecially manifeſts himſelf, is
Name *I am*; *Exod.* 3. 14. *And God ſaid unto M*
I am that I am. *And he ſaid, Thus ſhalt thou ſay*
*to the children of Iſrael,* I am *hath ſent me unto yo*
Q. 2. *What doth the Name of God* I am *ſig*
*to us ?*
*A.* It ſignifies to us, firſt, the reality of his
ing in oppoſition to Idols, which are but im
nary and fantaſtick things; 1 *Cor.* 8. 4. —
*know that an Idol is nothing in the world,* &c.
is not only the moſt perfect Being, but the roo
all other Beings.
Q. 3. *What elſe doth this Name* I am *import*
*A.* It imports both the perfection and etern
of God's Being: *I am* implies, he hath not
now which he had not formerly; and that he
not afterwards have what he hath not now:
that there is neither beginning, end, or ſucceſ
with God, whoſe Name is *I am.*
Q. 4. *But what are we here to underſtand by*
*Name of God ?*
*A.* All thoſe things are here intended, by wh
he manifeſts himſelf to the Creature; as his W
Works, and Ordinances, but eſpecially his glori
Attributes; *Exod.* 34. 5, 6. — *The Lord, the*
*God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and a*
*ant in goodneſs and truth.*

t ?
n God and us,
an holy awe of
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Q. 5. *What is it to hallow or ſanctifie his Name?*

*A.* Not to infuſe any Holineſs into him, which he had not before; ſo he ſanctifies us; but to manifeſt and acknowledge the Holineſs of God; *Iſa.* 29. 23. *But when he ſeeth his children, the work of my hands in the midſt of him, they ſhall ſanctifie my name, and ſanctifie the holy one of Jacob, and ſhall fear the God of Iſrael.*

Q. 6. *Why* Hallowed *or* Sanctified *rather than* Glorified? *Why that word rather than this?*

*A.* Becauſe his Holineſs is the beauty and luſtre of his other Attributes. His Greatneſs appears in his Holineſs; *Iſa.* 12. 6. — *great is the holy one of Iſrael in the midſt of thee.* So doth his Power, *Luke* 1. 49. *For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name.* And therefore his Holineſs is that Attribute, which Angels ſingle out eſpecially to celebrate; *Iſa.* 6. 3. *And one cried unto another, and ſaid, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hoſts, &c.* And ſo do men alſo, as it is the cauſe why they ſhould glorifie him, *Exod.* 15. 11. —*Who is like thee, glorious in holineſs,* &c.

Q. 7. *What's the firſt thing we are to intend in this Petition?*

*A.* The meaning is, that God would ſo diſpoſe and order all things in the World, as may beſt promote and advance the glory of his Name; on which account we may pray for the defeat of God's Enemies; *Pſal.* 83. 16, 17, 18. *Fill their faces with ſhame, that they may ſeek thy name, O Lord. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to ſhame and periſh: that men may know that thou, whoſe name alone is Jehovah, art the moſt high over all the earth.* And the deliverance of his Church and People; *Pſal.* 79. 9. *Help us, O God of our ſalvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our ſins for thy names ſake.*

Q. 8. *What's the ſecond thing we are to intend in it?*

*A.* That God would fit us for, and uſe us in the moſt ſerviceable capacity for the glorifying of his Name; *Pſal.* 67. 1, 2, 3. *God be merciful unto us, and bleſs us, and cauſe his face to ſhine upon us: That thy way may be known upon earth, thy ſaving health among all nations. Let the people praiſe thee, O God, let all the people praiſe thee.*

Q. 9. *What's the third thing intended in this Petition?*

*A.* That God may not only glorifie his own Name, and uſe us to glorifie it, but that it ſhould be our endeavour and joy to have it glorified by others all the World over; *Pſal.* 145. 4, 5, 6. *One generation ſhall praiſe thy works to another, and ſhall declare thy mighty acts. I will ſpeak of the glorious honour of thy majeſty, and of thy wondrous works. And men ſhall ſpeak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatneſs.*

Q. 10. *Why muſt our Hearts be ſo intently ſet upon the Sanctification of God's Name?*

*A.* Becauſe this is the ultimate end of our own and every other being; *Rom.* 11. 36. *For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever, Amen.* And the particular end of God in our Effectual Calling, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. *But ye are a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him, who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvelous light.*

Q. 11. *What's the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* That the diſhonour of God's Name muſt needs be a cutting Affliction to a gracious Soul; *Pſal.* 42. 10. *As with a ſword in my bones my enemies reproach me; while they ſay daily unto me, Where is their God?*

Q. 12. *What's the ſecond Inference from hence?*

*A.* That it is a dreadful Infatuation and ſpiritual Judgment upon thoſe men that think they glorifie God in doing thoſe things which his Soul hateth; *Iſa.* 66. 5. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word: your brethren that hated you, that caſt you out for my names ſake, ſaid, Let the Lord be glorified: but he ſhall appear to your joy, and they ſhall be aſhamed.* And *John* 16. 2. *They ſhall put you out of the Synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſervice.*

Q. 13. *What is the third Inference from hence?*

*A.* That it ſhould be indifferent to a Chriſtian what condition God puts him into, ſo that he may but be uſeful to ſanctifie and exalt the name of God therein; *Phil.* 1. 20. — *as always, ſo now alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

Q. 14. *What's the laſt Inference hence?*

*A.* That it's an high and dreadful provocation of God to prophane and abuſe his Worſhip, whereon his Name is called, and wherein it is to be ſanctified; *Levit.* 10. 1, 2, 3. *And Nadab and Abihu, the ſons of Aaron, took either of them his Cenſer, and put fire therein, and put incenſe thereon, and offered ſtrange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord ſpake, ſaying, I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people will I be glorified.*

## *Of God's Kingdom.*

Queſt. 102. **What do we pray for in the ſecond Petition?**

A. **In the ſecond Petition, which is,** [Thy Kingdom come] **we pray that Satan's Kingdom may be deſtroy'd, and that the Kingdom of grace may be advanc'd, our ſelves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the Kingdom of glory may be haſtened.**

Q. 1. *What is the firſt thing ſignify'd by the Kingdom of God here?*

*A.* The *Goſpel* is here intended by the Kingdom of God; *Matth.* 13. 47. — *Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net, that was caſt into the ſea, and gathered of every kind.*

Q. 2. *What's the thing ſignified by the coming of this Kingdom of God?*

*A.* It ſignifies the removal of all Impediments, that hinder its propagation in the World; 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 1. *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free courſe, and be glorified, even as it is with you.*

Q. 3. *Who, and what hinders the propagation of it?*

*A.* *Antichriſt*, that man of Sin, hinders it externally; 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 4. *Who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped: ſo that he as God ſitteth in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God.* The Devil and Mens Luſts internally; 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 18. *Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again, but Satan hindered.* Luke 19. 14. *But his citizens hated him, and ſent a meſſenger after him, ſaying, We will not have this man to reign over us.*

Q. 4. *What then is the deſire of all good men, with reſpect to the coming of the Goſpel-kingdom?*

*A.* That all Nations may be brought to Chriſt by the preaching of it, and ſo Chriſt's Kingdom be greatly exalted and enlarged; *Iſa.* 2. 2. *And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, that the mountain of the Lords houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the hills: and all nations ſhall flow unto it.*

Q. 5. *What's the ſecond thing here meant by the Kingdom of God?*

*A.* It ſignifies and intends the work of Saving Grace wrought in mens Souls; *Luke* 17. 21.— *behold the kingdom of God within you.*

Q. 6. *Why is this work of Grace called the Kingdom of God?*

*A.* Becauſe wherever ſaving Grace comes, it ſubdues the Soul to Chriſt's Scepter; 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. *Caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it ſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.*

Q. 7. *Wherein conſiſts the Kingdom of Grace?*

*A.* It conſiſts not in external Rites and Obſervances, but in Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt; *Rom.* 14. 17. *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

Q. 8. *What do we ask of God in this Petition with reſpect to this Kingdom of Grace?*

*A.* Herein we deſire not only our own perſonal progreſſive Sanctification, but the Sanctification of others all the World over; *Acts* 26. 29. *And Paul ſaid, I would to God that not only thou, but alſo all that hear me this day, were both almoſt and altogether ſuch as I am, except theſe bonds.*

Q. 9. *What's the third thing here meant by the Kingdom of God?*

*A.* By it is here meant the future ſtate of Glory and Bleſſedneſs, 1 *Cor.* 15. 50. *Now this I ſay, brethren, that fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,* &c.

Q. 10. *Why is the Heavenly ſtate call'd the Kingdom of God?*

*A.* This is call'd the Kingdom of God, becauſe in that ſtate God reigns over his People gloriouſly, there being no rebellion in them in the leaſt degree; *Luke* 20. 36. — *For they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the reſurrection. And they reign with Chriſt.* Rev. 3. 21. *To him that overcometh, will I grant to ſit with me in my throne,* &c.

Q. 11. *What do we deſire in Prayer for the coming of this Kingdom?*

*A.* We deſire not only our preſervation in our paſſage to that ſtate of Glory; 1 *Pet.* 5. 10. *But the God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered a while, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you.* But the haſtening of it to our ſelves and others, *Rev.* 22. 20. — *Amen, even ſo come Lord Jeſus.*

Q. 12. *What's the firſt Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* That the Goſpel is an invaluable Mercy, as it is the inſtrument of bringing us into Chriſt's Gracious and Glorious Kingdom; *Acts* 26. 18. *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of ſatan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance* *among them which are ſanctified by faith, that is in me.*

Q. 13. *What's the ſecond Inference from hence?*

*A.* That many men really hate and oppoſe the very thing they pray for.

Q. 14. *What's the laſt Inſtruction hence?*

*A.* That how firmly ſoever Satan's and Antichriſt's Kingdom ſeem to be founded in the World, they muſt and ſhall fall before the daily Prayers of the Saints.

## *Concerning the doing of God's Will.*

Queſt. 103. **What do we pray for in the third Petition?**

A. **In the third Petition, which is,** [Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven] **we pray, that God by his grace would make us able and willing to know, obey, and ſubmit to his Will in all things, as the Angels do in Heaven.**

Q. 1. *What Will of God is here intended?*

*A.* Not the Will of his Decree, for that is in himſelf alone; 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.*

Q. 2. *What Will then is here meant?*

*A.* The Will of his Providence may be here meant; *Pſal.* 125. 6. *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the ſeas, and all deep places.* And *Pſal.* 119. 89. *For ever, O Lord, thy word is ſettled in heaven.* Ver. 91. *They continue this day according to thine ordinances; for all are thy ſervants.*

Q. 3. *How are we to underſtand the doing of this Will of Providence in Heaven?*

*A.* (1.) As 'tis done by the Sun, Moon, and Stars; *Pſal.* 119. 89. *Thy word is ſetled in Heaven.* Ver. 91. *They continue this day according to thine ordinances.* Pſal. 19. 6. *His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.* (2.) As 'tis done by Angels, *Pſal.* 104. 4. *Who maketh the angels ſpirits: his miniſters a flaming fire.* Heb. 1. ult. *Are they not all miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?*

Q. 4. *How do theſe perform the will of God's Providence?*

*A.* (1.) The Heavenly Bodies do it evenly, conſtantly and unweariedly; *Pſal.* 104. 19. *He appointeth the Moon for ſeaſons, the Sun knoweth his going down.* (2.) The Angels do ſpeedily, voluntarily, cheerfully, and ſo knowingly; *Pſal.* 103. 21. *Ye miniſters of his, that do his pleaſure.*

Q. 5. *Muſt we be Agents in this Providential Will?*

*A.* Yes, we muſt; *Acts* 13 36. *For David, after he had ſerved his generation by the will of God, fell on ſleep.*

Q. 6. *How muſt we do it?*

*A.* By imploying our Abilities, Faculties, and ntereſts in the Duties of our particular Callings, nd by moving conſtantly, prudently and vigoouſly in our own ſphere, and ſo imitate thoſe in Heaven.

Q. 7. *Why do we pray that God's Will of Provi nce may be done by us?*

*A.* Becauſe we are his Creatures, and the moſt ble Inſtruments of the inferiour World; and erefore we ſhould be willing to be acted by m, and active for him; and becauſe this Will of Providence is always juſt, good and true, and for his own Glory; *Pſal.* 145. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.* Pſal. 119. 89. *For ever, O Lord, thy word is ſettled in Heaven.* Ver. 91. *They continue this day according to thine ordinances; for all are thy ſervants.*

Q. 8. *What other Will of God is here meant?*

*A.* The Will of his Precepts; and this is chiefly intended.

Q. 9. *And how is this will of God done in Heaven?*

*A.* By the Angels 'tis done univerſally, cheerfully, conſtantly, humbly, thankfully, loyally, readily; *Pſal.* 103. 20. *Bleſs the Lord ye his angels that excel in ſtrength, that do his commandments, harkning unto the voice of his word.* And ſo 'tis done by the Saints in Heaven; *Rev.* 7. 15. *Therefore are they before the throne of God, and ſerve him day and night in his temple.* And 22. 3. *And his ſervants ſhall ſerve him.*

Q. 10. *Do we pray then that we may thus do the will of God?*

*A.* Yes; for tho' we cannot perfectly without Sin do it, yet that is our Duty; *Mat.* 5. ult. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in Heaven is perfect.* And in all other particulars we may and we muſt imitate them herein; *Pſal.* 119. 6. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto all thy commandments.* Ver. 14. *I have rejoyced in the way of thy teſtimonies, as much as in all riches.* Ver. 60. *I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* Ver. 112, &c. *I have inclined my heart to perform thy ſtatutes alway, even unto the end.*

Q. 11. *How muſt we know God's will?*

*A.* Not notionally and rationally only, but ſpiritually alſo; 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. *They are ſpiritually diſcerned.*

Q. 12. *Why is knowing God's will placed here before doing it, &c?*

*A.* Becauſe the Underſtanding is the leading Faculty, without which 'tis impoſſible there ſhould be any Obedience; *Prov.* 19. 2. *Alſo that the ſoul be without knowledge it is not good.* Jer. 5. 4. *Therefore I ſaid, ſurely theſe are poor, they are fooliſh: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.*

Q. 13. *Why pray we to God for this knowledge, can we not know it of our ſelves?*

*A.* No, 'tis the ſpecial Gift and Grace of God, *Gal.* 1. 15, 16. *But when it pleaſed God, who ſeparated me from my mothers womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his ſon in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with fleſh and blood.* Eph. 1. 17, 19. *That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the father of glory may give unto you the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. —And what is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us-ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power.* Eph. 5. 8. *For ye were ſometimes darkneſs, but now are ye light in the Lord.*

Q. 14. *Why do we pray that we may obey, can we not do it of our own free will when we know it?*

*A.* No, for our Wills are ſtubborn and rebellious againſt God's Commands, as well as our Minds ignorant of them; *Rom.* 8. 7. *Becauſe the carnal mind is enmity againſt God: for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* Ezek. 36. 25, 26. *Then will I ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean: from all your filthineſs, and from all your idols, will I cleanſe you. A new heart alſo will I* *give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you: and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh.* Phil. 2. 13. *For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.*

Q. 15. *What is meant by ſubmitting to God's will?*

*A.* (1.) Either a voluntary ſubjection of Soul, and a preparedneſs actually to do his Will: Or (2.) a voluntary and ſilent ſubmiſſion to his Will of Providence in affliction; but in this particular we cannot imitate thoſe in Heaven, becauſe no croſs ever befals them.

Q. 16. *Why is Will added in all things?*

*A.* Becauſe partial Obedience is no Obedience; he that does not obey God in every thing, obeys him in nothing; *Jam.* 2. 10. *For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

Q. 17. *Why do we pray that God by his Grace would work this will in us and by us?*

*A.* Becauſe 'tis Free-grace that determines it; 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. *Who hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus, before the world began.* And efficacious Grace that works it in us, and enables us to do it; *Eph.* 5. 8. *For ye were ſometimes darkneſs, but now are ye light in the Lord.* Ver. 10. *Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*

Q. 18. *What is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* That 'tis Man's Glory and Felicity to be conformed to the Will of God; *Prov.* 12. 26. *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.* Pſal. 19. 10, 11. *More to be deſired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; ſweeter alſo than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover by them is thy ſervant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

Q. 19. *What is the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* That we muſt mortifie in our ſelves every luſt that contradicts God's Will, and renounce without our ſelves every thing that comes in competition therewith; 1 *Cor.* 9. ult. *But I keep under my body, and bring it into ſubjection; leſt that by any means when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.* Gal. 6. 14. *But God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

Q. 20. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* That it is in vain, yea, a provocation, to pray, if we be not obedient to God's Will; *Prov.* 2. 8, 9. *He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preſerveth the way of his ſaints. Then ſhalt thou underſtand righteouſneſs, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.*

Q. 21. *What is the fourth Inference?*

*A.* That the Law ſtill hath the authority of a Rule to Believers, becauſe it reveals God's Will, which they muſt do.

## *Concerning our Daily Bread.*

Queſt. 14. What do we pray for in the fourth Petition?

A. In the fourth Petition, which is, [Give us this day our daily Bread] we pray, that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his Bleſſing with them.

Q. 1. *Why is this Petition placed after the three former?*

*A.* Becauſe thoſe concern immediately and generally God's Glory, in the advancement of his Name, Kingdom and Will, which ought to be preferred to all our perſonal concerns; *Pſal* 69. 9. *For the zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up.* Acts 21. 13. *For I am ready not to be bound only, but alſo to die at Jeruſalem for the name of the Lord Jeſus.*

Q. 2. *Why is it put before the two following Petitions?*

*A.* Not for its worth, but for its order; for we can have no Spiritual Bleſſings unleſs we have a Natural Being in this Life.

Q. 3. *What kind of Bread is here meant?*

*A.* Not Spiritual Bread, or our Lord Chriſt, (as ſome) but Corporal and Temporal.

Q. 4. *What is included in this word Bread?*

*A.* Not that only which we call ſtrictly Bread, but all the good things of this preſent Life.

Q. 5. *Do we hereby beg pure Neceſſities only?*

*A.* No, we pray for Conveniencies for our comfort; as well as Neceſſaries for our life.

Q. 6. *Do we herein pray only for perſonal good things for our being?*

*A.* No, we pray for civil good things for our condition, that according to our degree in the World in which God hath placed us, we may have a convenient allowance.

Q. 7. *Do we pray here for our ſelves only?*

*A.* No, but alſo for our charge, Children and Family, that under and with us they may have the good things of this Life.

Q. 8. *Why do we pray to God for theſe good things, can we not get them our ſelves, or our fellow creatures give them to us?*

*A.* Not without God: Whatever we have of theſe things, they are from God; whoever be the Second Cauſe or Inſtrument; if our ſelves, God gives us ability and ſucceſs to get them; if others, God inclined their hearts, and opened their hands to beſtow them; *Deut.* 8. 17, 18. *And thou ſay in thine heart, my power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.*

Q. 9. *Why do we pray to God to give us Bread?*

*A.* Becauſe the leaſt crumb of Bread is a free Gift, and never can be merited by all we can do or ſuffer; *Luke* 17. 10. *So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall have done all theſe things which are commanded you, ſay, we are unprofitable ſervants.*

Q. 10. *Why are all theſe good things couched under the expreſſion Bread?*

*A.* (1) Becauſe Bread is one of the moſt neceſſary and uſeful things to preſerve Life. (2) Becauſe we muſt not ask Delicacies and Dainties of God.

Q. 11. *What is meant by Day in the Petition?*

*A.* Either (1) a natural Day of twenty four hours; or (2) the day of our whole Life.

Q. 12. *Why do we pray for Daily Bread?*

*A.* Becauſe God muſt give us the mercies an good things of every day, or elſe we cannot hav them.

Q. 13. *Why ſhould we not pray for weekly, or month- ly, or yearly Bread, as well as daily?*

*A.* (1) Becauſe 'tis fit we ſhould be ſtill ſenſibl of our dependance upon God. (2) Becauſe w do frequently pray to God; and ſo exert our Gr co ces, and maintain communion with him, and daily render thanks for daily favour; *Pſal.* 55.17. *Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud, and he ſhall hear my voice.*

Q. 14. *What need we to pray for Daily Bread, when we may have ſtores laid up for Years?*

*A.* They that have the good things of this Life need to pray this Petition, as well as they that have them not. Not that they may have Bread, but that it may be Bread to them; for except God give his Bleſſing upon it, Bread would be Aſhes, and not ſuſtaneous; neither could all the comforts of this Life do us any good: *Iſa.* 3 1. *For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hoſts doth take away from Jeruſalem, and from Juda, the whole ſtay of bread, and the whole ſtay of water.* Mal. 2. 1, 2. *And now, O ye prieſts, this commandment is for you: If you will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, I will even ſend a curſe upon you, and I will curſe your bleſſings; yea, I have curſed them already, becauſe you do not lay it to heart.*

Q. 15. *Why do we pray only for daily Bread, or a competency, may we not pray for abundance and riches?*

*A.* No, becauſe Riches are a great ſnare and temptation; *Matth.* 19. 23, 24. *Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, Verily, I ſay unto you, that a rich man ſhall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I ſay unto you, it is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* Prov. 30. 8, 9. *Remove far from me vanity and lyes, give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me; leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay, who is the Lord? Or leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of my God in vain.*

Q. 16. *What ſhall we then do with Riches, if Providence caſt them upon us, ſhall we caſt them away?*

*A.* No; for ſome of the beſt of Men, and greateſt of God's Favourites, have liv'd and died rich. But (1.) we muſt wean our Hearts from them; *Pſal.* 62. 10. *Truſt not in oppreſſion, and become not vain in robbery: if riches encreaſe, ſet not your heart upon them.* (2.) Be thankful for them, and (3.) Fruitful with them in acts of Piety and Charity: 1 *Tim.* 6. 17, 19. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

Q. 17. *Wherefore is the Bread call'd* our Bread?

*A.* Not becauſe we are abſolute Lords and Poſſeſſors of it, for ſo 'tis God only; *Pſal.* 24. 1, 2. *The earth is the Lords, and the fulneſs thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the ſeas, and eſtabliſhed it upon the floods.* Pſal. 50. 10, 12. *For every beaſt of the foreſt is mine, and the cattle upon a thouſand hills. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fulneſs thereof.* But (1) becauſe we muſt have a Covenant right to it; and (2.) a civil right; we muſt come lawfully and honeſtly by, and ſo keep the good things of this life. 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 10. *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat.*

Q. 18. *Having pray'd for our daily Bread, need we to labour and endeavour to get it?*

*A.* Yes, we muſt labour in good and honeſt callings, God's Bleſſing and Man's Induſtry muſt concur towards the preſent maintenance of life; *Pſal.* 128. 1, 2. *Bleſſed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways, for thou ſhalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy ſhalt thou be, and it ſhall be well with thee.* Prov. 10. 4, 22. *He becometh poor that dealeth with a ſlack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. The bleſſing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no ſorrow with it.*

Q. 19. *What is the firſt Inference from it?*

*A.* That we muſt not ſeek great matters for our ſelves, neither make them the matter of Prayer to God; nor the end and deſign of our Labours and Callings among Men.

Q. 20. *What is a ſecond Inference from hence?*

*A.* That having Food and Raiment, we muſt be therewith content, and therefore thankful; 1 *Tim.* 6. 8. *And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.* 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 18. *In every thing give thanks.*

Q. 21. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* That we aſcribe not our ſucceſs in the World to our own Skill and Induſtry, for the wiſeſt and moſt induſtrious do ſometimes labour in the Fire, and put their Gain in a bag of holes; but to God's free Donation to us, and to his Bleſſing upon our Endeavours; *Gen.* 33. 5, 11. *And he lift up his eyes, and ſaw the women and the children, and ſaid, who are thoſe with thee? And he ſaid, the children which God hath graciouſly given thy Servant.—Take, I pray thee, my bleſſing that is brought to thee, becauſe God hath dealt graciouſly with me, and becauſe I have enough.* Deut. 28. 3. *Bleſſed ſhalt thou be in the city, and bleſſed ſhalt thou be in the field.* Ver. 6. *Bleſſed ſhalt thou be when thou comeſt in, and bleſſed ſhalt thou be when thou goeſt out.*

## *Concerning Forgiveneſs of Sins.*

Queſt. 105. **What do we pray for in the fifth Petition?**

A. **In the fifth Petition, which is,** [and forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors] **we pray, that God for Chriſt's ſake would freely pardon all our Sins: which we are the rather encourag'd to aſk, becauſe by this Grace we are enabled from the Heart to forgive others.**

Q. 1. *Why doth this Petition immediately follow the former?*

*A.* To teach that all temporal and corporal good things, without ſpecial and ſpiritual ones, are little worth; *Pſal* 4. 6. *There be many that ſay, who will ſhew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* Pſal. 17. 14, 15. *From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world which have their portion in this life, and whoſe belly thou filleſt with thy hid treaſure: they are full of children, and leave the reſt of their ſubſtance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteouſneſs; I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs.*

Q. 2. *Why is it annexed to the former with the Copulative* and?

*A.* To teach, that to be one minute in the confluence of all earthly good things, without the pardon of Sin, is a very dangerous and dreadful condition; *Luke* 12. 16, 20. *And he ſpake a parable unto them, ſaying, the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully, but God ſaid unto him, Thou fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee: then* *whoſe ſhall thoſe things be which thou haſt provided?*

Q. 3. *Why is forgiveneſs of Sins placed in the front of ſpiritual Bleſſings?*

*A.* Becauſe till Sin be pardon'd we are under Wrath, and can have no ſpecial ſaving Grace applied to us, till we are accepted; till we are in Chriſt, we have no Covenant right to the Bleſſings of Chriſt; *Matt.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt;* Ver. 30. *For my yoke is eaſie, and my burden is light.* John 15. 4, 5. *Abide in me, and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of it ſelf, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing* — Ver. 7. *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye ſhall ask what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you.* John 3. ult. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life: and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Q. 4. *Why do we pray for forgiveneſs? cannot we make amends for our ſins, and be freed from their guilt without pardon?*

*A.* No, all that we can ever do or ſuffer can never expiate the guilt of the leaſt Sin; *Pſal.* 49. 7, 8. *None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ranſom for him: (For the redemption of their ſoul is precious, and it ceaſeth for ever.)* 1 Sam. 2. 25. *If one man ſin againſt another, the judge ſhall judge him: but if a man ſin againſt the Lord, who ſhall entreat for him?*

Q. 5. *Does God then freely, and out of meer Grace, forgive us?*

*A.* Yes, without any reſpect had to any thing we can do or be; *Iſa.* 43. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for my own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.* Rom. 9. 15. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion.* Ver. 18. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardneth.*

Q. 6. *How doth God forgive Sins?*

*A.* (1.) Univerſally, all Sins; *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. *And the Lord paſſed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity and tranſgreſſion and ſin.* Jer. 33. 8. *And I will cleanſe them from all their iniquity, whereby they have ſinned againſt me: and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have ſinned, and whereby they have tranſgreſſed againſt me.* Hoſ. 14. 2. *Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciouſly.* (2.) Compleatly and perfectly; *Iſa.* 43. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for my own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.* Pſal. 103. 12. *As far as the eaſt is from the weſt: ſo far hath he removed our tranſgreſſions from us.* Mic. 7. 19. *He will ſubdue our iniquities, and thou wilt caſt all our ſins into the depths of the ſea.* Iſaiah 38. 17. *For thou haſt caſt all my ſins behind thy back.* (3.) Everlaſtingly; *Jer.* 31. 34. *For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their ſin no more.* Heb. 8. 12. *And their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

Q. 7. *But doth not God puniſh them afterward whom he has juſtified and forgiven?*

*A.* No, not with a proper and vindictive puniſhment; but he brings Evil upon them for their Sins, as a Father chaſtiſes his Child; and other ſorts of Afflictions for their ſpiritual good: He may be angry, as a Father, with thoſe he has pardoned, but never hate them as a condemning Judge; *Pſal.* 89. 28. *My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him.* Ver. 34. *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.*

Q. 8. *How can God be ſaid freely to pardon all our ſins, when we pray it may be done for Chriſt's ſake, does not that imply that Chriſt has ſatisfied God for our ſins, and deſerv'd our Remiſſion?*

*A.* Yes, it does ſo; for the Lord Chriſt, by his Life and Death, did ſatisfie Divine Juſtice, and did merit our forgiveneſs; but if he did ſo, we did not ſo: our Sins coſt him dear, but their Pardon coſt us nothing; our Pardon is perfectly free to us, tho' due to Chriſt, for God gave Chriſt freely for us; God accepts of his Merits, and applies them to us freely; *Rom.* 3. 24. *Being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. 9. *But is there nothing requir'd from us as the Condition of Pardon? and if ſo, how can it be abſolutely free?*

*A.* There are requir'd Repentance from Sin, and Faith in the Lord Chriſt; *Luke* 13. 3. *But except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* John 3. ult. *And he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* This is requir'd from us towards our Pardon, but yet 'tis free, (1.) Becauſe God freely ordains thus to pardon. (2.) Becauſe both theſe are the free Gifts of God, *Acts* 11. 18. *Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.* Eph. 2. 8. *For by grace are ye ſaved, through Faith; and that not of your ſelves, it is the gift of God.*

Q. 10. *When then are our ſins forgiven?*

*A.* Juſt upon our cloſure with Chriſt by Faith, in that very moment; *Rom.* 5. 1. *Therefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Rom. 8. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Q. 11. *Why do we pray in the Anſwer for the forgiveneſs of all our Sins?*

*A.* Becauſe if the leaſt guilt ſhould remain upon us, 'twould exclude us from God's favour, and lodge us in everlaſting burnings; *Rom.* 6. ult. *For the wages of ſin is death.*

Q. 12. *What are the Privileges and Bleſſings that accompany Pardon?*

*A.* Juſtification is accompanied with Adoption, *John* 1. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* With the Spirit and Principle of all Grace and Holineſs; 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. *And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the ſpirit of our God.* With an infallible title to Eternal Glory, *John* 3. 16. *That whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* Rom. 8. 30. *Whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.*

Q. 13. *How may we know that we are pardon'd and juſtified?*

*A.* Ordinarily by our Sanctification, by our loathing of Sin, our contempt of the World, our valuing of Chriſt, our love and thankfulneſs to God, *&c.* 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. *But ye are ſanctified.* Rom. 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* Gal. 6. 14. *By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

1 Pet. 2. 7. *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.* Luke 7. 47. *Her ſins which are many are forgiven; for ſhe loved much.*

Q. 14. *What is meant by* [Our]? *is it only ſuch Sins as we have perſonally and actually committed?*

*A.* No; but alſo *Adam*'s Sin, which is ours by imputation; *Rom.* 5. 19. *By one mans diſobedience many were made ſinners.* And original Sin, which is ours by inheſion; *Pſal.* 51. 5. *Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.* And other mens Sins, which we have made ours, by exciting them to them, not hindring of them, ſilence at them, and other ways; 2 *Sam.* 12. 9. *Thou haſt killed Uriah the Hittite with the ſword, and haſt taken his wife to be thy wife, and haſt ſlain him with the ſword of the children of Ammon.* 1 Tim. 5. 22. *Neither be partaker of other mens ſins.*

Q. 15. *Wherefore are Sins called Debts?*

*A.* Becauſe they are a non-payment of God's Dues, a non-performance of our Duty, which makes us liable to the arreſt of Death, and to the Priſon of Hell.

Q. 16. *Why do we plead our own forgiveneſs of others?*

*A.* Not as any Merit of our own Pardon, but either as an Encouragement to our ſelves to beg Pardon; ſeeing ſuch evil, envious, and malignant perſons are enabled to forgive others, much more may we hope the good and gracious God will forgive us: Or as a condition, without which we can have no Pardon, and with which we ſhall; *Mat.* 6. 14. *For if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly father will alſo forgive you.*

Q. 17. *How do others treſpaſs againſt us?*

*A.* When they injure us either in our Perſons, or Names, or Families, or Eſtates, or Souls, *&c.* 1 *Sam.* 2. 25. *If one man ſin againſt another, the judge ſhall judge him; but if a man ſin againſt the Lord, who ſhall entreat for him?*

Q. 18. *Can we forgive our Neighbours freely, fully and perfectly, as God doth forgive us?*

*A.* We cannot.

Q. 19. *What then is the meaning of God's forgiving us as we forgive others?*

*A.* Not as to the quantity and perfection of forgiveneſs, but as to the ſincerity and quality thereof; *Mat.* 18. ult. *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly father do alſo unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes.*

Q. 20. *Are we always bound to manifeſt outwardly our love and forgiveneſs to all our enemies, and to behave our ſelves towards them as friends?*

*A.* No, if we have experienc'd them to be treacherous and falſe, and ſee no change, we are not bound to truſt them, if they be and remain wicked and profane, we muſt not aſſociate with them; *Pſal.* 26. 5. *I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not ſit with the wicked.* Ver. 4. *I have not ſate with vain perſons, neither will I go in with diſſemblers.*

Q. 21. *What then muſt we do to ſuch?*

*A.* We muſt heartily forgive them all their Injuries; we muſt love them with the love of benevolence, pray for them, and be ready and willing to do them all good both of Body and Soul; *Mat.* 5. 44, 45. *But I ſay unto you, love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you and perſecute you. That you may be the children of your father which is in heaven; for he maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil, and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt.*

Q. 22. *If we forgive others, ſhall we be forgiven our ſelves?*

*A.* We ſhall, if out of Obedience to God, and Love to Chriſt, we do it.

Q. 23. *What is the firſt Inference from hence?*

*A.* That except our Sins be forgiven, we are loſt and undone Creatures, and therefore we muſt never be contented till we are pardon'd.

Q. 24. *What is a ſecond Inference?*

*A.* That God is a God of Love, Goodneſs, and Pardon, ſeeing he will not pardon us if we do not pardon others, but will if we do ſo.

Q. 25. *What is a third Inference?*

*A.* That if we live in hatred when we pray the Lord's Prayer, we pray for our own damnation; *Mat.* 18. 22. *Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay not unto thee until ſeven times, but until ſeventy times ſeven.* Ver. 35. *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly father do alſo unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes.*

## *Of God's leading us into Temptation.*

Queſt. 106. **What do we pray for in the ſixth Petition?**

A. **In the ſixth Petition, which is,** [And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil] **we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to Sin, or ſupport and deliver us when we are tempted.**

Q. 1. *Why is this Petition joyn'd to the former with the Copulative* And?

*A.* Becauſe 'twill be but little advantage to have former Sins pardon'd, and to be left to the power and practice, to the love and trade of Sin for the future; *Ezek.* 18. 26. *When a righteous man turneth away from his righteouſneſs, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done ſhall he die.*

Q. 2. *What is meant by Temptation?*

*A.* In general, a tryal or probation of what is in us, or of what we will do.

Q. 3. *What is meant by Temptation here?*

*A.* Temptation to Sin and Wickedneſs.

Q. 4. *How may we be ſaid to be tempted to ſin?*

*A.* (1.) Effectually by our ſelves and our own hearts; *Jam.* 1. 14, 15. *But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt and enticed. Then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin; and ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.* (2.) Formally, with an intention to draw into ſin, and ſo we are tempted of the Devil; 1 *Chron.* 21. 1. *And Satan ſtood up againſt Iſrael, and provoked David to number Iſrael.* Mat. 4. 1, 3. *Then was Jeſus led up of the ſpirit into the wilderneſs, to be tempted of the devil. And when the tempter came to him, he ſaid, If thou be the Son of God, command that theſe ſtones be made bread.* (3.) Innocently and blameleſly, and ſo God is ſaid to tempt; 2 *Sam.* 24. 1. *And again the anger of the Lord was kindled againſt Iſrael, and he moved David againſt them to ſay, Go number Iſrael and Judah.*

Q. 5. *How many ways may God be ſaid to tempt to Evil?*

*A.* (1.) By withdrawing his Grace either common or ſpecial; 2 *Chron.* 32. 31. *Howbeit, in the buſineſs of the embaſſadors of the princes of Babylon,* *who ſent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.* (2.) By permitting Satan and wicked men to tempt; 2 *Sam.* 24. 1. *He moved David againſt them, to ſay, Go and number Iſrael and Judah.* With 1 *Chron* 21. 1. *Satan ſtood up againſt Iſrael, and provoked David.* Mat. 4. 1. *Then was Jeſus led up of the ſpirit into the wilderneſs, to be tempted of the devil.* (3.) By preſenting occaſions in his Providence, which he knows will be abuſed to Sin, as in the fall of *Adam*, the hardning of *Pharaoh*, &c.

Q. 6. *What do we beg in this Petition?*

*A.* We beg that we may not any of theſe, or any other ways, whereby the holy God may be ſaid to lead into Temptation, be led thereinto; *Pſal.* 141. 4. *Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties.* Pſal. 19. 13. *Keep back thy ſervant alſo from preſumptuous ſins, let them not have dominion over me: then ſhall I be upright, and I ſhall be innocent from the great tranſgreſſion.*

Q. 7. *What is meant by evil?*

*A.* Some underſtand it of the Devil, but the beſt meaning is Sin, which is the evil of evils; and makes the Devil evil, and is the worſt of evils the Devil can bring upon us, and is uſually ſo underſtood in Scripture; *Pſal.* 97. 10. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.* Iſa. 1. 16. *Ceaſe to do evil.* Amos 5. 15. *Hate the evil, and love the good.* Rom. 12. 9. *Abhor that which is evil.*

Q. 3. *What by deliverance from evil is meant?*

*A.* That if God ſees meet to permit us to be tempted by Satan and the wicked without, or by our own Hearts within, to ſin; or occaſionally by his Providence, that he will not leave us, but undertake for us, that we may not be led into Sin thereby, but by his Grace be made more than conquerors; *Pſal.* 51. 10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me.* Pſal. 119. 133. *Order my ſtep, in thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.* According to his promiſe, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *But God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.* 2 Cor. 12. 9. *And he ſaid unto me, my grace is ſufficient for thee; for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.*

Q. 9. *What is the firſt Inference?*

*A.* That Sin is the worſt of Evils.

Q. 10. *What's the ſecond Inference?*

*A.* That without God's Grace we can never withſtand, but ſhall be overcome by every temptation; 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. *Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves to think any thing as of our ſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God.* John 15. 5. *For without me ye can do nothing.*

Q. 11. *What is the third Inference?*

*A.* That we muſt do all we can to keep our ſelves from Temptation, and to engage the Grace of God with us in Temptation by Prayer, by pleaſing the Spirit of God, by looking to Jeſus, *&c.*

## *Of the Concluſion.*

Queſt. 107. **What doth the Concluſion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?**

A. **The Concluſion of the Lord's Prayer, which is,** [For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever, *Amen.*] **teacheth us to take our encouragement in Prayer from God only, and in our Prayers to praiſe him, aſcribing Kingdom, Power, and Glory to him, and in teſtimony of our deſire, and aſſurance to be heard we ſay,** Amen.

Q. 1. *Why is the Concluſion joyn'd to the Particle* For?

*A.* To teach us that therein are included Arguments or Reaſons to preſs God withal, and to prevail with him for audience.

Q. 2. *But is it lawful to argue with God, and to urge him with Reaſons in Prayer?*

*A.* 'Tis not only lawful, but expedient, yea, highly commendable; as is ſeen in the Saints Prayers. In *Moſes*'s, *Numb.* 14. 13. *And Moſes ſaid unto the Lord, then the Egyptians ſhall hear it (for thou broughteſt up this people in thy might from among them.)* Ver. 19. *Pardon, I beſeech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatneſs of thy mercy, and as thou haſt forgiven this people, from Egypt, even until now.* In *Joſhua*'s, chap. 7. 7. *And Joſhua ſaid, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore haſt thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to deſtroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other ſide Jordan.* Ver. 9. *For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land ſhall hear of it, and ſhall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?* In *Aſa*'s, 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. *And Aſa cried unto the Lord his God, and ſaid, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: Help us, O Lord our God, for we reſt on thee, and in thy name we go againſt this great multitude: O Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail againſt thee.* In *Jehoſhaphat*'s, 2 *Chron.* 20. 6. *And ſaid, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and ruleſt not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, ſo that none is able to withſtand thee?* And *Hezekiah*'s, 2 *Kin.* 19. 15. *And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and ſaid, O Lord God of Iſrael, which dwelleſt between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth, thou haſt made heaven and earth.* Ver. 19. *Now therefore, O Lord our God,* &c.

Q. 3. *But to what purpoſe can we think to prevail with God by our Arguments and Importunity?*

*A.* They are not uſed as tho' we would put God in remembrance of any thing, or would prevail with God to do that for us which he is unwilling to give.

Q. 4. *Why then?*

*A.* For our own profit, for the enlarging of our own Hearts, for the exciting of our Fervency, for the exerting of Faith, Hope, Zeal, Charity, *&c.* in Prayer, and ſo to prepare our ſelves for the mercy, that we may the more gratefully receive it, and the more fruitfully imploy it.

Q. 5. *How many Arguments are in this Concluſion?*

*A.* Three.

Q. 6. *From whence are they taken?*

*A.* From God's Kingdom, from his Law, and from his Glory.

Q. 7. *What Kingdom is here meant?*

*A.* God's univerſal, eſſential, and abſolute Kingdom, wherein may be and is involved his ſpecial Kingdom over the Church.

Q. 8. *What are the Arguments from hence?*

*A.* Becauſe all that we can pray for in this

Prayer, is for the advancement and perfecting of this his Kingdom, by the deſtruction of all perſons and things that oppoſe it, and the completion of his dominion over all his Subjects; therefore he would grant all theſe requeſts.

Q. 9. *What is another?*

(2.) Becauſe he being ſuch an abſolute Lord and Soveraign, has an undeniable Right, and unqueſtionable Authority to give and grant all we ask, and to effect and bring to paſs all we beg; for all perſons and things are his own, and at his diſpoſal; *Mat.* 20. 15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?*

Q. 10. *What is meant by Power?*

*A.* God's eſſential, infinite, irreſiſtible Power, whereby he can do what he pleaſes; *Pſal.* 135. 6. *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed*, &c.

Q. 11. *What is the Argument from hence?*

*A.* That we ask nothing from God but what he can do with infinite eaſe, in deſpite of all the oppoſition that Hell, Earth and Heart can make to the contrary; *Phil.* 3. ult. *According to the working*, &c. Eph. 3. 20. *Now unto him that is able*, &c.

Q. 12. *What is meant by Glory?*

*A.* Not his eſſential Glory, which no Man or Angel can ever apprehend.

Q. 13. *What Glory then?*

*A.* His declar'd and acknowledg'd Glory, even the accompliſhment of all his Decrees by his Providence; and then the love, the adoration and the praiſes, the ſelf-dedications of Angels and Saints return'd to him for the ſame.

Q. 14. *What is the Argument or Motive from hence?*

*A.* That ſeeing the ſubſtance of every Requeſt does directly tend to, and will perfectly end in, this Glory of God, when they are fully anſwer'd, therefore he would gradually anſwer them while we are here, and perfectly at laſt, to the advancement of his Glory now, and the completion of it then; 1 *Chron.* 29. 11. *Thine, O Lord, is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory*, &c. Joſ. 7. 9. *And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?* Iſa. 42. 8. *I am the Lord, that is my name*, &c. Iſa. 48. 11. *For my own ſake, even for my own ſake will I do it*, &c.

Q. 15. *Why is* Amen *added?*

*A.* Becauſe 'tis the uſual Concluſion of Prayers and Praiſes; *Pſal.* 41. 13. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael*, &c. Pſal. 72. 19. *And bleſſed be his glorious name for ever*, &c. 2 Cor. 13. ult. *The grace of the Lord Jeſus, and the love of God*, &c. Rom. 16. 20. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you. Amen.*

Q. 16. *But what doth this word here ſignifie?*

*A.* It ſignifies (1.) the reality and ardency of our deſire to be granted in what we pray for; *Rev.* 22. 20. *He which teſtifieth theſe things, ſaith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus.*

Q. 17. *And what beſides?*

*A.* Our truſt and firm confidence that we ſhall be heard and anſwer'd in all theſe our Requeſts; *Rev.* 1. 7. *Even ſo, Amen.* Rev. 7. 12. *Saying Amen: bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom*, &c.

Q. 18. *What are the Inferences from hence?*

*A.* That we ought to uſe in Prayer all ſuch Arguments as may moſt and beſt affect our Hearts towards God, excite our Graces, and ſucceed with God.

Q. 19. *What's another?*

*A.* That all we pray for muſt be in a ſubſerviency to God's Kingdom, and with a deſire of his Glory.

Q. 20. *What is the next?*

*A.* That we muſt act according to our Prayers, do all we can for the advancement of God's Kingdom, and the exaltation of his Glory, as Subjects and Votaries thereto; *Pſal.* 116. 16. 1 *Cor.* 10. 31.

Q. 21. *What may more be gathered hence?*

*A.* That we ought to begin, ſo to continue, and conclude our Prayers in loweſt Adorations of God, and acknowledgments of his Glory and Attributes.

Q. 22. *What more doth this Concluſion teach?*

*A.* That in Prayer we muſt be fervent in our deſires, and longing for what we pray, *Jam.* 5. 16.

Q. 23. *Is there any thing beſides?*

*A.* That praying for things agreeable to God's Will, we ought to be confident that we ſhall ſucceed in our Requeſts, praying for the Matter, and after the manner of this Prayer; *Jam.* 1. 6, 8. *Mat.* 21. 22.

# *Vindiciæ Legis & Fœderis*:

OR, A

# REPLY

TO

# Mr. PHILIP CARY's Solemn Call.

**Wherein he pretends to Anſwer all the Arguments of**

**Mr. ALLEN,**
**Mr. BAXTER,**
**Mr. SYDENHAM,**
**Mr. SEDGWICK,**
**Mr. ROBERTS, and**
**Dr. BURTHOGGE,**

**For the Right of *Believers Infants* to BAPTISM.**

By proving the Law at *Sinai*, and the Covenant of Circumciſion with *Abraham*, were the very ſame with *Adam*'s Covenant of Works, and that becauſe the *Goſpel-Covenant* is abſolute.

## A Friendly Preface to the *Author* of the SOLEMN CALL, and the more diſcreet and charitable of the Party concern'd with him in this Controverſie.

Chriſtian Friends,

WHen we open our Bibles, and read that Text, 1 Cor. 1. 10. *we have cauſe to deal with it as* Origen *once did by another Scripture, even cloſe the Book, and weep over it, in conſideration of the weak and feeble influences ſuch melting words, deliver'd with ſuch a* Pathos, *have upon the Hearts of Profeſſors this day.* Now I beſeech you, Brethren, by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions among you, but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.

I beſeech you] *He dips the Nail in Oyl, that it may drive the eaſier.* I beſeech you, Brethren] *A Compellation breathing ſweetneſs and affection, and ſhould drop from our Lips into each others Ears, with the ſame effect that Word once did upon the Ears of* Benhadad'*s Servants*, my Brother Benhadad. Sirs, (*ſaid* Moſes *to the ſtriving* Iſraelites) ye are Brethren. *O when ſhall the Church become a true* Philadelphia!

*I beſeech you Brethren*, by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt] *or as you love Jeſus Chriſt*, ut quantum ipſum amant, tantum ſtudeant concordiæ, *ſaith* Calvin; *Be as ſtudious of Concord, as you are free in profeſſing Love to Chriſt.*

That there be no diviſions] *or rents among you, a* Σχίσμα Schiſm, *or rent in the Church is much the ſame, and altogether as dangerous as a* Στάσις *or Sedition in the Common-wealth, and harder to be cured: For as the Lord* Verulam *truly obſerves, Differences amongſt perſecuting Enemies and the Church, are like the ſtrivings of the* Egyptian *with the* Iſraelite; *which* Moſes *quickly ended, by knocking down the* Egyptian: *but Diſſentions in the* Church *are like the ſtriving of one* Iſraelite *with another; and all that* Moſes *can do to quiet and part theſe, is only by fair and gentle words, and reminding them that they are* Brethren.

*Great is the miſchief of Diviſions among Chriſtians, and the leſs the grounds and cauſes are, the greater always is the ſin and miſchief of them. In the* Primitive Church *Contentions grew fervent about means lawful and unlawful*; which did not profit, *the meaning is, it greatly damnified them that were occupied therein*, Heb. 13. 9. *practical Religion among them grew cold, as Diſputations about theſe Trifles grew fervent.*

*The readieſt way to cool ſuch Heats is, by diſcovering the trivial nature of the matter contended about; as* Demoſthenes *appeas'd the tumult among the People rais'd by a ſmall occaſion, by relating to them the Story of a Man that had hir'd an* Aſs *to carry him a Journey, but the Sun ſhining fervent, he was forced to quit her Back, and betake himſelf to her ſhadow; the owner withſtood him, alledging, that he had hired the Body of the Aſs, but her ſhadow was not in the bargain; and ſo the Contention between them grew as hot as the Sun. Many ſuch Trifles have raiſed great Contentions in the World; witneſs the great Contention betwixt* *the* Eaſtern *and* Weſtern Church, *about keeping of* Eaſter.

*Other Points there are of greater moment, about which good men contend, and yet theſe oftentimes are magnified much above their true intrinſecal value. So I am ſure it is in the Controverſie before us. Mr.* Cary *tells us, that* Theſe things will be found at length to be of higheſt concernment unto us, and muſt therefore be our moſt ſerious practice; *pa.* 243. *If ſo, then the* proper ſubject of Baptiſm *muſt be one of thoſe that is of greateſt weight, and the profeſſion thereof, the very* Schibboleth *to diſtinguiſh one perſon from another in matters of Religion. No wonder therefore the Fires of Contention are blown up to ſuch a vehement heat, even in ſuch an improper ſeaſon; much like the Contentions among the* Engliſh Fugitives *at* Frankfort, *when their Brethren were frying in the Flames at* Smithfield. *Juſt ſo muſt we be ſcuffling, whilſt thouſands of our Brethren are bleeding in* Ireland. *Had we a true ſenſe of the quality of the* Subject, *or the unſeaſonableneſs of the* Time, *it would certainly allay theſe Heats among us. Did we ſee who ſtand by, and look with pleaſure upon our Follies, it would quickly allay our Heats.* Tertullian *tells the Chriſtians of his time, that they were like the* Funambulones, *or Men that walk upon Ropes, the leaſt tread awry might be their ruin, ſo narrowly did their Enemies watch them.*

*Sirs, the Peace, Safety and Honour of the diſſenting Intereſt are things of too great value to be hazarded amongſt the hands of our common Enemies. You may fancy they will neglect the advantage you give them, but if they do, the Devil will call them Fools for it. Mr.* Herle *tells us of a King's Fool, who wrote down the King himſelf in his Table among his brother Fools, becauſe he had truſted an* African *Stranger with Four thouſand pounds to buy* Barbary *Horſes. The King asked him how he would make him amends, if the Stranger ſhould come again? Why then* (ſaid he) *I'll blot your Name out of my Table of Fools, and write down the* African *in your ſtead. Think not our Enemies are ſuch Fools to neglect the advantage we caſt into their hands. 'Tis a weighty Note of* Livy, Conſilia non dant homines rebus, ſed res hominibus; *Men don't counſel Things, but Time and Things counſel Men. Methinks the poſtures of Times and Affairs give us better Counſel than we ſeem to be govern'd by in ſuch work as this. Diviſions of Forty years ſtanding and more,* about Infants Baptiſm, *have eaten up the Times, waſted the Spirits, and alienated the Hearts of Engliſh Profeſſors, divided them both in Society and Love; by reaſon whereof God's pleaſant Plant in this reſembles the Bramble, which taking root at both ends, by reaſon of the rancounters of the Sap, commonly withers in the middle. Your Brethren, in their* Narrative *from their* general Aſſembly, *make a ſad and ſenſible complaint of withering in the power of Godlineſs. And truly we as well as they may complain with the Church,* We do all fade as a Leaf: *The Lord help us to diſcern the true cauſe, whether it be not the miſplacing of our Zeal, our being cold where we ſhould be fervent, and fervent hot where we ſhould be cool; and whether the eating up of ſo much time and ſtudy about Baptizing of Infants, have not kept us theſe forty years in the Infancy of our Graces?*

*I well remember that bleſſed time, when* Ours *and* Yours *were terms almoſt unknown among Profeſſors in* England. *When their Affections and Prayers melted and mingled together ſweetly in days of humiliation, and other Duties of edifying and heavenly Communion; and then Churches began to flouriſh, and the Graces of Chriſtians every where flouriſhed, and became fruitful; but no ſooner did the Saints divide in Society and Affection, but theſe pleaſant bloſſoms were nipt by it, as by a froſty morning. The* Church *form'd it ſelf as it were into two Armies, ſet in* Battalia *againſt each other. It was now with us much like as it's ſaid of the* Amphisbena, *that hath an Head at either end, of which neither can well move without the conſent of both; but if each move a contrary way, the Body tears in the middle. I doubt not but many that differ'd from us belong'd to* Chriſt, *the ſame Head with us; and yet 'tis paſt doubt, that many who ſeem'd to be of us were headed by* Satan; *and quickly diſcover'd themſelves to be ſo, by running farther than we firſt or you next imagin'd, even into* Quakeriſm, Socinianiſm, Ranteriſm, *and the fouleſt Puddle and Sink of complicated Errors; of which an impartial Stranger under the name of* Honorius Reggius, ἀναγραμματικῶς, Georgius Hornius *having heard the report in his own Country, came over on purpoſe into* England *for his particular and perfect information, and hath given the foreign Churches a full and ſad account thereof in a* Latin Narrative, *which I have by me; whereby I find, that if the Lord in mercy to us had not let in a third Party with the common Calamity upon us all, we our ſelves muſt in all probability have mutually ruin'd each other. But God ſaw other hands fitter for ſuch dirty Work than ours; and now it was time to reflect upon former Follies, and renew our ancient acquaintance in the common Goals. And through the goodneſs of God this did ſomewhat allay the Heats of good men, and gave us freſh hopes of an hearty and laſting redintegration. We hoped the Furnace might have purged our Droſs, and melted our Hearts into Unity, both by diſcovering the Evils for which the Lord afflicted us, and the Sincerity of the Sufferers Hearts under thoſe Tryals.* Chriſtians, (*ſaith Mr.* Jenkins) if we muſt die, let us die like men, by an unanimous holy Contention againſt the common Enemy, not like Fools, by giving him our Sword, and deſtroying one another by Schiſms in our own bowels.

*But alas! alas! no ſooner is the Rod off our Backs, and a reſpite from Sufferings given us, but we are preſently ſounding an Alarm to the Battel again, and, to my ſorrow, my ſelf unavoidably engaged therein.*

*Friends, I have a Witneſs in many of your Boſoms, how peacefully and reſpectfully I have always carried it towards you, even to ſuch a degree as began to bring me under the ſuſpicion of ſome of your Party, that I was inclining to their Opinion, tho' I did not openly profeſs it. But the true Reaſons of my moderation in this point were,* (1.) *That I ever did, and ſtill do, look upon many of you as Chriſtians, ſound in the other great Doctrines of the Goſpel.* (2.) *That there are difficulties in this Controverſie which may puzzle the minds of well-meaning Chriſtians.* (3.) *I highly valued the Peace of the* Church, *and durſt do nothing that tended to keep open the breaches upon a* Controverſie *of this nature, you being for Purity in Doctrine and Worſhip in moſt other controverted points, as well as we.* (4.) *I obſerv'd how rare a thing it is for engaged Parties to give ground.*

Qui velit ingenio cedere, rarus erit.

(5.) *My Head, Heart, and Hands have been filled with better employments, from which I am extreamly loth to be diverted. If* Bellarmine *turn'd with loathing from School-divinity, becauſe it wanted the ſweet juice of Piety, much more may I turn from ſuch perverſe*

*Diſputes as theſe: Sure I may find as fair Expoſitions of Scripture, and as accurate and legitimate diſtinctions among the* School-men, *as in Mr.* Tombes's Examen *and* Apology; *or (which for the moſt part is but a Tranſcript of both) in Mr.* Cary's Solemn Call. *But I ſee I muſt not be my own chuſer, I cannot now be both ſilent and innocent; for in this* Solemn Call *I find the great Doctrines of God's Covenants abuſed by my Neighbour. The Books diſpers'd into many Families related to me in this place, one of them deliver'd to me by the* Author's *own hand, with a preſſing deſire to give my judgment upon it. Several Objections which I privately and ſeaſonably ſent him, to prevent the ſin and folly of his attempt, pretended to be anſwer'd from* p. 164. ad p. 183. *Thus am I neceſſarily brought into the Field of Controverſie, whither I come not a* Volunteer, *but a* preſs'd man; *not out of choice, but neceſſity. And now I am here, I reſolve to be only* Adverſarius litis, non perſonæ, *an Adverſary in the Controverſie, not to the Perſon, eſpecially of my friendly Neighbour. Neither would I have appear'd thus publickly againſt him, if Differences could have been accommodated, and the evil prevented in a more private way, in order whereto, I have punctually obſerv'd and kept the rules and meaſures of friendſhip.*

*'Tis poſſible ſome may judge my Stile againſt him to be too ſharp, but if they pleaſe to read the Concluſion of his* Call, *and my* Anſwer, *I preſume they will find enough to make atonement for that fault, if it be a fault. 'Tis from the nature of the matter before me, not from defect of Charity to the Perſon or Party, that I am forced to be ſo plain and pungent as I am.*

*To conclude, I ſuſpect this very Preface may be alſo cenſur'd for its plainneſs and tediouſneſs. I confeſs, when times are buſie we ſhould be brief; and I am perſwaded a ſufficient Preface may be contracted into four words,* ἄνευ προοιμίων, ϗ παθῶν, without Preface or Paſſions. *However, I have a little eaſed my own Heart, by diſcharging my Duty to my differing Brethren, and pleas'd my ſelf, if not them.*

*The God of Peace create Peace in all the borders of* Sion, *beat our* Swords *into* Plow ſhares, *and our* Spears *into* Pruning-hooks; *I mean our* polemicals *into* practicals, *that* Jeruſalem *may once more be a City compact, and no more terrible to her ſelf, but only to her Enemies, as an Army with Banners. This, Brethren, is the Prayer, and ſhall ever be the Endeavour of*

Your Friend and Servant
in Chriſt,

*John Flavell.*

# PROLEGOMENA.

BEfore we enter into the main Controverſie, it will be neceſſary to acquaint the Reader, why I begin with the middle of the Book; and it is becauſe I there find theſe three Principles or Poſitions, on which the other parts of his Diſcourſe are ſuperſtructed; and theſe being deſtroy'd, his other Diſcourſes are but *arenæ, ſine calce.* I properly therefore begin with the Foundation.

Next I ſhall ſhew how far we are agreed in the matters here controverted, and where it is in each of theſe that the Controverſie indeed lies betwixt us; and as to

### I. *Poſition*, viz.

*That the* Sinai *Law is the ſame with* Adam's *Covenant of Works, made in Paradiſe.*

The difference betwixt us here is not (1.) Whether both theſe be call'd Covenants in Scripture? nor (2.) Whether there were no Grace at all in both, or either of them; for we are agreed, it is Grace in God to enter into Covenant with Man, whatever that Covenant be: nor (3.) Whether the *Sinai* Law be not a Covenant of Works to ſome Men, by their own fault and occaſion? nor (4.) Whether the Scriptures do not many times ſpeak of it in that very ſenſe and notion wherein *Carnal Juſticiaries* apprehend and take it, and by rejecting Chriſt, make it ſo to themſelves? nor (5.) Whether the very matter of the *Law of Nature* be not reviv'd and repreſented in the *Sinai Law*? Theſe are not the Points we contend about: but the Queſtion is, Whether the *Sinai* Law do in its own nature, and according to God's purpoſe and deſign in the promulgation of it, revive the Law of Nature, to the ſame ends and uſes it ſerv'd to in *Adam*'s Covenant; and ſo be properly and truly a Covenant of Works? Or whether God had not gracious and evangelical ends and purpoſes, *viz.* by ſuch a dreadful repreſentation of the ſevere and impracticable terms of the firſt Covenant, inſtead of obliging them to the perſonal and punctual obſervance of them for Righteouſneſs and Life, he did not rather deſign to convince them of the impoſſibility of legal Righteouſneſs, humble proud Nature, and ſhew them the neceſſity of betaking themſelves to Chriſt, now exhibited in the New Covenant, as the only Refuge to fallen Sinners. The latter I defend according to the Scriptures, the former Mr. *Cary* ſeems to aſſert and vehemently argue for.

*2ly.* In this Controverſie about the *Sinai* Law, I do not find Mr. *Cary* diſtinguiſhing (as he ought) betwixt the Law conſider'd more largely and complexly, as containing both the *Moral* and *Ceremonial Law*, for both which it is often taken in Scripture, and more ſtrictly for the *Moral Law* only, as it is ſometimes uſed in Scripture. Theſe two he makes one and the ſame *Covenant of Works*; though there be ſome that doubt whether the meer *Moral Law* may not be a *Covenant of Works*; yet I never met with any man before, that durſt affirm the *Ceremonial Law*, which is ſo full of Chriſt, to be ſo; and to this Law it is that *Circumciſion* appertains.

*3ly.* The Moral Law, ſtrictly taken for the Ten

Commandments, is not by him diſtinguiſh'd (as it ought to be, and as the Scripture frequently doth) according to God's intention and deſign in the promulgation of it, which was to add it as an Appendix to the Promiſe, *Gal.* 3. 19. and not to ſet it up as an oppoſite Covenant, *Gal.* 3. 21. and the carnal Jews *miſtaking and perverting the uſe and end of the Law*, and making it to themſelves a Covenant of Works, by making it the very Rule and Reaſon of their Juſtification before God, *Rom.* 9. 32, 33. *Rom.* 10. 3. theſe things ought carefully to have been diſtinguiſh'd, foraſmuch as the whole Controverſie depends on this double ſenſe and intention of the Law; yea, the very *denomination* of that Law depends hereon: For I affirm, it ought not to be denominated from the abuſed and miſtaken end of it amongſt carnal men, but from the true ſcope, deſign and end for which God publiſh'd it after the Fall: And tho' we find ſuch expreſſions as theſe in Scripture, *The man that doth them ſhall live in them*; and *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things*, &c. yet theſe reſpecting the Law not according to God's intention, but man's corruption and abuſe of it, the Law is not thereby to be denominated a Covenant of Works. God's End was not to juſtifie them, but to try them by that terrible diſpenſation, *Exod.* 20. 20. whether they would ſtill hanker after that natural way of ſelf-righteouſneſs: for this end God propounded the Terms of the firſt Covenant to them on *Sinai*, not to open the way of ſelf-juſtification to them, but to convince them, and ſhut them up to Chriſt; juſt as our Saviour, *Matt.* 19. 17. puts the young man upon keeping the Commandments, not to drive him from, but neceſſitate him to himſelf in the way of Faith.

The Law in both theſe ſenſes is excellently deſcrib'd, *Gal.* 4. in that Allegory of *Hagar* and *Sarah*, the figures of the two Covenants. *Hagar* in her firſt and proper ſtation was but a ſerviceable *Handmaid* to *Sarah*, as the Law is a *Schoolmaſter* to *Chriſt*; but when *Hagar* the Handmaid is taken into *Sarah*'s Bed, and brings forth Children that aſpire to the Inheritance, then ſaith the Scripture, *Caſt out the bond-woman, with her ſon.* So it is here; take the Law in its primary uſe, as God deſign'd it, as a *Schoolmaſter* or *Handmaid* to *Chriſt* and the *Promiſe*, ſo it is conſiſtent with them, and excellently ſubſervient to them; but if we marry this Handmaid, and eſpouſe it as a *Covenant of Works*, then are we bound to it for life, *Rom.* 7. and muſt have nothing to do with Chriſt. The Believers of the Old Teſtament had true apprehenſions of the right end and uſe of the Law, which directed them to *Chriſt*, and ſo they became children of the *Free-woman*. The carnal Jews truſted to the works of the Law for righteouſneſs, and ſo became the children of the *Bond-woman*; but neither could be children of both at once, no more than the ſame man can naturally be born of two Mothers. This is the difference betwixt us about the firſt Poſition. And as to the

### II *Poſition.*

*That* Abraham's *Covenant*, Gen. 17. *is an* Adam's *Covenant of Works alſo, becauſe Circumciſion was annexed to it, which obliged Men to keep the whole Law.*

The Controverſie betwixt us in this point, is not whether *Circumciſion* were an Ordinance of God, annexed by him to his *Covenant* with *Abraham*: nor (2.) Whether *Abraham*'s ordinary and extraordinary Seed ought to be, and actually were ſign'd by it? nor (3.) Whether it were a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith to any individual perſon; for he allows it to be ſo to *Abraham*? nor (4.) Whether it pertain'd to the *Ceremonial Law*, and ſo muſt ceaſe at the death of *Chriſt*? But the difference betwixt us is, Whether (1.) it was a Seal of the Covenant to none but *Abraham*? and, (2.) Whether in the very nature of the Act, or only from the intention of the Agent, it did oblige men to keep the whole Law, as *Adam* was obliged to keep it in innocency? (3.) Whether it were utterly aboliſh'd at the death of *Chriſt*, as a condition of the *Covenant of Works*; or being a ſign of the ſame *Covenant of Grace* we are now under, it be not ſucceeded by the new Goſpel-ſign, which is Baptiſm? Mr. *Cary* affirms, that it was in it ſelf a condition of the *Covenant of Works*, and being annexed to God's Covenant with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. it made that a true *Adam's Covenant of Works* alſo. This I utterly deny, and ſay, *Abraham*'s Covenant was a true Covenant of Grace. (2.) That Circumciſion was a Seal of righteouſneſs of Faith, and therefore could not poſſibly belong to the *Covenant of Works*. (3.) That as it was applied both to the ordinary and extraordinary Infant-ſeed of *Abraham*, during that adminiſtration of the Covenant, ſo it is the Will of Chriſt that Baptiſm ſhould take its place under the Goſpel, and be applied now to the Infant-ſeed of all *Abraham*'s Spiritual Children. Theſe are the things wherein we differ about the ſecond *Poſition.* And laſtly, as to the

### III *Poſition.*

*That neither* Moſes's *Law*, Exod. 20. *nor God's Covenant with* Abraham, Gen. 17. *can be any other than an* Adam'*s Covenant of Works, becauſe they have each of them Conditions in them on Man's part; but the Goſpel Covenant hath none at all, but is altogether free and abſolute.*

The Controverſie here betwixt us is not (1.) Whether the Goſpel-covenant requires no Duties at all of them that are under it? nor (2.) Whether it requires any ſuch conditions as were in *Adam*'s Covenant, namely, perfect, perſonal, and perpetual Obedience under the ſevereſt Penalty of a curſe, and admitting no place of Repentance? nor (3.) Whether any condition requir'd by it, on *our* part, have any thing in its own nature meritorious of the Benefits promiſed? nor (4) Whether we be able in our own ſtrength, and by the power of our Free Will, without the *preventing* as well as the *aſſiſting* Grace of God, to perform any ſuch Work or Duty as we call a *Condition*? In theſe things we have no Controverſie, but the only Queſtion betwixt us is,

Whether in the New Covenant ſome act of ours (tho' it have no Merit in it, nor can be done in our own ſingle Strength) be not requir'd to be perform'd by us, antecedently to a Bleſſing or Privilege conſequent by vertue of a Promiſe? and Whether ſuch an Act or Duty, being of a ſuſpending nature to the Bleſſing promis'd, it have not the true and proper nature of a *Goſpel Condition*? This I affirm, and he poſitively denies.

Theſe three *Poſitions* being confuted, and the contrary well confirm'd, *viz.* that the Law at *Sinai* was not ſet up by God as an *Adam*'s Covenant, to open the old way of Righteouſneſs and Life by works; but was added to the Promiſe, as ſubſervient to Chriſt in its deſign and uſe, and conſequently can never be a pure *Adam*'s Covenant of Works. And ſecondly,

That *Abraham*'s Covenant, *Gen.* 17. is the very ſame Covenant of Grace we are now under; and (2*ly*) That Circumciſion in the nature of the act did not oblige all men to keep the whole Law for Righteouſneſs. And (3*ly*)

That the *New Covenant* is not abſolutely and wholly unconditional, though notwithſtanding a moſt free and gracious Covenant; the Pillars on which Mr. *Cary* ſets his new Structure ſink under it, and the Building falls into ruins.

I have not here taken Mr. *Cary*'s two *Syllogiſms*, proving *Abraham*'s *Covenant* to be a *Covenant of Works*, becauſe I find my ſelf therein prevented by that ingenious and learned man Mr. *Whiſton*, in his late Anſwer to Mr. *Grantham*. Neither have I particularly ſpoken to his 23 Arguments to prove the *Sinai* Law to be a pure *Adam*'s Covenant, becauſe *fruſtra fit per plura, quod fieri poteſt per pauciora*, I have overthrown them all together at one blow, by evincing every Argument to have four terms in it, and ſo proves nothing: but I have ſpoken to all thoſe Scriptures which concern our four *Poſitions*, and fully vindicated them from the injurious Senſes to which Mr. *Cary* (following Mr. *Tombes*) had wreſted them.

Theſe things premiſed, I ſhall only further add, that if Mr. *Cary* ſhall attempt a Reply to my Anſwer, and free his own *Theſes* from the groſs Abſurdities with which I have loaded them, he muſt plainly and ſubſtantially prove againſt me,

(1.) That the *Sinai* Law, according to its true ſcope and end, was promulged by God for man's Juſtification and Happineſs in the way of perſonal Obedience; and that the *Jews*, that did accordingly endeavour after Righteouſneſs by the Works of the Law, did not miſtake its true end and meaning; or if they did, and thereby made it what God never intended it to be, a *Covenant of Works* to themſelves; that the *Sinai* Law ought rather to be denominated from their miſtake and abuſe of it, than from its primary and proper uſe, and God's deſign in its promulgation.

(2.) He muſt prove againſt me with like evidence of truth, that Circumciſion diſcover'd no more of Man's Native Corruption, nor any more of his Remedy by *Chriſt*; nor ſealed to any perſon whatſoever the Righteouſneſs of Faith, than *Adam*'s Covenant in Paradiſe did; and that it did in its own nature oblige all upon whom it paſſed, to the ſame terms of Obedience that *Adam*'s Covenant oblig'd him: and,

(3.) That there is not to be found in the *New Covenant* any ſuch Act or Duty of ours, as hath been deſcrib'd and limited above; which is of a ſuſpending nature to the Benefits therein granted. And,

(4.) That the reſpective Expoſitions he gives of the ſeveral Texts by me explain'd and vindicated, are more congruous to the Scope and Grammar than mine are, and more agreeable to the current ſenſe of *Orthodox Expoſitors*; and then he ſhall be ſure to receive an anſwerable return from me, elſe 'tis but labour loſt to write again.

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# A
# REPLY
# TO
# Mr. *Philip Cary*'s Solemn Call, &c.

THE Book I have undertaken to animadvert briefly upon, bears the Title of *A Solemn Call*; but I am not ſo much concern'd with the *Solemnity* as I am with the *Authority* of this Call. Not *how* it is, but *whoſe* it is. If it be the Call of *God*, it muſt be obey'd, tho' it be to part not only with the *Privileges*, but *Lives* of our deareſt Children; but then we had need to be very well aſſur'd it is the call of God, elſe we are guilty at once of the higheſt Folly and baſeſt Treachery, to part with ſo rich an Inheritance, convey'd by God's Covenant with *Abraham*, to us believing Gentiles, and our Seed, at Mr. *Cary*'s call.

You direct your *Solemn Call to all that would be own'd as Chriſt's faithful Witneſſes.*

Here you are too obſcure and general: Do you mean all that would be own'd by you, or by Chriſt? If you mean, that we muſt not expect to be own'd by you till we renounce Infants Baptiſm, you tell us no News, for you have long ſince turn'd your back upon our Miniſtry and Aſſemblies: Yet methinks 'tis ſtrange, that we who were lately own'd as Chriſt's faithful Witneſſes under our late Sufferings, muſt now be diſown'd by you, when we have liberty to amplifie and confirm our Teſtimony in the peaceful improvement of our common Liberty.

But if your meaning be, (as I ſtrongly ſuſpect it is) that we muſt not expect to be own'd by Chriſt, except we give up Infants Baptiſm; then, I ſay, it is the moſt uncharitable, as well as unwarrantable, and dangerous cenſure that ever dropt from the Pen of a ſober Chriſtian. 'Tis certainly your great Evil to lay *Salvation* it ſelf on ſuch a point as the proper Subject of Baptiſm, and to make it *Articulus Stantis, vel cadentis Religionis*, the very *Baſis* on which the whole Chriſtian Religion and its Profeſſors Salvation muſt ſtand. I hope the reſt of your Brethren are more charitable than your ſelf; but however it be, I do openly profeſs, that I ever have, and ſtill do own you, and many more of your Perſwaſion, for my Brethren in Chriſt, and am perſwaded Chriſt will own you too, notwithſtanding your many Errors and Miſtakes about the leſſer and lower matters of Religion. Nor need your Cenſure much to affect us, as long as we are ſatisfied you have neither a Faculty nor Commiſſion thus ſolemnly to pronounce it upon us.

But what's the *Condition* upon which this dreadful Sentence depends? why, it is our attendance or non-attendance to the primitive Purity of the Goſpel Doctrine.

Sir, I hope we do attend it, and in ſome reſpects better than ſome greater Pretenders to primitive Purity, who have caſt off not only the initiating Sign of God's Covenant, (this did not *Abraham*) but alſo that moſt comfortable and ancient Ordinance of ſinging *Pſalms*; and what other primitive Ordinance of God may be caſhier'd next, who can tell?

We have a Witneſs in your Boſom, that the defence of *Chriſt's pure Worſhip and Inſtitutions* hath coſt us ſomething; and as for me, were I convinced by all that you have here ſaid, or any of your Friends, that in baptizing the Infants of Believers we did really depart from the primitive Purity, I would renounce it, and turn *Anabaptiſt* the ſame day.

But really, Sir, this Diſcourſe of yours hath very much convinc'd me of the weakneſs and ſickleneſs of your cauſe, which is forc'd to ſeek a new Foundation, and is here laid by you upon ſuch a Foundation as muſt inevitably ruine it, if your Party, as well as your ſelf, have but *Reſolution* enough to venture it thereupon.

And it appears to me very probable, that they intend to fight us upon the new ground you have here choſen and mark'd out for them, by the high *Encomiums* they give your *Book* in their Epiſtles to it, wherein they tell us, *Your Notions are of ſo rare a nature, that you are not beholden to any other for them*; and it is a wonder if you ſhould, for I think it never enter'd into any ſober Chriſtian's Head before you, that *Abraham*'s Covenant, *Gen.* 17. was the very ſame with *Adam*'s Covenant made in *Paradiſe*; or that *Moſes*, *Abraham*, and all the Elect of God in thoſe days were abſolutely under the very rigour and tyranny of the *Covenant of Works*, and at the ſame time under the *Covenant of Grace*, and all the Bleſſings and Privileges thereof: with many other ſuch rare *notions*, of which it is pity but you ſhould have the ſole propriety.

I am particularly concern'd to detect your dangerous Miſtakes, both in love to *your own* Soul, and care of *my Peoples*, amongſt whom you have diſpers'd them; tho' I foreſee by *M. E's* Epiſtle to *your Book* what meaſure I am like to have for my plain and faithful dealing with you: for if that Gentleman, upon a meer ſurmiſe and preſumption that one or other would *oppoſe your Book*, dare adventure to call your unknown Anſwerer, before ever he put Pen to Paper, *a Man-pleaſer, a Quarreller at Reformation*, and rank him with the Papiſts, which oppos'd the Faithful for their nonconformity to their Inventions: What muſt I expect from ſuch raſh Cenſurers, for my ſober, plain, and rational confutation of your Errors?

As to the *Controverſie* betwixt us, you truly ſay in your Title Page, and many parts of your *Book*, and your Brethren comprobate it in their Epiſtles, that the main Arguments made uſe of by the *Pædo-baptiſts*, for the ſupport of their practice, are taken from the Covenant of God with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. You call this the very Hinge of the *Controverſie*; and therefore if you can but prove this to be the very ſame *Covenant of Works* with that made with *Adam* in *Paradiſe*, we ſhall then ſee what improvements you will quickly make of it.

Ay Sir, you are ſenſible of the Advantage, no leſs than a compleat Victory you ſhall obtain by it; and therefore being a more hardy and adventurous man than others, put deſperately upon it, (which never any before you durſt attempt) to prove *Abraham*'s Covenant, which ſtands ſo much in the way of your cauſe, to be a meer *Covenant of Works*, and therefore now aboliſh'd.

My proper Province is to diſcover here, that part of the *Foundation* (I mean *Abraham*'s *Covenant*) whence our Divines, with great Strength and Evidence, deduce the Right of Believers Infants to Baptiſm now. Next, to evince the Abſurdity of your Aſſertions and Arguments you bring to deſtroy it: And laſtly, To reflect briefly upon the Anſwers you give in the beginning of your *Book*, to thoſe ſeveral Texts of Scripture pleaded by the learned and judicious Divines you oppoſe, for the juſtification of *Infants Baptiſm*.

(1.) Thoſe that plead God's Covenant with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. as a Scripture foundation for baptizing Believers Infants under the Goſpel, proceed generally upon theſe four Grounds or Principles.

(1.) That God's Covenant with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. was the ſame Covenant for ſubſtance we Gentile Believers are now under, and they ſubſtantially prove it from *Luke* 1. from the 54th to the 74th Verſe; which place evidently ſhews the ſameneſs of the Covenant of Grace they were and we are now under; and from *Matth.* 21. 41, 43. the ſame Vineyard and Kingdom the Jews then had, is now let out to us Gentiles; and from *Rom.* 11. that the Gentile Chriſtians are grafted into the ſame Olive-tree, from which the Jews were broken off for their Unbelief; and that the Bleſſing of *Abraham* cometh now upon the Gentiles, *Gal.* 3. 8, 14, 16. And in a word, that the Partition Wall betwixt them and us, is now pulled down; and that we, through Faith, are let into the ſelf-ſame Covenant, and all the Privileges they then enjoy'd, *Epheſ.* 2. 13.

(2.) They aſſert and prove, That in *Abraham's Covenant* the Infant-Seed were taken in with their Parents, and that in token thereof, they were to have the Sign of the Covenant applied to them, *Gen.* 17. 9.

(3.) They affirm and prove, That the Promiſe of God to *Abraham* and his Seed, with the Privileges thereof to his Children, do, for the ſubſtance of them, deſcend to Believers now, and their Seed, *Acts* 2. 38, 39. and tho' the external Sign, *viz.* *Circumciſion*, be chang'd, yet Baptiſm takes its place under the Goſpel, *Col.* 2. 11, 12.

(4) They conſtantly affirm, That none of thoſe Grants or Privileges made to the Infant-Seed of *Abraham*'s Family, were ever repeal'd or revok'd by *Chriſt* or his Apoſtles; and therefore Believers Children now are in the rightful poſſeſſion of

them; and that therefore there needed no new Command or Promiſe: In *Abraham*'s Command we find our Duty to ſign our Children with the Sign of the Covenant; and in *Abraham*'s Promiſe we find God's gracious Grant to our Children, as well as his, eſpecially ſince the Apoſtle directs us, in this very reſpect, to the Covenant of God with *Abraham*, *Acts* 2. 38, 39.

Theſe, Sir, are the Principles on which we lay (as you ſay) great ſtreſs, and which to this day you have never been able to ſhake down; here therefore you attempt a new method to do it, by proving this Covenant is now aboliſh'd; and this is your method in which you promiſe your ſelf great Succeſs: Three things you pretend to prove;

(1.) That the *Sinai* Covenant, *Exod.* 20.
(2.) That *Abraham*'s Covenant, *Gen.* 17. are no Goſpel-Covenants, and that becauſe,
(3.) The Goſpel-Covenant is Abſolute and Unconditional.

How you come to hook in the *Moſaick Covenant* into this Controverſie is not very evident, unleſs you think it were eaſie for you to prove that to be a *Covenant of Works*; and then *Abraham*'s Covenant, *Gen.* 17. being an Old Teſtament Covenant, were the more eaſily proved to be of the ſame nature. I am oblig'd to examine your three Poſitions above noted, and if I evidence to the World the falſity of them, the Cauſe you manage is ſo far loſt, and the right of Believers Infants to Baptiſm ſtands firm upon its old and ſure Foundation. I begin therefore with your

## I. *Poſition.*

*That the Covenant made with* Iſrael *on Mount* Sinai, *is the very ſame Covenant of Works made with* Adam *in Innocency*, p. 122. and divers other places of your Book the very ſame.

Now, if I prove that this Aſſertion of yours doth naturally and regularly draw many falſe and abſurd conſequents upon you, which you are and muſt be forced to own, then this your *Poſition* cannot be true, for from true Premiſſes nothing but Truth can naturally and regularly follow: but I ſhall make it plain to you, that this your Poſition regularly draws many falſe Concluſions and groſs Abſurdities upon you, ſome of which you own expreſly, and others you as good as own, being able to return nothing rational or ſatisfactory in your own defence againſt them.

(1.) From this Aſſertion, That the *Sinai Covenant* was a pure *Covenant of Works*, the very ſame with *Adam*'s *Covenant*, it regularly and neceſſarily follows, that either *Moſes* and all *Iſrael* were damn'd, there being no Salvation poſſible to be attain'd by that firſt Covenant; or elſe, that there was a Covenant of Grace at the ſame time running parallel with that Covenant of Works; and ſo the Elect People of God were at one and the ſame time under the firſt, as a Covenant of Death and Condemnation; and under the ſecond, as a Covenant of Grace and Juſtification.

This *Dilemma* pinches you, to aſſert, that *Moſes* and all the Elect of God under that Diſpenſation were damn'd, you dare not; and if you had, you muſt have expung'd the Eleventh Chapter to the *Hebrews*, and a great part of the New Teſtament, together with all your Hopes of ſitting down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, in the Kingdom of Heaven. The latter therefore (ſeeing you cannot avoid) you are forc'd upon, and in plain words yield it, p. 174, 175. *That* Moſes, *and the whole body of the Children of* Iſrael, *without exception of any, were under, yea, abſolutely under the ſevereſt penalties of a dreadful Curſe; That the Covenant they were under could be no other than a Covenant of Works, a miniſtration of Death and Condemnation; when yet it is alſo evident from the ſame Holy Scriptures of Truth, that at the ſame time both* Moſes *and all the Elect among that People, were under a pure Covenant of Goſpel-grace; and that theſe two Covenants were juſt oppoſite the one to the other; but to this you have nothing to ſay, but with the Apoſtle in another caſe,* O *the depth!*

Here, Sir, you father a pure and perfect contradiction upon the holy Scriptures, That it ſpeaks things juſt oppoſite and contradictory one to the other, and of neceſſity one part or member of a contradiction muſt be falſe: This all the rational World knows; but ſo it is, ſay you, and fly to the Infinite Wiſdom to reconcile them; for you ſay, You know not what to ſay to it. Juſt ſo the *Papiſts* ſerve us in the *Controverſie* about *Tranſubſtantiation*, when they cannot reconcile one thing with another, they fly to the Omnipotent Power to do it.

But, Sir, I wonder how you hold and hug a Principle that runs naturally into ſuch groſs Abſurdities: Do you ſee what follows from hence by unavoidable conſequence? You muſt, according to this Principle, hold, That *Moſes*, and all God's peculiar elect People in *Iſrael*, muſt, during their Life, hang mid-way between Juſtification and Condemnation; and after Death, between Heaven and Hell.

(1.) During Life, they muſt hang mid-way between Juſtification and Condemnation; juſtified they could not be, for Juſtification is the Soul's paſſing from Death to Life, 1 *John* 3. 14. *John* 5. 24. This they could not poſſibly do, for the miniſtration of *Death* and *Condemnation* hindred. He that is under *Condemnation* by the Law, cannot, during that ſtate, paſs into Life. And yet to be under *Condemnation* is as impoſſible on the other ſide; for he that is juſtified, cannot at the ſame time be under *Condemnation*, *Rom.* 8. 1. *John* 5. 24. What remains then, but that during Life they muſt ſtick mid-way betwixt both, neither juſtified nor condemn'd; and yet both ſo and ſo. Juſtification is our Life, and Condemnation our Death in Law: Betwixt theſe two which are *privately oppoſ'd*, there can be no *Medium* of participation, and yet ſuch a *Medium* you here fancy.

(2.) And then after Death they muſt neceſſarily hang betwixt Heaven and Hell; to Heaven none can go that are under the very rigour and tyranny of the Law, a pure *Covenant of Works*, as you ſay they were. To Hell they could not go, being under the pure *Covenant of Grace*: What remains then, but ſome third ſtate muſt be aſſign'd them; and ſo at laſt we have found the *Limbus Patrum*, and your Poſition leads us right to *Purgatory*; a concluſion which, I believe, you your ſelf abhor as much as I.

(2*ly*) This Hypotheſis pinches you with another *Dilemma*, *viz.* Either there was Pardon on

Repentance in *Moſes*'s *Covenant* and the *Sinai Diſpenſation of the Law*, or there was none; if you ſay none, you directly contradict *Lev.* 26. 40, 46. if there were, then it cannot be *Adam*'s *Covenant of Works*.

You anſwer, *pag.* 179. *That God promiſeth Pardon for the Breach of* Moſes's *Covenant, and of* Adam's *Covenant too, but neither* Adam's *Covenant, nor the Jewiſh legal Covenant, promiſed any Pardon upon Repentance, but rather threatens and inflicts the contrary.*

*Reply.* Either this is a direct Anſwer to my Argument, to prove the Law at *Sinai* cannot be a pure *Adam*'s *Covenant*, becauſe it had a promiſe of Pardon annexed to it, *Lev.* 26. 40. but *Adam*'s *Covenant* had none. If your Anſwer be direct, then 'tis a plain contradiction in ſaying it had and it had not a promiſe of Pardon belonging to it; or elſe it is a meer Evaſion, and an eluding of the Argument; and your only meaning is, that the Relief I ſpeak of is not to be found in any Promiſe belonging to the *Sinai* Diſpenſation, but in ſome other Goſpel-Covenant or Promiſe. But Sir, this will not ſerve your turn; you ſee I cite the very Promiſe of Grace made to the *Iſraelites* on Mount *Sinai* by the hand of *Moſes*, wherein God promiſeth, upon their humiliation, to remember his Covenant for their good. Now, Sir, you had as good have ſtood to your firſt Anſwer, which is ſelf-contradictory, as to this which is no leſs ſo; as will evidently appear by a nearer and more particular view of the place, and gathering up your own conceſſions about it. That this Text *Lev.* 26. 40. hath the nature of a gracious Goſpel-promiſe in it, no man can deny, except he that will deny that God's remembring of his *Covenant*, for the relief of poor broken-hearted Sinners, is no Goſpel-promiſe pertaining to the Covenant of Grace: That it was made to the penitent *Iſraelites* upon *Mount Sinai*, and there deliver'd them by the hand of *Moſes* for their relief, is as viſible and plain as the Words and Syllables of the 46th Verſe are to him that reads them. Let the Promiſe then be conſider'd both ways, (1.) in your Senſe, as a *plain direction to the Covenant of Grace made with* Abraham *for their relief*; for ſo you ſay it was, *p.* 180. or let it be conſider'd abſolutely, as that which contain'd relief in it ſelf for the penitent *Iſraelites* that ſhould live towards the end of the World, after they ſhould be gather'd from all their Diſperſions and Captivities, as you there ſpeak, and more fully explicate in your accommodation of a parallel Promiſe, *p.* 111, 112, 113. Firſt let us view it in your ſenſe, as a *relative Promiſe* to the *Covenant of Grace* made with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 12. to which, ſay you, it plainly directs them; and then this legal *Diſpenſation* can never be the ſame with *Adam*'s *Covenant*, for to that *Covenant* no ſuch Promiſe was ever annexed, which ſhould guide and plainly direct them to Chriſt and Pardon, as that Star which appear'd to the Wiſe Men directed their way to Chriſt. If there be any ſuch relative Promiſe belonging to *Adam*'s *Covenant* in *Paradiſe*, as this which I plainly ſhew you was made on *Mount Sinai*, be pleas'd to produce it, and you end the *Controverſie*; but if you cannot, (as you know you cannot) then never ſay the legal Diſpenſation at *Sinai*, and the Covenant of Works with *Adam* in *Paradiſe*, are the very ſame Covenant. Secondly, Let us conſider this Promiſe *abſolutely* in it ſelf, and then I demand, Was there Mercy, Relief and Pardon contain'd in it for any penitent Sinner preſent or to come? Yes, ſay you, it extends Relief to Penitents, after God ſhall gather them from all their Captivities at the end of the World: very good. Then 'tis a very vigorous Promiſe of Grace, which not only reaches 430 years backward, as far as the firſt Promiſe to *Abraham*, but alſo extends its Reliefs and Comforts many thouſand years forwards, even to the pureſt times of the Goſpel, juſt before Chriſt's coming to Judgment; And can ſuch a Promiſe as this be denied to be in it ſelf a Goſpel-Promiſe? Sure it can neither be denied to be ſuch, nor yet to be made upon *Mount Sinai* by the hand of *Moſes*. This *Dilemma* is as pinching as the former.

Perhaps you will ſay, This Promiſe did not belong to the *Moral Law* given at *Sinai*, but to the *Ceremonial Law*: If ſo, then I ſhould reaſonably conclude, that you take the *Ceremonial Law* (of which you ſeem to make this a Branch, *pag.* 181.) to be a Covenant of Grace, ſeeing one of its Branches bears ſuch a gracious Promiſe upon it. No, that muſt not be ſo neither; for ſay you, *p.* 151. the *Ceremonial Covenant* is of the ſame nature with the *Covenant of Works*, or Law written in Tables of Stone: Whither then ſhall we ſend this Promiſe? To the Covenant of Grace we muſt not ſend it, unleſs only as an *Index* or Finger to point to it, becauſe it was made upon *Mount Sinai*, and deliver'd to *Iſrael* by the hand of *Moſes*: To the Goſpel-Covenant we muſt not therefore annex it; and to the Legal Diſpenſation at *Sinai* you are as loath to annex it, becauſe it contains ſo much Relief and Grace in it for poor Penitents; and that will prove, that neither the *Moral* nor *Ceremonial Law* (place it in which you pleaſe) can be a pure *Covenant of Works* as *Adam*'s was.

Moreover, in making this the Promiſe which muſt relieve and comfort the diſtreſſed *Iſraelites* in the pureſt Goſpel-times, towards the end of the World, you as palpably contradict your ſelf in another reſpect; for we ſhall find you by and by ſtoutly denying, that the Goſpel-Promiſes have any *Conditions* or *Qualifications* annexed to them; but ſo hath this, which you ſay relates to them that ſhall live at the end of the World. *If their uncircumciſed Hearts be humbled, and if they accept the puniſhment of their Iniquities, then will I remember my Covenant*, &c. But be this Promiſe conditional or abſolute, two things are undeniably clear: (1.) That it is a Promiſe full of Grace, for the relief of Law-Tranſgreſſors, *ver.* 40. (2.) That it was a *Mount Sinai Promiſe*, *ver.* 46. and ſuch a Promiſe as you can never ſhew in *Adam*'s Covenant.

Beſides, it is to me an unaccountable thing, that a Promiſe which hath a double comfortable Aſpect, 430 years back, and ſome thouſands of years forward; ſhould not caſt one comfortable glance upon the Penitents of the preſent Age when it was made, nor upon any till near the end of the World. What think you, Sir, of the 3000 *Jews* prick'd at the heart, *Acts* 2. had they no Relief from it, becauſe their Lot fell not late enough in time? Were the penitent *Jews* in *Moſes* and *Peter*'s days all born out of due time for this Promiſe to relieve? O what ſhifting and ſhuffling is here! Who can think a Man that twiſts and winds every way, to avoid the dint of an Argument,

ment, can poſſibly have a Moral Aſſurance of the truth of his own Opinion ?

(3.) You ſay, *pag.* 134. *That through Chriſt's ſatisfaction there is no repugnancy or hoſtile contrariety betwixt the Law and Promiſe, but an Agreement betwixt them, and that they differ only in reſpect of Strength and Weakneſs; the Goſpel is able to go through ſtitch with it, which the Law cannot do.*

*Reply.* Well then, the Law conſider'd as a Covenant of Works, whoſe Terms or Condition is, *do this and live* ; and the Promiſe or Goſpel, whoſe Condition is, *Believe and thou ſhalt be ſaved*; are not ſpecifically different, but only gradually, in point of ſtrength and weakneſs : and the Reaſon you give is as ſtrange, that *this comes to paſs through the ſatisfaction of Chriſt.* Good Sir, enlighten us in this rare Notion. Did Chriſt die to purchaſe a Reconciliation betwixt the Covenant of Works as ſuch, and the Covenant of Grace; as if both were now by the Death of Chriſt agreed; and to be juſtified by Works and by Faith, ſhould after Chriſt's death make no odds or difference between them ? If it be ſo, why have you kept ſuch a coil to prove *Moſes*'s and *Adam*'s Covenant, yea, *Abraham*'s too, being a *Covenant of Works* can never conſiſt or mingle with the *Goſpel-Covenant* ? And then I ſay, you contradict the *Apoſtle*, who ſo directly oppoſes the *Covenant of Works* as Gal. 3. 18. ſuch, to the *Covenant of Grace*, and tells us they are utterly inconſiſtent and excluſive of each other; and this he ſpake after Chriſt's Death and actual Satisfaction : But

(4.) That which more amazes me, is the ſtrange Anſwer you give to Mr. *Sedgwick, pag.* 132, 133. in your return to his Argument, That *if the Law and the Promiſe can conſiſt, then the Law cannot be ſet up as a Covenant of Works.* You anſwer, *That the Law and the Promiſe having divers ends, it doth not thence follow, that there is an inconſiſtence betwixt them, and that the Law, even as it is a Covenant of Works, inſtead of being againſt the Promiſe, tends to the eſtabliſhment of it.* And *pag.* 133. *That by convincing Men of the Impoſſibility of obtaining Reſt and Peace in themſelves, and the neceſſity of betaking themſelves to the Promiſe,* &c. *the Law is not againſt the Promiſe, having ſo* Bleſſed a Subſerviency *towards the eſtabliſhment thereof.* Here you own a *Subſerviency*, yea, *a Bleſſed Subſerviency* of the Law to the Promiſe, which is that Mr. *Sedgwick* and my ſelf have urg'd to prove it cannot be ſo, as it is a pure *Adam*'s Covenant, but that therefore it muſt come under another conſideration; only here we differ, you ſay it hath a *Bleſſed Subſerviency* to the Promiſe, as it is the ſame with *Adam*'s Covenant; we ſay it can never be ſo as ſuch, but as it is either a Covenant of Grace, though more obſcure, as he ſpeaks; or though the matter of it ſhould be the ſame with *Adam*'s Covenant, yet it is ſubſerviently a Covenant of Grace, as others ſpeak; and under no other conſideration can it be reconciled to the Promiſe. But will you ſtand to this, that the Law hath no hoſtile contradiction to the Promiſe, but a *Bleſſed Subſerviency* to it, as you ſpeak, *p.* 173. where you ſay, *That if we preach up the Law as a Covenant of Life, or a Covenant of Faith and Grace, (which are equipolent terms) let us diſtinguiſh as we pleaſe between a Covenant of Grace* Abſolutely *and* Subſerviently *ſuch; then we make an ill uſe of the Law, by perverting it to ſuch a Service as God never intended it for, and are guilty of mingling Law and Goſpel, Life and Death together.*

*Reply.* Here, Sir, my Underſtanding is perfectly poſed, and I know not how to make any tolerable Orthodox Senſe out of this Poſition : Is the Law preached up as a pure *Covenant of Works* (that is, preſſing Men to the perſonal and punctual Obedience of it, in order to their Juſtification by Works) no way repugnant to the Promiſe, but altogether ſo, when preach'd in ſubſerviency to Chriſt and Faith ? This is new Divinity with me, and I believe muſt be ſo to every intelligent Reader. Don't I oppoſe the Promiſe, when I preach up the Law as a pure Covenant of Works, which therefore as ſuch muſt be excluſive of Chriſt and the Promiſe? and do I oppoſe either, when I tell Sinners the Terrors of the Law ſerve only to drive them to Chriſt, their only Remedy, who is *the end of the Law for Righteouſneſs, to every one that believeth,* Rom. 10. 4 ? Are Works and Grace more conſiſtent than Grace with Grace ? Explain your meaning in this *Paradoxical Expreſſion,* and leave not your ſelf and others in ſuch a Maze. I read *Gal.* 3. 19. for what end God publiſh'd the Law 430 Years after the Promiſe was made to *Abraham,* and find *it was added becauſe of Tranſgreſſion,* προσετέθη it was put to, not ſet up by it ſelf alone, as a diſtinct Covenant, but added as an *Appendix* to the *Covenant of Grace,* whence it is plain, that God added the *Sinai Law* to the *Promiſe* with *Evangelical ends and purpoſes.* If then I preach the Law to the very ſame Evangelical uſes and purpoſes for which God added it to the Promiſe, do I therein make an ill uſe of the Law, and mingle Life and Death together ? But preaching it as a pure *Covenant of Works,* as it holds forth Juſtification to Sinners by Obedience to its Precepts, do I then make it bleſſedly ſubſervient (as you ſpeak) to the *Promiſe* or *Covenant of Grace* ? The Law was added becauſe of Tranſgreſſion, that is, to reſtrain Sin in the World, and to convince Sinners under guilt of the neceſſity of another Righteouſneſs than their own, even that of Chriſt, and for the ſame ends God added it to the Promiſe; I always did, and ſtill ſhall preach it, and, I am perſwaded, without the leaſt danger of mingling Law and Goſpel, Life and Death together, in your ſenſe.

'Tis plain to me, that in the publication of the Law on *Sinai* God did not in the leaſt intend to give them ſo much as a *Direction* how to obtain Juſtification by their moſt punctual Obedience to its Precepts, that being to fallen Man utterly impoſſible; and beſide, had he promulged the Law to that end and purpoſe, he had not added it, but directly oppoſed it to the Promiſe; which it's manifeſt he did not, *Gal.* 3. 21. *Is the Law then againſt the Promiſe of God ? God forbid.* And *ver.* 18. makes it appear, that had it been ſet up to that end and purpoſe, it had utterly diſannulled the Promiſe; for *if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more by promiſe.* What then can be clearer, than that the Law at *Sinai* was publiſh'd with gracious Goſpel ends and purpoſes, to lead Men to Chriſt, which *Adam*'s *Covenant* had no reſpect nor reference to ? And therefore it can never be a pure *Adam*'s *Covenant,* as you falſly call it; neither is it capable of becoming a pure *Covenant of Works* to any Man, but by his own Fault, in rejecting the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and ſeeking Juſtification by the Works of the Law, as the miſtaken carnal *Jews* did, *Rom.* 10. 3. and other legal Juſticiaries now do. And upon this account only it is that *Paul*, who ſo highly praiſes the Law in its ſubſerviency to Chriſt, thunders ſo dreadfully againſt it, as it is thus ſet by ignorant miſtaken Souls in direct oppoſition to Chriſt.

(5*ly*.) And further, to clear this point, the Apoſtle tells us, *Rom.* 10. 4. *That Chriſt is the end of the Law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.* Whence I argue, That if *Adam*'s *Covenant* had one End, namely, the Juſtification of Men by their own perſonal Obedience; and the Law at *Sinai* had a quite contrary End, namely, to bring *Sinners* to Chriſt by Faith for their Righteouſneſs; the one to keep him within himſelf, the other to take him quite out of himſelf, and bring him for his Juſtification to the Righteouſneſs of another, even that of Chriſt; then the *Sinai Law* cannot poſſibly be the ſame thing with *Adam*'s *Covenant of Works*; but the Antecedent is true and plain in the forecited Text, therefore ſo is the Conſequent.

*Chriſt is the end of the Law for Righteouſneſs.* Take the Law here either more ſtrictly for the *Moral Law*, or more largely, as it comprehends the *Ceremonial Law*, ſtill *Chriſt is the end of the Law*. The Moral Law ſhuts up every Man to *Chriſt* for Righteouſneſs, by convincing him (according to God's deſign in the publication of it) of the impoſſibility of obtaining Juſtification in the way of Works.

And the *Ceremonial Law* many ways prefigur'd *Chriſt*, his Death and Satiſfaction by Blood, in our room, and ſo led Men to *Chriſt*, their true Propitiation; and all its Types were fulfilled and ended in *Chriſt*. Was there any ſuch thing in *Adam*'s *Covenant*? You muſt prove there was, elſe you will never be able to make them one and the ſame *Covenant*.

(6*ly*.) It ſeems exceeding probable from *Acts* 7. 37, 38. That the *Sinai Covenant* was deliver'd to *Moſes* by *Jeſus Chriſt*, there called *the Angel. This is he that was in the Church in the Wilderneſs, with the Angel that ſpake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our Fathers, who received the lively Oracles to give unto us.* Now if *Chriſt* himſelf were the *Angel*, and the Precepts of the Law deliver'd by him to *Moſes* were the *lively Oracles of God*, as they are expreſly affirm'd to be, then the Law deliver'd on *Mount Sinai* cannot be a pure *Adam*'s *Covenant of Works*; for it is never to be imagined that *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf ſhould deliver to *Moſes* ſuch a *Covenant*, directly oppoſite to all the ends of his future Incarnation; and that thoſe Precepts (which if they were of the ſame nature, and reviv'd to the ſame end, at which *Adam*'s Covenant directly aim'd) ſhould be called the *lively Oracles of God*: When contrariwiſe, upon your Suppoſition, they could be no other than a Miniſtration of Condemnation and Death: But that they were *lively Oracles, viz.* in their deſign and intention, is plain in the Text; and that they were deliver'd to *Moſes* by *Jeſus Chriſt* the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, ſeems more than probable, by comparing it with the former Verſes.

(7*ly*.) Neither is it eaſie to imagine how ſuch a *Covenant*, which by the Fall of *Adam* had utterly loſt all its Promiſes, Privileges and Bleſſings, and could retain nothing but the Curſes and Puniſhments annexed to it, in caſe of the leaſt failure, could poſſibly be numbred among the chief Privileges in which God's *Iſrael* gloried; as it apparently was, *Rom.* 9. 4. *Who are Iſraelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the ſervice of God, and the promiſes.*

Theſe things conſider'd, with many more, (which the intended brevity of this Diſcourſe will not now admit) I am fully ſatisfied of the falſity of your *Poſition*, and ſo may you too, when you ſhall review the many groſs and palpable Abſurdities with which I have clogg'd and loaded it, with many more regularly and fairly deducible from it, which I could eaſily produce, did I not ſuſpect theſe I have produced have already preſt your Patience a little too far: but if ever I ſhall ſee (which I never expect) a fair and Scriptural Solution of theſe weighty Objections, you may expect from me more Arguments againſt your unſound *Poſition*, which at the preſent I judge needleſs to add.

To conclude, Thoſe *Premiſes* (as before I noted) can never be true, from whence ſuch, and ſo many groſs and notorious Abſurdities are regularly and unavoidably deducible. For *ex veris nil niſi verum*, from true Premiſes nothing but Truth can regularly follow.

Had you minded thoſe things which I ſeaſonably ſent you, you had avoided all thoſe Boggs into which you are now ſunk, and been able fairly to reconcile all thoſe ſeeming contradictions in *Paul*'s *Epiſtles*, with reſpect to the Law at *Sinai*: But however, by what hath been ſaid, your firſt Poſition, *That the* Sinai *Covenant is the ſame Covenant of Works with* Adam'*s in Paradiſe*, vaniſhes before the Evidence of Scripture Truth and ſound Reaſon.

But yet, though what I have ſaid deſtroys your falſe Poſition, I am not willing to leave you or the Reader ignorant wherein the Truth lies in this controverted point betwixt us; and that will appear by a due conſideration of the following particulars.

(1.) 'Tis plain and uncontroverted, that *Adam*'s Covenant in *Paradiſe* contained in it a perfect Law and Rule of natural Righteouſneſs, founded both in God's Nature, and in Man's, which in its perfect ſtate of *Innocency* was every way enabled perfectly to comply therewith: for the Scripture tells us, *Eccleſ.* 7. 29. That God made man upright, and his punctual complying therewith was the Righteouſneſs by which he ſtood.

(2.) This *Covenant of Works* being once broken, can never more be available to the Juſtification and Salvation of any fallen man: There was not now a Law found that could give Righteouſneſs; the broken *Covenant of Works* loſt immediately all the Bleſſings and Privileges which before it contain'd, and retain'd only the *Curſe* and *Puniſhment*, in token whereof *Cherubims* with flaming Swords turning every way, were ſet to keep the way of the Tree of Life, *Gen.* 3. 24.

(3.) Soon after the violation of the *Covenant of Works*, God was graciouſly pleaſed to publiſh for the relief of Mankind, now miſerable and hopeleſs, the *Second Covenant*, which we call the *Covenant of Grace*, *Gen.* 3. 15. which is the firſt opening of the Grace of God in Chriſt to fallen Man; and though this firſt Promiſe of Chriſt was but ſhort and obſcure, yet it was in every Age to be opened clearer and clearer, until the promiſed Seed ſhould come. After the firſt opening of this new Covenant in the firſt Promiſe of Chriſt, the firſt Covenant is ſhut up for ever, as a Covenant of Life and Salvation; and all the World are ſhut up to the only way of Salvation by Chriſt, *Gal.* 3. 23. it being contrary to the Will of God, that two ways of Salvation ſhould ſtand open to Man at once, and they ſo oppoſite one to another, as the way of Works and the way of Faith are, *Acts* 4. 12. *John* 14. 6. *Gal.* 2. 21.

(4.) 'Tis evident however, that after the firſt opening of the Promiſe of Chriſt, *Gen.* 3. 15. God foreſeeing the Pride of fallen Man, who naturally inclines to a Righteouſneſs of his own in the way of doing, was pleaſed to revive the Law of Nature, as to its matter, in the *Sinai* Diſpenſation, which was 430 years after the firſt Promiſe had been renew'd and further open'd unto *Abraham*, of whoſe Seed Chriſt ſhould come; and this he did not in oppoſition to the Promiſe, but in ſubſerviency thereto, *Gal.* 3. 21. And though the matter and ſubſtance of the Law of Nature be found in the *Sinai* Covenant, ſtrictly taken for the *Ten Commandments*, yet the Ends and Intentions of God in that terrible *Sinai* Diſpenſation were two-fold: (1.) To convince fallen Man of the *ſinfulneſs* and *impotency* of his Nature, and the impoſſibility of obtaining Righteouſneſs by the Law, and ſo by a bleſſed neceſſity to ſhut him up to Chriſt, his only Remedy. And (2.) to be a ſtanding Rule of Duty both towards God and Man, to the end of the World. But if we take the *Sinai Covenant* more largely, as incluſive of the *Ceremonial* with the *Moral Law*, (as it is often taken, and is ſo by you, in the New Teſtament) then it did not only ſerve for a *conviction* of Impotency, and a *rule* of Duty, but exhibited and taught much of Chriſt and the Myſteries of the New Covenant in thoſe its Ceremonies, wherein he was prefigured to them.

(5.) Whence it evidently appears that the *Sinai Covenant* was neither repugnant to the *New Covenant* in its ſcope and aim. *The law is not againſt the promiſe*, Gal. 3. 21. nor yet ſet up as co-ordinate with it, with a deſign to open two different ways of Salvation to fallen Man, but was added to the Promiſe, in reſpect of its *Evangelical* purpoſes and deſigns; on which account it is call'd by ſome a Covenant of Faith or Grace, in reſpect of its ſubſerviency unto Chriſt, who is the end of the Law for Righteouſneſs, *Rom.* 10. 4. and by others a ſubſervient Covenant, according to *Gal.* 3. 23, 24. and accordingly we find both Tables of the Law put into the Ark, *Heb.* 9. 4. which ſhews their conſiſtency and ſubordination with, and to the method of Salvation by Chriſt in the *New Covenant*.

(6.) This Deſign and Intention of God was fatally miſtaken by the *Jews*, ever ſince God promulg'd that Law at *Sinai*, and was by them notoriouſly perverted to a quite contrary end to that which God promulg'd it for, even to give Righteouſneſs and Life in the way of perſonal and perfect Obedience, *Rom.* 10. 3. *For they being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God.* Hence Chriſt came to be ſlighted by them, and his Righteouſneſs rejected; for they reſted in the Law, *Rom.* 2. 17. were married to the Law as an Husband, *Rom.* 7. 2, 3. and ſo might have no conjugal communion with Chriſt. However *Moſes*, *Abraham*, and all the Elect, diſcerned *Chriſt* as the end of the Law for Righteouſneſs, and were led to him thereby.

(7ly.) This fatal Miſtake of the Uſe and Intent of the Law, is the ground of thoſe ſeeming Contradictions in *Paul*'s Epiſtles. Sometimes he magnifies the Law, when he ſpeaks of it according to God's end and purpoſe in its promulgation, *Rom.* 7. 12, 14, 16. but as it was fatally miſtaken by the *Jews*, and ſet in oppoſition to *Chriſt*, ſo he thunders againſt it, calls it a *miniſtration of Death and Condemnation*, and all its appendent Ceremonies, *weak and beggarly elements*; and by this diſtinction whatſoever ſeems repugnant in *Paul's Epiſtles*, may be ſweetly reconciled: and 'tis a diſtinction of his own making, 1 *Tim.* 1. 8. *We know that the Law is good, if we uſe it lawfully*. There is a good and an evil uſe of the Law. Had you attended theſe things, you had not ſo confidently and inconſiderately pronounced it a pure *Covenant of Works*.

Rom. 10. 3.
Rom. 2. 17.

## II. *Poſition.*

Secondly, you affirm with like confidence, *That the Covenant of Circumciſion is alſo the ſame*, viz. *the Covenant of Works made with* Adam *in Paradiſe*.

This I utterly deny, and will try whether you have any better Succeſs in the proof of your ſecond, than you had in your firſt *Poſition*; and to convince you of your miſtake, let us conſider what the general nature of this *Ordinance of Circumciſion* was, what its ends were, and then prove, that it cannot be what you affirm it to be, the very ſame Covenant God made with *Adam* before the Fall, but muſt needs be a *Covenant of Grace*.

(1.) Circumciſion in its general nature was (1.) an *Ordinance* of God's own inſtitution in the 99th year of *Abraham*'s age, at which time of its inſtitution God renew'd the *Covenant* with him, *Gen.* 17. 9, 10. (2.) That it conſiſted (as all Sacraments do) of an external Sign, and a ſpiritual Myſtery ſignified thereby. The external part of it (which we call the Sign) was the cutting o the fore-skin of the Genital part of the Hebrew Males, on the eighth day from their Birth. Th ſpiritual Myſtery thereby ſignified and repreſented, was the cutting off the Filth and Guilt of Sin from their Souls by Regeneration and Juſtification, ca led, *the circumciſion of the heart*, Deut. 10. 16. An though this was laid upon them by the Com mand, as their Duty, yet a gracious Promiſe o Power from God to perform that Duty was adde to the Command, *Deut.* 30. 6. *The Lord thy G will circumciſe thy heart to love him*, &c. juſt as Pr miſes of Grace in the *New Teſtament* are added Commands of Duty. (3.) Betwixt this outwa viſible Sign, and ſpiritual Myſtery, there was *Sacramental Relation*, from which Relation it called the *Token of the Covenant*, Gen. 17. 12. T *Sign and Seal of the Covenant*, Rom. 4. 11. yea, *Covenant it ſelf*, Acts 7. 8.

(2.) Next let us conſider the Ends for whi Circumciſion was inſtituted and ordained of G of which theſe were the principal.

(1.)

(1.) It was inſtituted to be a *convictive Sign* of their natural Corruption, propagated by the way of natural Generation; for which reaſon this natural Corruption goes in Scripture under the name of the *Uncircumciſion of the heart*, Jer. 9. 26.

(2.) It alſo ſignified the putting off of this Body of Sin, in the vertue of Chriſt's Death, *Col.* 2. 11.

(3.) It was appointed to be the initiating Sign of the Covenant, or a Token of their *Matriculation* and Admiſſion into the Church and Covenant of God, *Gen.* 17. 9, 10, 11.

(4.) It was ordain'd to be a diſcriminating Mark betwixt God's Covenanted People and the Pagan World, who were Strangers to the Covenant, and without God in the World: And accordingly both Parties were from this Ordinance denominated the *Circumciſion* and the *Uncircumciſion*, Col. 3. 11.

(5.) It was alſo an obliging Sign to *Abraham* and his Seed, to walk with God in the uprightneſs and ſincerity of their Hearts, in the performance of all covenanted Duties, in which Duties *Abraham* and the Faithful walked *obedientially* with God, looking to *Chriſt* for Righteouſneſs; but the carnal Jews reſting in, and truſting to thoſe Duties and Ordinances for Righteouſneſs and Juſtification, made it a *Covenant of Works* to themſelves; and Circumciſion it ſelf a *Bond* of that Covenant.

(6.) Now foraſmuch as *Circumciſion* prefigured *Chriſt*, who was to come of this holy circumcis'd Seed of *Abraham*, and his Death alſo was pointed at therein, *Heb.* 2. 16. *Col.* 2. 11. of neceſſity this Ordinance muſt vaniſh at the Death of Chriſt, and accordingly did ſo.

Theſe things duly ponder'd, how irrational is it to imagine this Covenant of *Circumciſion* to be the very ſame with the *Paradiſical Covenant!* Did that Covenant diſcover native Corruption, and direct to its remedy in Chriſt as this did? Surely it gave not the leaſt glimps of any ſuch thing. Did that Covenant ſeparate and diſtinguiſh one perſon from another as this did? No, no, it left all under equal and common Miſery, *Eph.* 2. 3.

Had *Adam*'s Covenant a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith annexed to it as this had? *Rom.* 4. 11. *He received Circumciſion a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith.* The Righteouſneſs of Faith is Evangelical Righteouſneſs, and this Circumciſion ſeal'd. Say not it was to *Abraham* only that it ſealed it, for 'tis an injurious Reſtriction put upon the Seal of a Covenant which extended to the *Fathers* as well as to *Abraham, Luke* 1. 72. But you admit however, that it ſeal'd Evangelical Righteouſneſs to *Abraham*; but I hope you will not ſay, that a Seal of the *Covenant of Works* ever did or could ſeal Evangelical Righteouſneſs to any individual Perſon in the World. So then turn which way you will, this Truth ſtill follows you, and will faſten upon you, That the *Covenant of Circumciſion* was not a pure *Covenant of Works*, but a *Goſpel-Covenant*, which I thus prove.

### *Argument* I.

If *Circumciſion* be a part of the Ceremonial Law, and the Ceremonial Law was dedicated by Blood; and whatſoever is ſo dedicated, is by you confeſs'd to be no part of the *Covenant of Works*; then *Circumciſion* is no part of the *Covenant of Works*, even by your own confeſſion. But it is ſo, *Ergo.*

That it is a part of the Ceremonial Law, was never doubted or denied by any Man: That it was dedicated by Blood, and therefore no part of the *Moral Law*, you your ſelf not only acknowledge, but vehemently plead for it, *pag.* 148, where you blame Mr. *Sedgwick* with ſome Sharpneſs and unbecoming Reflection, for making no diſtinction betwixt the Ceremonial Covenant which was dedicated by Blood, and the Law written in Tables of Stone; which was not ſo dedicated, and therefore could not be the ſame with the *Moral Law*, which you make the Covenant of Works; telling him, that this Dedication by Blood ought to diſtinguiſh it from the *Moral Law* or *Sinai Covenant* of Works, as you ſay it doth and ought to do; how then can Circumciſion be the ſame with, and yet quite another thing from the *Sinai* Covenant? Was the Ceremonial Law dedicated by Blood? Yes, the Apoſtle plainly aſſerts it from Heb. 9. 18, 19. *Exod.* 24. 7, 8. *Moſes took the Book of the Covenant, and read it in the audience of the people, and took the blood, and ſprinkled it upon the people, and ſaid, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning theſe things.* But what kind of Covenant then was this Covenant that was ſprinkled with Blood? You tell us, *pag.* 147. it could not poſſibly be the Law written in Stones (which you make the Covenant of Works) but was indeed another Covenant deliver'd at a diſtinct ſeaſon, and in a diſtinct method. What Covenant then muſt this be, ſeeing it could not poſſibly (as you ſay) be the *Sinai Covenant* written in Stones? It muſt either be the Covenant of Grace, or none. No, ſay you, that it was not neither, for it was of the ſame nature with, and is no other than a Covenant of Works, *pag.* 151. it was the ſame, and yet could not poſſibly be the ſame. Mr. *Sedgwick*, that Learned grave Divine, is check'd *pag.* 148. for confounding the *Ceremonial Law* that was ſprinkled with Blood, with the *Moral Law* (which you call the Covenant of Works) that was not ſprinkled with Blood; and ſay you, *pag.* 147. *It could not poſſibly be the ſame:* And then, *p.* 151. you ſay, *It's clear theſe two,* viz. *the* Moral *and* Ceremonial *Law were both of the ſame nature, that is, no other than a Covenant of Works.* How doth this hang together? Pray reconcile it if you can. You ſay, *It is an ungrounded Suppoſition of Mr.* Sedgwick'*s, that that* Covenant *which was ſo confirm'd by Blood, muſt of neceſſity be confirm'd by the Blood of* Chriſt *alſo, p.*148. But, Sir, the truth you oppoſe, *viz.* that the Book of the Ceremonial Law was ſprinkled by Typical Blood, and therefore confirm'd by the Blood of Chriſt for the time it was to continue, ſhines like a bright Sun-beam in your Eyes, from *Heb.* 9. 14, 23. Was not the Blood that ſprinkled this Law the Figure or Type of Chriſt's own Blood? Whoſe Blood was it then, if not Chriſt's? How dare you call this an ungrounded Suppoſition? Was not that Blood typical Blood? And what, I pray you, was the *Antitype* but Chriſt's Blood? And did not the Holy Ghoſt ſignifie the one by the other? *Heb.* 9. 8. I ſtand amaz'd at theſe things: You diſtinguiſh and confound all again. You ſay, it could not poſſibly be the ſame with the Law written in Stone; and you ſay, it's clear both were of the ſame nature, no other than a *Covenant of Works.* At this rate you may ſay what you pleaſe, for I ſee *Contradiction* is no Crime in your Book.

### *Argument* II.

If Circumciſion was the Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith, it did not pertain to the *Covenant of Works*, for the Righteouſneſs of Faith and Works are Oppoſites, and belong to two contrary Covenants.

But Circumciſion was the Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith, *Rom.* 4. 11. *He* (*i. e.* Abraham) *received the ſign of Circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of Faith.* Therefore it pertains not to the Covenant of Works, but Grace.

A Man would think it impoſſible to evade ſo clear and Scripture an Argument as this is. The *Major Propoſition* is even ſelf-evident and undeniable; the *Minor*, the plain words of the *Apoſtle.*

And what is your Reply to this? certainly as ſtrange a one as ever I met with, *Page* 205. you ſay, *'Tis true, Circumciſion was a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith to* Abraham, *but it was ſo to him only, in his extraordinary circumſtances, but it was not ſo to any of his natural Seed in its ordinary uſe.*

I cannot deny but I have met with ſuch an Aſſertion before in Mr. *Tombes*; and I can tell you too, that *Bellarmine* invented it before Mr. *Tombes* was born, and that Dr. *Ames* fully confuted it in his third Tome, *pag.* 27. proving, that there was no extraordinary cauſe on *Abraham*'s account why God ſhould juſtifie or ſeal him more than any other Believer; and that *Abraham* had nothing to glory in before God. But to reſtrain, as you do, the publick Seal of a Covenant, that comprehended and equally concern'd the whole *Church* and *People* of God, to one ſingle Perſon, ſo that neither *Iſaac* nor *Jacob*, who were by name enrolled in that great Charter, ſhould have any right to the Seal of it; is ſuch a Conceit as amazes an intelligent Reader. We know *Abraham* was the firſt that receiv'd it, but utterly deny that he receiv'd only for himſelf, but he receiv'd it as the Father of all them that believe, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, as the very next words tell us, *He received it that he might be the Father of all them that believe*, that is, for himſelf and all his Spiritual Children. One half of this Sacrament of *Circumciſion* you allow, *p.*205. to the reſt that were under it, *viz.* to be *a ſign of the Covenant*; but the other half you cut off, and ſay it was only a *Seal* to him. What good Vouchers have you for this Expoſition of the Text? Have you the concurrence of *Orthodox Expoſitors*? Or is it the raſh and bold Adventure of your own Head? I am ſure it no ways agrees with the drift and ſcope of the *Apoſtle*'s Argument, which evidently is to prove, that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* are juſtified by Faith, as *Abraham* was; and that the Ground of Juſtification and Bleſſedneſs is common both to the uncircumciſed *Gentiles* and uncircumciſed *Jews*; and that *Abraham* and all other Believers, have but one way of Juſtification and Salvation; and that how great ſoever *Abraham* was, in this caſe he hath found nothing whereof to glory, *ver.* 1, 2. And is not your Expoſition a notable one, to prove the community of the Privilege of Juſtification, becauſe the Seal of it was peculiar to *Abraham* alone? Rectifie it, and better conſider it.

### *Argument* III.

In the Covenant of Circumciſion, *Gen.* 17. God makes over himſelf to *Abraham* and his Seed to be their God, or give them a ſpecial Intereſt in himſelf.

But in the *Covenant of Works* God doth not, ſince the Fall, make over himſelf to any to be their God by way of ſpecial Intereſt.

Therefore the *Covenant of Circumciſion* cannot be the *Covenant of Works.*

This is ſo plain and clear, that none can doubt or deny it, that underſtands the nature of the two Covenants. And now, Sir, what courſe do you take to avoid this Argument? ſuch a one ſure as no Man that ever I met with took before you, and that's this; you boldly cut *Abraham*'s Covenant, *Gen.* 17, into two parts. and make the firſt to be the pure Covenant of Grace; which is the promiſſory part, to the *ninth Verſe*, and the *Reſtipulation* (as you call it) *pag.* 205. to be as pure a Covenant of Works. What hard ſhift will ſome Men make to maintain their Opinion! You ſay truly, *pag.* 205. that at the *ſeventh* and *eighth Verſes* was their Reſtipulation; why then do you ſay, *pag.* 224. that at *Verſe* the *ſeventh* he proceeds to ſpeak of another *Covenant* than what he had been ſpeaking of before? Does the Promiſe and the Reſtipulation make two *Covenants*, or are they juſt and neceſſary parts of one and the ſame *Covenant*? You alſo tell us, that the Covenant *Gen.* 17 1, 2, 3, 4. was a plain Tranſcript of ſeveral free Promiſes of the Goſpel, under the denomination of a *Covenant.* But why then don't you take the Reſtipulation, *ver.* 7, 8, 9, 10. to be a part of it? Oh, no, there is ſomething requir'd on *Abraham*'s and his Poſterities part, they muſt be circumcis'd, and that ſpoils all. Why, but Sir, if the requiring of Circumciſion alters the caſe ſo greatly, as to make it a quite contrary *Covenant*, how comes it to paſs that in the *Covenant* to *Abraham* he himſelf was firſt requir'd to be circumcis'd? Why this is the reaſon, here is ſomewhat requir'd on their part as a *Condition*, and a *Condition* quite alters the nature of the *Covenant*. Very well; but tell me then why you ſay, *pag.* 223. and in many other places, that the Covenant made with *Abraham* in *Gen.* 12. was a Goſpel-covenant, and yet there *Abraham* is obliged to walk before God, and be perfect? Does not that alſo there alter the nature of the *Covenant*, as well as here in the *ſeventh* Chapter? You alſo grant, the Covenant made with *Abraham, Gen.* 22. was a pure Goſpel-Covenant; or if you deny it, the *Apoſtle* proves it, *Heb.* 6. 13. and yet there is more appearance of reſpect to *Abraham*'s Obedience in that Covenant, than is in ſubmitting to Circumciſion; ſee *Gen.* 22. 16, 17. *By my ſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the Lord, for becauſe thou haſt done this thing,* &c. *That in bleſſing I will bleſs thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee.*

I will trouble you on this Head but with one Query more: If the four firſt Verſes of the Seventeenth of *Geneſis* contain a pure Goſpel-covenant, as you ſay, and the Reſtipulation in the following Verſes make a Covenant of Works, becauſe it thereby becomes conditional; then tell me, if you pleaſe, whether what God graciouſly granted to

*Abraham* in the former Verſes be not all null'd, and made void again by their Reſtipulation? Does not this ſeem harſh? Here you have brought *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and all the Believers of *Abraham*'s Race, juſt into the ſame caſe you brought *Moſes* and all the *Iſraelites* before, under two oppoſite Covenants, where one cuts off all that the other granted.

But there is a ſtronger reaſon urg'd than the *conditionality* of the Covenant, to prove it a *Covenant of Works*, and that is, *Circumciſion* is made the *condition* of *Abraham*'s *Covenant*; and that's the worſt of all *conditions*, for it obliges a man to keep the whole Law, *Gal.* 5. 3. 'tis the yoke of bondage, and to whatſoever Covenant it be ſo annexed, it makes it become a *bondage Legal Covenant. If we be circumciſed*, Chriſt ſhall profit us nothing. Thus it was in the Covenant, *Gen.* 17.

Great uſe is made of this in many parts of your Diſcourſe; but Sir, you are greatly miſtaken in applying theſe Texts to the purpoſes you do; for the *Apoſtle* all along in that Epiſtle to the *Galatians* argues againſt the falſe Teachers, who taught and preſſed the neceſſity of Circumciſion, as a Bond obliging them to the ſtrict and perfect Obedience of the Law, in order to their Juſtification thereby, or at leaſt to joyn it with the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as a *Con cauſe of Juſtification*; ſee *Gal.* 2. 4, 5. and the 3. 1. Now againſt this Abuſe of Circumciſion it is that the *Apoſtle* argues thus, and tells them, that in ſubmitting to it on that account, they made the Death of Chriſt of no effect, and obliged themſelves by it to the whole Law; for Circumciſion did not ſimply and abſolutely, in the nature of the work or action, oblige Men to the whole Law in the way of juſtification by it, but it did ſo from the Intention of the worker, and the ſuppoſition of ſuch an Opinion of it, and deſign in it; for in it ſelf, and with reſpect to God's deſign in the inſtitution of it, it was to be a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith, *Rom.* 4. 11. and ſo it was an excellent, uſeful, inſtructive Ordinance to all Believers, as long as the Ceremonial Law ſtood; and even when it was expiring, as the Goſpel began to open more and more clearly, there was yet ſome kind of toleration of it to ſuch as were born of Jewiſh Parents: Thus *Paul* himſelf circumcis'd *Timothy*, his Mother being a Jeweſs, *Acts* 16. 1, 3. but *Titus* being a Greek, was not circumcis'd, and that becauſe of theſe falſe Teachers, that would make an ill uſe of that their Liberty, *Gal.* 2. 3, 4. this *Paul* could never have done, in caſe Circumciſion, in the nature of the act, had bound *Timothy* to keep the Law for Juſtification. By which it appears that the action in its own nature did not oblige to the keeping of the whole Law, but from the Intention of the Agent; and therefore, as the *Apoſtle* rightly argues, if a Man be circumcis'd with this deſign to be juſtified by it, he would thereby bind himſelf to the whole Law, and fruſtrate the Death of Chriſt to himſelf; but it was now to have its Funeral with all other parts of the Ceremonial Law which vaniſh'd, and were accompliſh'd in the Death of Chriſt; and it falling out that ſuch a vile uſe was made of it at that time, the *Apoſtle* thus thunders againſt it. Had this been obſerv'd, as alſo the like abuſe of the *Moral Law*, you would have known how to have reconcil'd the *Apoſtle's Encomiums* of them both, with his ſharp *Invectives* againſt the one and the other. But being ignorant of theſe two great and neceſſary Diſtinctions of the Law, according to God's *Intention* in the promulgation of it at *Sinai*, and the carnal *Jews Senſe* of it, as a pure *Covenant of Works*, againſt which the *Apoſtle* ſo ſharply inveighs in the places by you cited, all your 23 *Arguments* from *Page* 183, to *Page* 187. fall to the Ground at one ſtroke, your *Medius Terminus* having one ſenſe in your *Major Propoſition*, and another in your *Minor*; and ſo every Argument hath four *Terms* in it; as will eaſily be evinc'd by the particular conſideration of the reſpective places from whence you draw them.

So in like manner in your arguing here againſt *Circumciſion*, as a Bond to keep the whole Law; and as ſuch vacating the Death of Chriſt is a ſtumble at the ſame Stone, not diſtinguiſhing as you ought to have done, betwixt an Obligation ariſing out of the nature of the Work, and out of the end and intention of the Workers; and this every learned and judicious Eye will eaſily diſcern. But we proceed to

### *Argument* IV.

That which in its direct and primary end teacheth Man the corruption of his Nature by Sin, and the mortification of Sin by the Spirit of Chriſt, cannot be a *condition* of the *Covenant of Works*; but ſo did Circumciſion in the very direct and primary end of it.

This *Ordinance* ſuppoſeth the Fall of Man, points to the *Means* and *Inſtruments* of his Sin and Miſery, and alſo to the Remedy thereof by Chriſt: (1.) It ſingles out that *Genital part* by which Original Sin was propagated, *Gen.* 17. 11. *Pſal.* 51. 5. to this the Sign of the Covenant is applied in *Circumciſion*, for the remiſſion of Sins paſt, and the extirpation of Sin for the future. (2.) Therefore it was inſtituted of God, that Men might ſee both the neceſſity and true way of mortifying their Luſts, in the vertue of Chriſt's Death and Reſurrection, whereof Baptiſm, that ſucceeds it, is a Sign now as *Circumciſion* was then; as is plain from *Col.* 2. 11, 12. *In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the circumciſion made without hands, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh by the circumciſion of Chriſt, buried with him in Baptiſm, wherein alſo ye are riſen with him, through the Faith of the operation of God, who raiſed him from the dead.* 'Tis clear then that Circumciſion directed Men to the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt, as the true and only means of mortifying their Luſts; and if it did ſo, ſure it was not the *Covenant of Works*, for that gives fallen Man no hint of a remedy. (3.) It was alſo a *diſcriminating Sign* or *Token*, betwixt the *Church* and the *World*. God's People, and the Heathens, who were accordingly denominated from it, the *Circumciſion* and the *Uncircumciſion*, the *Holy Seed* and the *Gentiles*. And now under the *New Teſtament*, the Children of *Abraham* by Faith, and the Children of the *Fleſh*. This alſo ſhews it cannot be the *Covenant of Works*; for in that Covenant all are equally and alike concluded under Sin and Miſery, *Epheſ.* 2. 3. and there is no difference made by that Covenant betwixt Perſon and Perſon, State and State.

If this be not enough to evince, that the Covenant of Circumciſion is a *Covenant of Grace*, I promiſe you many more Arguments to prove it, as ſoon as I ſhall find theſe refuted, and your contrary Aſſertion well diſcharg'd from the groſs Abſurdities with which it is clogg'd and loaded. You ſee how genuine, natural and congruous to Scripture the notion of it as a Covenant of Grace is, and all the World may ſee how harſh, alien, and repugnant to Scripture your Notion of Circumciſion, as a *Covenant of Works*, is. You ſee into what Boggs you are again driven in defence of your Opinion. *Exemp. gra.*

That Circumciſion is a part of the *Ceremonial Law*, which was dedicated with Blood, and therefore could be no part of the *Moral Law* or *Ten Commandments*, which was (ſay you) the *Covenant of Works*; and yet that it is of the ſame nature; and that it's clear it is no other than a *Covenant of Works*. Don't you there diſtinguiſh and confound all again, blame and check Mr. *Sedgwick* without cauſe, and commit a greater Abſurdity preſently than you charg'd him with? Don't you queſtion whether that *Covenant* that was *typically* ſeal'd by Blood, was ſeal'd by Chriſt's Blood? Pray, Sir, conſider where-ever God commands typical Blood to be applied, it relates to Chriſt's Blood ſpiritually applied, or to nothing.

Are not you forced, in defence of your erroneous *Theſis*, to ſay with *Bellarmine*, That *Circumciſion* was extraordinary in its inſtitution, and applied as a Seal to none but *Abraham* himſelf? It excluded even *Iſaac* the Type of Chriſt, and *Jacob* a Prince with God. O what will not men venture upon in defence of their darling Opinions!

Are you not forced, for your ſecurity from the danger of the *Third Argument*, to cut one of the ſame Covenants made with *Abraham* juſt in two, and of the pure promiſſory part to make a *Covenant of Grace*; and of the other part, which you your ſelf call a *Reſtipulation*, to make another quite oppoſite Covenant? Don't you magnifie the Bounty and Grace of God to *Abraham* in the firſt four Verſes, and then deſtroy it all, by putting him at once under a contrary Covenant, and ſo cut off all capacity to enjoy one of thoſe Mercies?

Don't you make *Circumciſion*, in its own nature, without reſpect to the intention of the Perſon, an Obligation to the whole Law, and that which fruſtrates the Death of Chriſt, and yet muſt grant, that *Paul* himſelf took *Timothy* and circumciſed him, and yet thereby brought him under no ſuch dangerous obligation to the Law? In a word,

You reject all thoſe Covenants as legal, that have any *conditions* in them, or reſpect to any thing that is to be done by us, and allow *Gen.* 12. and *Gen.* 22. to be pure *Goſpel-Covenants of Grace*; and yet in the firſt *Abraham* is bound to *walk before God and be perfect*; and in the other God ſaith, *For becauſe thou haſt done this thing, ſurely bleſſing I will bleſs thee.*

And ſo much for *Abraham's Covenant.*

## III. *Of the Conditionality of the New Covenant.*

Come we next to conſider that Opinion of yours, which led you into theſe other groſs Miſtakes and Abſurdities, and that is this, That the *Covenant of Grace* is abſolute, and whatever Covenant is not ſo, but hath any *condition* upon our part, muſt needs for that reaſon be a *Covenant of Works.* See *Page* 229. *It is obſervable* (ſay you) *that as the Covenants mention'd* Gen. 2. Exod. 20, *&c. were all conditional, and therefore legal Covenants, requiring ſtrict and perfect Obedience, as the condition propounded, in order to the enjoyment of the mercies contain'd in them, which are all therefore done away in Chriſt; ſo on the other hand we ſee, that the Covenant God made with* Abraham, Gen. 12. 2, 3. *and* Gen. 17. 2, 3. *and* Gen. 22. 16, 17, 18. *was wholly free and abſolute, and therefore purely* Evangeli*cal*, &c. We will review theſe things anon, and ſee if you truly repreſent the matter, but in order to it let me firſt tell you,

(1.) What we mean by a Goſpel-condition.
(2.) Prove that there are ſuch in the Goſpel-Covenant.
(3.) Shew you the abſurdity of your Opinion againſt it.

(1.) What we mean by a *Condition* in the Goſpel-Covenant. By a Condition of the Covenant, we do not mean in the ſtricteſt rigid ſenſe of the word, ſuch a Reſtipulation to God from Man of perfect Obedience in his own Perſon, at all times, ſo as the leaſt failure therein forfeits all the Mercies of the Covenant: That's rather the condition of *Adam's* Covenant of Works, than of the Evangelical Covenant: Nor do we aſſert any *meritorious Condition*, that in the nature of an impulſive cauſe ſhall bring Man into the Covenant and its Privileges, or continue him in when brought in. This we renounce as well as you; but our Queſtion is about ſuch a Condition as is neither in the nature of it an Act perfect in every degree, nor meritorious in the leaſt of the Benefit conferr'd, nor yet done in our own ſtrength. But plainly and briefly, our Queſtion is, *Whether there be not ſomething as an Act requir'd of us in point of Duty, to a Bleſſing conſequent by vertue of a Promiſe?* Such a thing, whatever it be, hath the nature of a Condition, inaſmuch as it is antecedent to the Benefit of the Promiſe, and the Mercy or Benefit granted is ſuſpended until it be perform'd. The Queſtion is not, Whether there be any intrinſecal worth or value in the thing ſo requir'd, to oblige the diſpoſer to make or perform the Grant or Promiſe, but meerly that it be antecedent to the enjoyment of the Benefit; and that the diſpoſer of the Benefit do ſuſpend the Benefit until it be perform'd. Thus an Act or Duty of ours, which hath nothing at all of Merit in it, or anſwerable value to the benefit it relates to, may be in a proper ſenſe a *Condition* of the ſaid benefit. For what is a *Condition* in the true notion of it, but * the ſuſpenſion of a Grant until ſomething future be done? or † as others to the ſame purpoſe, the adding of Words to a Grant, for the future, of a ſuſpending quality, according to which the Diſpoſer will have the Benefit he diſpoſeth to be regulated. This properly is a *Condition*, tho' there be nothing of equivalent value or merit in the thing requir'd. And ſuch your Brethren, in their Narrative,

* *Conditio eſt ſuſpenſio alicujus diſpoſitionis, tantiſper dum aliquid futurum fiat.* Navarr. Enchirid. 482.

† *Eſt verborum adjectio in futurum ſuſpendentium, ſecundum quam diſponens vult diſpoſitum regulari.*

pag. 14. do acknowledge Faith to be, when they aſſert none can be actually reconcil'd, juſtified, or adopted, till they are really implanted into Jeſus Chriſt by Faith, and ſo by vertue of this their Union with him, have theſe fundamental benefits actually convey'd unto them; which contains the proper Notion of the *Condition* we contend for.

And ſuch a *Condition of Salvation* we aſſert *Faith* to be in the New Covenant Grant; that is to ſay, the Grant of Salvation by God in the Goſpel-Covenant is ſuſpended from all men, till they believe, and is due by Promiſe (not Merit) to them as ſoon as they do truly believe. The Notes or Signs of a Condition given by *Civilians* or *Moraliſts* are ſuch as theſe, *If, if not, unleſs, but if, except only*, and the like. When theſe are added in the Promiſe of a Bleſſing or Benefit for the future, they make that Promiſe conditional; and your *Grammar* (according to which you muſt ſpeak, if you ſpeak properly and ſtrictly) will tell you, that *Si, ſin, modo, dum, dummodo*, are all conditional Particles; and it is evident, that theſe conditional Particles are frequently inſerted in the Grants of the Bleſſings and Privileges of the New Teſtament. As for example, *Mark* 9. 23. εἰ δύνασαι πιστεῦσαι, *If thou canſt believe.* Acts 8. 37. εἰ πιστεύεις ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας, *If thou believeſt with thy whole heart, thou mayeſt*, &c. *Rom.* 10. 9. ὅτι ἐὰν, *That if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth, and believe with thy heart*, &c. *thou ſhalt be ſaved.* Matth. 18. 3. ἐὰν μὴ, *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, you ſhall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* Mark 5. 36. μόνον, *Only believe.* Mark 11. 26. εἰ δὲ οὐκ, *But if ye forgive not*, &c. With multitudes more, which are all conditional Particles inſerted in the Grants of Benefits.

(2.) Having ſhewn you what the nature of a *Condition* is, I ſhall, I hope, make it plain to you, That *Faith* is ſuch a *Condition* in the Goſpel-grant of our Salvation; for we find the Benefit ſuſpended till this Act of Faith be perform'd, *John* 3. 36. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life; and he that believeth not the Son ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* And moſt plainly, *Rom.* 10. 9. having ſhewn before what the *Condition* of Legal Righteouſneſs was, he tells us there what the Goſpel-condition of Salvation is, *The Righteouſneſs which is of Faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe; that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Je-ſu, and ſhalt believe in thy heart, that God raiſed him rom the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* I ask you, Sir, whether it be poſſible to put words into a frame ore lively expreſſive of a *Condition* than theſe re? Do but compare *Mark* 16. 16. *He that be-eveth, and is baptiſed, ſhall be ſaved; but he that be-eveth not, ſhall be damned.* Do but compare, I y, that Scripture-phraſe with the words of *Ja-'s Sons*, which all allow to be conditional, *Gen.* 3. 4, 5. *If thou wilt ſend our brother with us, we will down: but if thou wilt not ſend him, we will not down*; and judge whether the one be not as nditional as the other: More particularly,

### *Argument* I.

f we cannot be juſtified or ſav'd till we believe, n *Faith* is the *Condition* on which thoſe conſe-nt Benefits are ſuſpended.

But we cannot be juſtified or ſaved till we believe. *Ergo,*

The Sequel of the Major is evident; for as was ſaid before, a Condition is the ſuſpenſion of a Grant till ſomething future be done. The Minor is plain in Scripture, *Rom.* 4. 24. *Now it was not written for his ſake alone, that righteouſneſs was imputed to him, but for our ſakes alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed if we believe.* οἷς μέλλει λογίζεσθαι, *Quibus futurum eſt ut imputetur*, to whom it ſhall come to paſs, that it ſhall be imputed, if we believe: And *Acts* 10. 43. *Whoſoever believeth on him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.* John 3. 36. *He that believeth not, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God remaineth on him*; with multitudes more. Now, Sir, lay ſeriouſly before your Eyes ſuch Scriptures as theſe, that promiſe Salvation to Believers, and threaten Damnation to all Unbelievers, as *Mark* 16. 16. doth, and then give a plain and clear Anſwer to this Queſtion; either the poſitive part of that Text promiſes Salvation abſolutely to Men, whether they believe or believe not, and conſequently Unbelievers ſhall be ſav'd as well as Believers: and the negative part threatens Damnation abſolutely to Sinners, as Sinners; and conſequently all Sinners ſhall be damned, whether they believe or believe not; or elſe if you allow neither to be abſolute, but that none can be ſav'd till they believe, nor any damn'd when they do believe; is not that a conditional Promiſe and Threatning?

### *Argument* II.

If God's Covenant with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 12. 2, 3. and that *Gen.* 17. 2, 3. were (as you ſay) pure Goſpel-covenants of Grace, and yet in both ſome things are requir'd as Duties on *Abraham*'s part, to make him partaker of the Benefits of the Promiſes, then the Covenant of Grace is not abſolute, but conditional.

But ſo it was in both theſe Covenants. *Ergo,*

The Minor only requires proof, for which let us have recourſe to the places, and ſee whether it be ſo or not.

(1.) For the firſt you inſtance in as pure a Goſpel-covenant made with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 12. 2, 3. I muſt confeſs, as you diſmember the Text, *p.* 229. by chuſing out the ſecond and third Verſes, and leaving out the firſt, which was the tryal of *Abraham*'s Obedience in forſaking his native Country, and his Father's Houſe; I ſay, give me but this liberty to ſeparate and disjoyn one part of a Covenant from the other, and it's eaſie to make any conditional Covenant in the World to become abſolute: for take but the Duty requir'd, from the Promiſe that is made, and that which was a conditional, preſently becomes an abſolute Grant. Suppoſe, Sir, that *Abraham* had refus'd to leave his dear native Country and neareſt Relations, as many do, think you that the promis'd Mercies had been his? I muſt plainly tell you, you aſſume a ſtrange liberty in this matter, and make a great deal bolder with the Scriptures than you ought: And the very ſame uſage the other Scriptures hath.

(2.) For when you cite your *Second Covenant* with *Abraham*, you only cite *Gen.* 17. 2, 3. and then call it an *abſolute Goſpel-covenant*; when indeed you made it ſo, by leaving out the firſt Verſe, which contains the Condition or Duty requir'd on *Abraham*'s part; for thus run the three firſt Verſes, *And when* Abraham *was ninety nine years old, the Lord appeared to* Abraham, *and ſaid unto him, I am the Almighty God, walk thou before me, and be thou perfect, and I will make my Covenant between me and thee*, &c. Here an upright Converſation before God is requir'd of him, at God's entrance into this Covenant with him; but that is, and muſt be omitted, and cut off, to make the Covenant look abſolute. I am really griev'd to ſee the Scriptures thus dealt with to ſerve a deſign.

### *Argument* III.

If all the Promiſes of the Goſpel be abſolute and unconditional, requiring no Reſtipulation from Man, then they cannot properly and truly belong to the New Covenant.

But they do properly and truly belong to the *New Covenant*; therefore they are not all abſolute and unconditional.

The Sequel of the Major is only liable to doubt or denial, namely, That the Abſoluteneſs of all the Promiſes of the New Teſtament cuts off their relation to a Covenant; but that it doth ſo, no Man can deny, that underſtands the difference between a Covenant and an abſolute Promiſe. A Covenant is a mutual Compact or Agreement betwixt Parties, in which they bind each other to the performance of what they reſpectively promiſe; ſo that there can be no proper Covenant where there is not a Reſtipulation or Re-obligation of one part, as well as a Promiſe on the other: But an abſolute Promiſe binds only one Party, and leaves the other wholly free and unoblig'd to any thing in order to the enjoyment of the good promis'd. So then if all the New Teſtament Promiſes be unconditional and abſolute, they are not part of a Covenant, nor muſt that word be applied to them; they are abſolute Promiſes, binding no man to whom they are made to any Duty, in order to the enjoyment of the Mercies promis'd: But thoſe perſons that are under theſe abſolute Promiſes, muſt and ſhall enjoy the Mercies of Pardon and Salvation, whether they repent or repent not, believe or believe not, obey or obey not. Now, to what Licentiouſneſs this Doctrine leads Men, is obvious to every Eye. Yet this abſoluteneſs of the *Covenant* (as you improperly call it) is by you aſſerted, *p.* 229, 230. there is (ſay you) no Condition at all, 'tis wholly free and abſolute, as the *Covenant* with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 12. 2, 3. *Gen.* 17. 2, 3. Thank you, Sir, for making them ſo; for by cutting off the firſt Verſes, where the Duty requir'd on *Abraham*'s part is contain'd, you make them what God never intended them to be. And the ſame foul play is in *Deut.* 30. where you ſeparate the plain Condition contain'd in *verſ.* 1, 2. from the Promiſe, *verſ.* 6. Or if the Condition, *verſ.* 1, 2. be not plain enough, but you will make it part of the Promiſe, I hope that after in *verſ.* 10. is too plain to be denied. As to the other Texts, more anon; mean time ſee how you deſtroy the Nature of a *Covenant*.

*Object.* But ſay you, *pag.* 233. To impoſe new Conditions, though never ſo mild, is a new *Covenant of Works* with ſome Mercy, but not a *Covenant of Grace*, properly ſo call'd.

*Sol.* 'Tis true, if thoſe Works or Acts of ours, which God requires, be underſtood of meritorious Works in our own Strength and Power to perform, it deſtroys the Free Grace of the *Covenant*; but this we utterly reject, and ſpeak only of Faith wrought in us by the Spirit of God, which receives all from God, and gives the entire Glory to God; *Epheſ.* 2. 5, 8.

*Obj.* But you will ſay, If Faith be the *Condition*, and that Faith be not of our ſelves, then both the *Promiſe* and the *Condition* are on God's part, (if you will call Faith a *Condition*) and ſo ſtill on our part the *Covenant* is abſolute.

*Sol.* This is a miſtake, and the miſtake in this leads you into all the reſt; tho' Faith (which we call the Condition on our part) be the Gift of God, and the power of believing be deriv'd from God, yet the act of believing is properly our act, tho' the power by which we believe be of God; elſe it would follow when we act any Grace, as Faith, Repentance or Obedience, that God believes, repents, and obeys in us, and it is not we, but God that doth all theſe. This, I hope, you will not dare to aſſert; they are truly our Works, tho' wrought in God's ſtrength; *Iſa.* 26. 12. *Lord, thou haſt wrought all our works in us*, (*i. e.*) though they be our Works, yet they are wrought in us by thy Grace or Strength.

As for Dr. *Owen*, 'tis plain from the place you cite in the Doctrine of Juſtification, *pag.* 156. he only excludes Conditions as we do, in reſpect of the dignity of the Act, and is more plain in his Treatiſe of Redemption, *pag.* 103, 104. in which he allows Conditions in both the *Covenants*, and makes this the difference, That the Old requir'd them, but the New effects them in all the Federates.

I know no Orthodox Divine in the World that preſumes to thruſt in any Work of Man's into the *Covenant of Grace*, as a *Condition*, which in the *Arminian* ſenſe he may or may not perform, according to the power and pleaſure of his own Free-will, without the preventing or determining Grace of God; which preventing Grace is contain'd in thoſe Promiſes, *Ezek.* 36. 25, 26, 27, *&c.* Nor yet that there is any meritorious worth, either of *Condignity* or *Congruity* in the Popiſh ſenſe, in the very juſtifying Act of Faith, for the which God juſtifies and ſaves us. But we ſay, That tho' God in the way of preventing Grace works Faith in us, and when it is ſo wrought, we need his aſſiſting Grace to act it, yet neither this aſſiſting nor preventing Grace makes the Act of Faith no more to be *our* Act: 'Tis we that believe ſtill, though in God's Strength, and that upon our believing or not believing, we have or have not the Benefits of God's Promiſes; which is the very proper Notion of a *Condition*.

### *Argument* IV.

If all the Promiſes of the New Covenant be abſolute and unconditional, having no reſpect nor relation to any Grace wrought in us, nor Duty done by us, then the tryal of our Intereſt in *Chriſt* by *Marks* and *Signs* of Grace is not our Duty, nor can we take comfort in Sanctification, as an Evidence of Juſtification.

But it is a Chriſtian's Duty to try his Intereſt in Chriſt by *Marks* and *Signs*, and he may take comfort in Sanctification, as an Evidence of Juſtification. *Ergo*, The Sequel of the *Major* is undeniably clear, for that can never be a Sign or Evidence of an Intereſt in Chriſt, which that Intereſt may be without; yea, and as Dr. *Criſpe* aſſerts, according to his *Antinomian* Principles, *Chriſt is ours* (ſaith he) *before we have gracious Qualifications. Every true Mark and Sign muſt be inſeparable from that it ſignifies.* Now, if the Works of the Spirit in us be not ſo, but an Intereſt in Chriſt may be where theſe are not; then they are no proper Marks or Signs; and if they are not, it cannot be our Duty to make uſe of them as ſuch; and conſequently if we ſhould, they can yield us no Comfort.

Dr. *Criſpe* 2d Vol. of Chriſt exalted. Serm. 14.

The *Minor* is plain in Scripture, 1 *John* 2. 3. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.* The meaning is, we perceive and diſcern our ſelves to be ſincere Believers, and conſequently that Chriſt is our Propitiation, when Obedience to his Commands is become habitual and eaſie to us: So 1 *John* 3. 19. *Hereby we know that we are are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our Hearts before him,* (*i. e.*) by our ſincere cordial Love to Chriſt and his Members, as *v.* 18. this ſhall demonſtrate to us, that we are the Children of Truth; and again, 1 *John* 3. 14. *We know that we are paſſed from death to life; becauſe we love the Brethren.* With multitudes more to the ſame purpoſe, which plainly teach Chriſtians to fetch the Evidences of their Juſtification out of their Sanctification, and to prove their Intereſt in Chriſt, by the Works of his Spirit found in their own Hearts.

And this is not only a Chriſtian's Liberty, but his commanded Duty; to bring his Intereſt in Chriſt to this Touchſtone and Teſt, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves, prove your ſelves,* &c. 2 Pet. 1. 10. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure,* (*i. e.*) your Election by your Calling. No Man can make his Election ſure *à priori*, nor can any Man make it ſurer than it is *in ſe*, therefore it is only capable of being made ſure to us *à poſteriori*, arguing from the work of Sanctification in us, to God's eternal choice of us.

And as the Saints in all Ages have taken this Courſe, ſo they have taken great and lawful Comfort in the uſe of theſe Marks and Signs of Grace, 2 *Kings* 20. 3. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12.

I am ſenſible how vehemently the *Antinomian* Party, Dr. *Criſpe*, Mr. *Eyre*, and ſome others do oppugn this Truth, repreſenting it as legal and impracticable (for they are for the abſolute and unconditional Nature of the New Covenant, as well as you), but by your eſpouſing their Principle, you have even run *Anabaptiſm* into *Antinomianiſm*, and muſt by this Principle of yours, renounce all Marks and Trials of an Intereſt in Chriſt, by any Work of the Spirit wrought in us. You muſt only ſtick to the immediate Sealings of the Spirit, which if ſuch a thing be at all, it is but rare and extraordinary.

I will not deny but there may be an immediate Teſtimony of the Spirit, but ſure I am his mediate Teſtimony by his Graces in us, is his uſual way of ſealing Believers. We do not affirm any of theſe his Works to be meritorious Cauſes of our Juſtification, or that conſidered abſtractedly from the Spirit, they can of themſelves ſeal or evidence our Intereſt in Chriſt. Neither do we affirm, that any of them are compleat and perfect Works; but this we ſay, that they being true and ſincere, tho' imperfect Graces, they are our uſual and ſtanding Evidences, to make out our Intereſt in Chriſt by. And I hope you, and the whole *Antinomian Party* will find it hard, yea, and impoſſible, to remove the Saints, from that comfortable and ſcriptural way of examining their Intereſt in Chriſt, by the Graces of his Spirit in them; as the Saints who are gone to Heaven before them, have done in all Generations.

### *Argument* V.

If the Covenant of Grace be altogether Abſolute and Unconditional, requiring nothing to be done on our part, to entitle us to its Benefits; then it cannot be Man's Duty in entring Covenant with God, to deliberate the Terms, count the Coſt, or give his Conſent by word or writing, explicitly to the Terms of this Covenant.

But it is Man's Duty, in entring Covenant with God, to deliberate the Terms, and count the Coſt, *Luke* 14. 26. to 34. and explicitly to give his conſent thereto, either by word or writing; *Ergo*,

The *Sequel* of the *Major* is ſelf-evident; for where there are no Terms or Conditions required on our part, there can be none to deliberate or give our conſent to; and ſo a Man may be in a Covenant without his own Conſent.

The Minor is undeniable in the Text cited. If you ſay theſe are Duties, but not Conditions; I reply, they are ſuch Duties, without the performance of which, we can have no Benefit by Chriſt and the new Covenant, *Luke* 14. 33. and ſuch Duties have the true ſuſpending Nature of Conditions in them. If you ſay they are only ſubſequent Duties, but not antecedent or concomitant Acts; the 28th Verſe directly oppoſes you, *Let him firſt ſit down and count the coſt*: And for thoſe Overt-acts whereby we explicitly declare our conſent to the Terms of the Covenant, at our firſt entring into the Bond of it, I hope you will not ſay that's a legal Covenant too, *Iſa.* 44. 3, 4. *I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Bleſſing upon thine Off-ſpring, and they ſhall ſpring up as among the graſs, as willows by the Water-courſes. One ſhall ſay I am the Lords, and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of Jacob; and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord,* &c. A plain alluſion to Soldiers, when they liſt themſelves under a Captain or General. What remains now, to reply to theſe Arguments? But either that the places by me cited and argued upon, do not intend the new Covenant under which we are, or that this new Covenant hath its Conditions, and is not altogether abſolute, as you have aſſerted it to be.

And thus, Sir, you are fairly beaten off (if I miſtake not) from the new Ground you had choſen and marked out to raiſe your Battery upon, to demoliſh that ſtrong Fort which ſecures the Right of Believers Infants to Baptiſm, and you muſt return again to the old Anſwers of Mr. *Tombes*, and others, to our ſolid and ſubſtantial Arguments from *Abraham*'s Covenant, *Gen.* 17. which have been baffled over and over by *Baxter*, *Blake*, *Sydenham*,

*denham*, and many other ſtout Champions for Infants Baptiſm.

All that I am further concerned about, is to examine ſo many of thoſe Scriptures as you have ſpoken to, which are by us produced in defence of thoſe four Grounds or Principles mentioned in the beginning of this Diſcourſe, whereon we eſtabliſh the Right of Infants Baptiſm; and to vindicate thoſe Scriptures from your ſtrained and injurious Interpretations of them. Which being done, they will each of them ſtand in thoſe eminent places of Service, where they have been ſo long uſeful to the Cauſe we defend.

As for your pretended Solutions of the incomparable Mr. *Baxter*'s, and the learned and acute Dr. *Burthogg*'s Arguments; I admire at your Confidence therein; and let me tell you, without breach of Charity, 'tis an high piece of Confidence in you, to throw the Gantlet, and bid Defiance to two ſuch Worthies yet alive, and eaſily able to detect your Folly in the Weakneſs and Impertinency of your Anſwers. Alas! my Friend, you little know what it is to have ſuch weak and inartificial Diſcourſes as yours, brought under the ſtrict *Examen* of ſuch acute and judicious Eyes. But,

————————*Sic Dama leonem*
*Inſequitur, audetque viro concurrere Virgo.*

Nor will I preſume to anticipate either of their Anſwers to your Diſcourſe, (if they ſhall think it worthy of an Anſwer) but rather briefly reflect upon what you return to the Arguments of thoſe eminent Divines that are gone to Glory, in the Faith of that Truth you oppoſe; and are not capable of defending their ſolid and regular Interpretations of Scriptures, againſt the Notions you force upon them, contrary both to the Grammar and Scope of ſeveral of them.

And here, Sir, in the beginning, let me mind you what a Learned and Judicious Perſon ſaith, about all Interpretations of Scriptures. *Four things* (ſaith he) *commend an Interpretation, and eſtabliſh it as a King upon the Throne, againſt whom there is no riſing up.*

(1.) If the Letter and Grammar of the Text will fairly bear it.
(2.) If the Scope and Argument of the place will cloſe directly with it.
(3.) If the Interpretation ſet up againſt it, cannot ſtand before both, or either of the former.
(4.) If the Judgment of Learned, Wiſe, and Impartial Men, be found generally agreeable to it.

According to theſe Rules (whereat you can have no juſt Exception), I ſhall briefly, yet I hope clearly and ſufficiently, anſwer ſome of the Replies you make to the Arguments of thoſe deceaſed Worthies: And,

(1.) In *Page* 1. you produce Mr. *William Allen*'s Argument *ad hominem*, againſt your Practice. *He tells you your own Principle condemns you, for you reject the Baptizing of Infants, becauſe there is no Example in the New Teſtament for it; and yet baptize Perſons at Age, whoſe Parents were Chriſtians, which is as much without a Goſpel preſident or Example as the former.* The Sum of your Reply is, *That tho' it ſhould be granted, that there is no expreſs Example for the Baptizing of ſuch in Scripture, yet there are Examples enough concerning the Baptiſm of Believers.*

*Reply.* Here you grant all that Mr. *Allen* objects, *viz. That you are altogether without Example or Preſident for your Practice:* And object to him and us, what he nor we ever ſcrupled or denied, *viz. The Baptizing of ſome adult Perſons, upon the perſonal Profeſſion of their Faith.* I have done it my ſelf, and in like Circumſtances am ready to do it again. Once you clearly yield it, that you have no Preſident nor Example for your Practice in the Goſpel. That's all that he ſeeks, and what he ſeeks you plainly grant. As to the Precept and Examples of Baptizing adult Believers, whoſe Parents were Unbelievers, and themſelves never baptized in Infancy; that's not the Point you are now to ſpeak to: Nor have we any Controverſie about it. Certainly you are none of the fitteſt Perſons in the World, to clamour ſo loudly againſt us, for want of expreſs Preſidents for Infant Baptiſm, whilſt your ſelf confeſſes, you want even one Preſident in the New Teſtament, to legitimate your own Practice; and in the mean time are found in the ſinful neglect of a ſweet and heavenly Goſpel-Ordinance, *viz.* the ſinging of Pſalms, for which you have both Precept and Preſident in the Goſpel, *Col.* 3. 16. *James* 5. 13. 1 *Cor.* 14. 26.

(2.) It is objected againſt you, *Page* 2. *That if the Commiſſion*, Mat. 28. *excludes none from Baptiſm, but ſuch as are to be excluded by the Order therein to be obſerved; and if Baptizing and Teaching are to precede or follow one the other, as there named by Chriſt, then theſe two Concluſions will follow:* (1.) *That Infants are not there excluded from Baptiſm.* (2.) *That a Perſon may be baptized before he be taught; for there we have,* Firſt, Μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. *Diſciple all Nations, make them Diſciples, or Chriſtians.* Secondly, *We have* Βαπτίζοντες, ϗ διδάσκοντες; *which literally to tranſlate, is Baptizing-teaching. Now then Diſcipling being a general word, that contains in it the two others that follow,* viz. *Baptizing and Teaching; and being the* Imperative Mood, *whereas the other two are* Participles; *it is manifeſt, that the whole Command, or Commiſſion, is given in that, and the Mode of Execution in theſe; and if the Mode of Executing that general Commiſſion be expreſſed in theſe, where Baptizing is firſt, and Teaching comes after; what is become of the Order the* Antipœdobaptiſts *have ſo long talk'd of?*

The Summ of your Anſwer is, *That if Baptizing be firſt, and Teaching comes after; then it will follow, that the Apoſtles underſtood not their Commiſſion aright, for they firſt preached, and then baptized them that by their preaching believed,* Acts 8. Acts 10. Acts 2. *with many other places you heap up to the ſame purpoſe; and therefore Infants muſt be excluded by that Commiſſion, becauſe uncapable of being taught. And therefore let us Criticize as we pleaſe, upon Imperative Moods and Participles, the Caſe is clear, Teaching muſt go before Baptizing.*

*Reply.* It had been more modeſt to ſuſpect, that you underſtood not the Text aright, than that the *Apoſtles* underſtood not their Commiſſion aright. The Order of the Words (as this well fortified Objection declares, and you cannot deny) puts Teaching after Baptizing; and tho' we ſhould allow you, that they Diſcipled adult Perſons by Teaching, and taught others Baptized in Infancy, after their Baptizing them; in both they followed their Order and Commiſſion, in Diſcipling the Parents by Preaching, and Teaching their Children baptized by virtue of the Promiſe to them, after their Baptiſm: For he declares, *Acts* 2. the Promiſe is to them, and to their Children, which gives a Right of both unto Baptiſm; and ſo Teaching, according to the Order of this Commiſſion, may be an antecedent Duty to the Parent, and a ſubſequent Duty to him and his baptized Children: For if Μαθητεύσατε, includes Teaching before Baptizing, why ſhould not Διδάσκοντες, which is put after Baptizing, reſpect the ſubſequent Duty of Teaching both the one and other?

(3.) Mr. *Allen*'s next Argument, mentioned by you, *page* 5. is taken from *Mat.* 19. 14. *Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of ſuch is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Whence he argues againſt your Objection of the Incapacity of Infants for Baptiſm, That if they are capable of Intereſt or Memberſhip in the Kingdom of Heaven, or Church, they are equally capable of the Sign or Cognizance, which is Baptiſm.

To this you reply three things: (1.) *That it remains to be prov'd, that theſe little Children were Infants, and not grown Boys or Girls, capable of making an actual Profeſſion of their Faith in Chriſt.* (2.) *'Tis doubtful whether they were for preſent in the Kingdom of God, or were only elected, and ſo in time ſhould be of his Kingdom.* And (3.) *Whatever they were, they were, they were brought unto Chriſt, who himſelf baptized not; not to his Diſciples, who did baptize.*

*Reply.* Your firſt Exception is vain and groundleſs; that they were very young and little ones, appears not only by Chriſt's taking them in his Arms, but from the very Notation of the Word Παιδία, a Dimunitive Word, ſignifying a little Child or Infant. So *John* was call'd when New-born, *Luke* 1. 76. And Chriſt when he lay in the Manger, and *Moſes* when among the Flaggs. And if this be not enough, St. *Luke* gives them another Name, *Luke* 18. 15. Τὰ βρέφη, *Infants*, a word given to a Child in the Womb, *Luke* 1. 41. And for what you object out of *Piſcator*, that the ſame word is us'd of *Timothy*, who knew the Scriptures from a Child: 'Tis an evident miſtake, or ſhift, for the Word is ἀπὸ βρέφους, he knew them not being an Infant, but from his Childhood or Infancy; that is, when he had paſt his Infant State, in which State theſe were that were brought unto Chriſt. And, (2.) Whereas you queſtion their preſent Right in the Kingdom of God, or whether it were not future by virtue of their Election? The Text will not allow your Interpretation, Τῶν γὰρ τοιούτων ἐστὶν, *Of ſuch is*; not ἔσεται, *Shall be* the Kingdom of God. Their preſent Church-Memberſhip aſſerted by Chriſt, is alſo a known Rule to regulate for the future, the Diſciples Carriage towards them, which was too ſevere, harſh, and therefore highly diſpleaſing to Chriſt; but by telling them they were Members of the Church, or Kingdom of Heaven (they being very probably the Infants of believing Parents, as their bringing them unto Chriſt with ſuch Affection, through the Frowns and Repulſes of the Diſciples, ſhews) he gives them a known and plain Rule how to diſtinguiſh Infants, and regulate their Carriage towards them, which God's Election can never be, that being an unrevealed Secret. And, (3.) Whereas you ſay Chriſt did not baptize them, I reply, We never urged this Scripture to prove he did ſo, but only to prove their Church-Memberſhip; which methinks Chriſt aſſerts as plainly as Words can aſſert it, when he ſaith, *Of ſuch is the Kingdom of Heaven*; and tho' you uſe to quibble at the word Τοιούτων, *of ſuch*, as tho' it reſpected not the preſent Infants, but grown Perſons, reſembling them in humble and innocent Qualities; Mr. *Sydenham* hath ſufficiently baffled that Interpretation, by ſhewing its Inconſiſtence with the Scope and Argument of that place, and how ridiculous this Sence would be, when reduced to a formal Argument.

(4) The fourth Argument you pretend to anſwer, *page* 8. is drawn from 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. *Elſe were your Children unclean, but now are they holy.* To this you anſwer two things: (1.) That the Holineſs here ſpoken of, is not a Federal, but a Matrimonial Holineſs, namely, Legitimacy, and is as much as to ſay, your Children are no Baſtards, ſeeing one of you is a Believer.

*Reply.* If this be true, and the genuine Sence of this Text, then all the Children in the World, not immediately deſcended from one, or both believing Parents, muſt of neceſſity be all Baſtards, their Parents, how ſolemnly ſoever married, muſt live in Uncleanneſs; and what mad Work (think you) will this Aſſertion make in the World? And how many Millions of Perſons will it nearly touch, both in point of Honour, and Inheritance?

(2.) You ſay, Tho' the Holineſs here ſpoken of ſhould be allow'd to be a Federal or Covenant Holineſs, yet for want of an expreſs Inſtitution, it will not warrant our Practice.

*Reply.* The Holineſs of the Children being granted to be a Covenant Holineſs, none can deny them to be within the Covenant; how elſe come they to be holy by Covenant? And if within the Covenant, who can deny them the initiating Sign, which is Baptiſm? Or how ſhall they ordinarily be viſibly admitted into the Viſible Church without it? The Connection betwixt their Federal Holineſs and Right to Baptiſm, will appear plain enough from *Acts* 2. 38. which you come next to ſpeak to.

(5.) You attempt to anſwer Mr. *Allen*'s Argument from *Acts* 2. 38. *Be baptized, for the Promiſe is unto you, and to your Children, and unto all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.*

On this Text you know we lay very great ſtreſs, for the Proof of Infants Baptiſm; and it deſerves a Remark, that you wholly ſuppreſs our Arguments drawn from that Text; but however return an Anſwer to them all, ſuch as it is. You firſt tell us, *The Promiſe here ſpoken of, is not a Promiſe of any external Priviledges, but the Promiſe of the Goſpel, or the Grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Secondly, *That the Promiſe was not to their Children as Believers Seed, nor to them, or any other uncall'd by the Lord, but only a Promiſe of Remiſſion of Sins, and receiving the Holy Ghoſt, upon their actual Repentance, which Infants cannot perform, and there-*

*fore cannot here be intended.* This is the true and whole Sence of your Anſwer.

*Reply.* Now becauſe you have wholly omitted our Argument from this Text, (for which doubtleſs there was ſome Reaſon) I think my ſelf oblig'd to let the World know how we expound it, and what we duly infer from that Expoſition of it: And then let the Reader judge, whether by the forementioned Rules of a juſt Interpretation, you or we are in the right.

(1.) We obſerve this famous Text to contain the firſt Argument uſed by the Apoſtle, after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, to perſwade the Jews to embrace Chriſtianity, by repenting, and ſubmitting themſelves to Baptiſm, the initiating Sign of it; and therefore here we juſtly expect much Light about this controverted Point; nor doth the Apoſtle, in this Text, deceive our Expectation.

(2.) We take it for granted, that the direct and proper Scope of this place, is to perſwade the Jews (to whom St. *Peter* preach'd) to repent and be baptized. This you allow, when you ſay, *page* 10. *He uſes it as a Motive, why they and theirs ſhould actually repent and be baptized.* In theſe two then there is no Controverſie.

(3.) We take it for certain, that the Promiſe here referr'd to by *Peter*, is that gracious Promiſe, *Gen.* 17. 7. I will be a God to thee and thy Seed; the adjoyning of their Children to them (ſaith *Calvin* (and with him runs the general Current of Expoſitors) depends on the Words of that Promiſe, *Gen.* 17. 7. If you be not ſatisfied with this, but rather will refer it to *Joel* 2. 28. you are then oblig'd to anſwer Mr. *Sydenham*'s Arguments *à fortiori*, from that reference. But you make no Exception at all to this Accommodation of it: And then the Sence muſt be this; the Promiſe ſhall run as before, to you and to your Children.

(4.) We ſay, that except it had had relation to the Covenant with *Abraham*, there had been no occaſion or reaſon at all here to have mentioned Children, as well as Parents; *The Promiſe is to you, and to your Children*: It had been enough, if he had only intended the believing Parents, excluſive of their Infant Seed, to have ſaid, The Promiſe is made *to as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.* What reaſon or occaſion was there to bring in their Children at all?

(5.) We find here the Children both of believing Jews and Gentiles, mentioned in the Promiſe, accompanying the Precept of Baptiſm, and the Precept to them built upon the Promiſe, as that which gave them their Title to Baptiſm, Ὑμιν γὰρ ἐπαγγελία; for the Promiſe is to you, and to your Children. In the ſame Line that he mentions Baptiſm, he alſo mentions the Promiſe, upon which their Right is founded; and in the ſame Breath with which he mentions their Children, he alſo mentions the Promiſe; which he would never have done, had his deſign been to have excluded their Children from both, or either of them; eſpecially ſeeing their Children had been ſo long in the poſſeſſion of both. Theſe things are obvious, natural, and every way agreeable, both to the Grammar and Scope of the Text; whence we argue,

*Arg.* If the Promiſe be the ſame to Believers under the Goſpel, that ever it was to *Abraham*, and his natural Seed, then the Children of Believers by virtue thereof, have as good a Title to Baptiſm, as *Abraham*'s Children had to *Circumciſion.* But the Promiſe is the ſame, *Ergo*, &c.

Next, let us conſider your Anſwers.

(1.) You ſay, *The Promiſe here ſpoken of, is not a Promiſe of any external Priviledges, but the Promiſe of the Goſpel.*

*Reply.* Your Diſtinction is vain and groundleſs, for it oppoſeth Promiſes that contain external Priviledges, to Goſpel Promiſes, contrary to 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. *Godlineſs hath promiſe of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Secondly, Circumciſion then, and Baptiſm now, which have both their Foundation in that Promiſe, contain Priviledges in them of both ſorts. This no Man can deny, but he that thinks it no Priviledge to be admitted into the viſible Church, by the external initiating Sign, and to be thereby diſtinguiſhed from the Pagan World. You have no Warrant therefore, to divide thoſe things which God hath united.

(2.) *You ſay, the Promiſe was not to them as Believers Seed, nor to any uncalled by the Lord.*

*Reply.* Your meaning is, that theſe Words [*as many as the Lord ſhall call*], are a Limitation of the Promiſe to them only, whether Parents or Children, that are actually called; let this your Interpretation be compared with, and examin'd by the Scope of the Text, which you confeſſed before to be a Motive to perſwade them and theirs to Repentance and Baptiſm, and ſee if it can ſtand before it, as ours doth: For if this be the meaning, then the Apoſtle's Argument muſt run thus: I exhort you, convinced Jews, to Repentance and Chriſtian Baptiſm; for whereas you and your Children have hitherto been an holy Seed, and the Promiſe formerly was to them as well as you; but now the Caſe is alter'd; if you your ſelves repent and be baptiz'd, you ſhall have the benefit of the Promiſe; but as for your Children, they ſhall be in the ſelf-ſame Caſe, and State, with the Children of Pagans and Infidels: Indeed, if any of your Children ſhall hereafter believe, they ſhall have benefit by the Promiſe, but no more than the Children of Pagans and Infidels, which upon Repentance ſhall be equal with them. *Repent ye therefore. and be baptized, for the Promiſe is unto you, and to your Children.* This, and no other, muſt the Apoſtle's Motive be, according to your Interpretation and Limitation of his Words.

We make the Motive or Argument to run thus: God hath now remembred his Covenant to *Abraham*, in ſending that bleſſed Seed, in whom he promiſed to be the God of him and his Seed; yea, and of all believing Gentiles, as well as Jews and their Children: Don't you therefore by your Unbelief, deprive both your ſelves, and your dear Children, of the Mercies and Priviledges of ſo great a Promiſe? Repent therefore, and be baptized, for the Promiſe is unto you, and to your Children, *&c.* Let the impartial Reader judge both, and the acknowledged Scope of the place determine the matter: And as it cannot ſtand with the Scope of the place, ſo neither (as Mr. *Sydenham* hath plainly evinc'd) with the Grammar of the Text, nor Rules of Logick, by which (according to your Expoſition) the Word [*Children*] muſt be redundant and ſuperfluous, as being neither comprehended under Jews or Gentiles, thoſe that are near, or far off; into which

*Infant-Baptiſm*, page 44. 45.

which two Claſſes or Ranks the Text diſtributes the whole World, but muſt ſtand out of the Text, as a Party by themſelves, tho' expreſly mention'd in it, as thoſe to whom the Promiſe belongs. But enough of this.

(6.) Having vindicated *Acts* 2. 38, 39. which confirms our fourth Aſſertion, *viz.* the Identity of the Promiſe the Jews were, and we are under; we proceed next to vindicate 2 *Col.* 8. 9, 10, 11, 12. whereby we prove the ſucceſſion of *Baptiſm* to *Circumciſion*, and vindicate it from that foreign ſenſe you force upon it, to the great injury of the Text, as well as of our Infants, whom you exclude from any concernment therein.

Without any repreſentation at all of the grounds on which we proceed, to prove the ſucceſſion of this Ordinance to that, you as raſhly as confidently call it a groundleſs Inference; which, whether it be or no, let the Impartial judge, when they ſhall ſee the grounds on which we build that Aſſertion.

(1) 'Tis out of controverſie, that the ſcope of this place is to take off the *Coloſſians* from *Circumciſion*, and other Jewiſh Rites and Ceremonies, which the Falſe Teachers at that time earneſtly endeavour'd to reduce them to, as appears *verſ.* 4. to be his plain deſign, *And this I ſay, leſt any man ſhould beguile you with enticing words*; and he ſaith it with great concernment of mind, as appears *verſ.* 1.

(2.) 'Tis as plain that the Argument by which he eſtabliſhes them in the truth of the Goſpel, and ſecures them againſt the danger of returning to thoſe Jewiſh Rites, eſpecially Circumciſion, is drawn from their *compleatneſs in Chriſt* without it, *verſ.* 9, & 10. and that whatſoever they had under Circumciſion, they now enjoy in as compleat and full a meaſure and manner as ever *Abraham* and his Seed did. *And ye are compleat in him,* i. e. in Chriſt.

(3.) To evince this, he inſtanceth in the very caſe then under debate, *viz. Circumciſion, verſe* 11, 12. and firſt diſtinguiſhing of a twofold *Circumciſion*, one made with, and the other without Hands, which he calls the *Circumciſion of Chriſt*: He tells them, as to both of theſe, namely, inward Circumciſion of the Heart, and the external Sign thereof too, both are fully anſwer'd in Baptiſm, *in whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the circumciſion made without hands, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh, by the circumciſion of Chriſt, buried with him in Baptiſm*, Verſ. 11, 12. that is, look as before inward Circumciſion of the Heart was ſignified by outward Circumciſion of the Fleſh, as the proper, direct and appointed Sign of it: So now he ſame inward Circumciſion or Regeneration of he Soul is as really and fully ſignified to you by he new Goſpel-ſign of it, which is Baptiſm: And herefore you are as compleat, in reſpect both of utward and inward Privileges now, as ever *Abra- am* and his Seed were. Do but convert the *Pro- ſition*, and ſuppoſe the *Apoſtle*'s Deſign had been take them off from Baptiſm, and bring them ick to Circumciſion, and in order to it had ſaid, *whom ye are alſo baptiſed with the baptiſm of Chriſt, ing circumciſed with him*; Would not the ſubſti- tion of Circumciſion in the place of Baptiſm ve been clear? And why is not this as clear as at would have been?

(4.) We further ſay, that except he had intended in theſe words to have placed Baptiſm as an external Ordinance, in place and ſtead of outward Circumciſion, he could never have pitch'd upon a worſe Inſtance than that of Circumciſion, which was ſo much valued by them: yea, from the very Inſtance he brings, he had put a ſtrong Objection into their Mouths againſt his Aſſertion *verſ.* 10. That we are every way as compleat without it, as the Jews were with it; for then their Children enjoy'd an Ordinance of great value, which ours are depriv'd of, having none under the Goſpel in lieu of it. Hence we argue,

*Argument.* If the Ordinance of Baptiſm now be appointed to anſwer the ſame ends that Circumciſion did to the Jews, and to make us every way as compleat in Privileges as Circumciſion did them, then it comes in the place and room of it; and our Children have the ſame right to this as theirs had to that.

But the Antecedent is plain from the Scope and Argument of the Apoſtle in this Text and Context.

*Ergo,* So is the Conſequent.

The ſum of your Anſwer is, (1.) *That Circumciſion in the Fleſh is neither expreſs'd nor meant here, but that of Chriſt in his own Perſon.* (2.) *That if Baptiſm had been intended to have come in the place of Circumciſion, then it would follow that Females muſt be excluded from Baptiſm.*

*Reply.* Your firſt Anſwer is manifeſtly falſe; for if the Apoſtle diſtinguiſhes of a twofold Circumciſion, one made with Hands, the other made without Hands, then 'tis manifeſt he means Circumciſion in the Fleſh, which is now aboliſh'd, and all its ends and uſes anſwer'd in Goſpel-Baptiſm. And whereas you ſay, the Circumciſion here ſpoken of is no other but the Circumciſion of Chriſt in his own Perſon; I would gladly know how the *Coloſſians* are ſaid to be circumcis'd in Chriſt's perſonal Circumciſion only: And whether the Baptiſm here ſpoken of, wherewith they are ſaid to be buried with him, be not meant of *Chriſt*'s perſonal Baptiſm too: and conſequently there is no need of the outward Ordinance to paſs upon them or us. But eſpecially 'tis worth while for you to explain the Reaſon why he calls the *Coloſſians* Circumciſion a *Circumciſion of Chriſt made without hands*, if he only intends Chriſt's perſonal Circumciſion; when we all know that Chriſt's perſonal Circumciſion was a *Circumciſion made with hands*; and could not poſſibly be ſuch a *Circumciſion* as theirs was, conſiſting in the putting off the body of the Sins of the Fleſh, or mortification of their corruptions. *Chriſt* had no Sin by propagation to put off or mortifie in his own Perſon.

(2.) Your Second Anſwer is no leſs abſurd; *That if Baptiſm, according to our Argument, ſucceeds in the place of Circumciſion, then Females muſt be excluded from Baptiſm.* You had as good have ſaid, That the enlargement of the Privilege under the Goſpel is no good *Medium* to prove we are as compleat now under *Baptiſm*, as they were under *Circumciſion*: Cannot *Baptiſm* ſtand in the place of *Circumciſion*, becauſe it anſwers all its ends with an advantage? This to me is a very ſtrange Anſwer; however it muſt ſtand in the place of a better, rather than *Baptiſm* ſhall ſtand in the place of *Circumciſion*.

*Obj.* But if Baptiſm ſucceed in the room of Circumciſion, and there be ſuch an Analogy betwixt them as you pretend, then it will follow, that you are oblig'd to baptiſe your children the Eighth Day, as they circumcis'd theirs.

*Sol.* The Objection is frivolous and vain; no Man that I know doubts but the Lord's Supper ſucceeds in the room and place of the Paſſover. *Chriſt* was the ſubſtance of that as well as this, and that was abrogated by his inſtitution of this, the very ſame Night, as ſoon as he and his Diſciples had celebrated the one, the other was inſtituted, and immediately ſucceeded it; and yet *Chriſtians* are not oblig'd to the ſame Month, Day or Hour for the celebration of the Lord's Supper: The Analogy is betwixt the ſubſtantial parts of both, amongſt which the Spiritual Myſtery, Principal Ends, and proper Subjects are of principal conſideration; not the minuter circumſtances of time and place. In the Paſſover and the Lord's Supper there is a correſpondence betwixt the proper Subjects of both: No uncircumcis'd Perſon, or Stranger to the Covenant might eat of that, *Exod.* 12. 43, 48. No unbelieving Perſon, uncircumcis'd in Heart, hath a right to this, 1 *Cor.* 11. 27, 28. So in the other, The Infants of God's covenanted People were the proper Subjects of *Circumciſion* then, and ſo they are (ſay we) of Baptiſm now; for the ſame Promiſe is ſtill to Believers and their Children, *Acts* 2. 38, 39. Here lies the Analogy, and not in the variable circumſtances of Time.

Whereas you ſay, *pag.* 12. Baptiſm cannot ſucceed Circumciſion, becauſe it leaves no character or mark upon the Body, as that did. This very Objection of yours is borrow'd in expreſs words from *Socinus*, that Enemy of Chriſt, in *Diſp. de Bapt. pag.* 113. and fully anſwer'd by *Maccovius*, *Loc. Com. pag.* 830, 831.

*Object.* But it will be further ſaid, That according to our Opinion there can be no Analogy or Correſpondency betwixt the very Subjects of both Ordinances; for Infants, at eight days old, were the proper Subjects of *Circumciſion*, but the Subjects of Baptiſm were adult Believers, from the time of its firſt inſtitution. And ſo the Analogy fails in the very Subjects.

*Sol.* This Objection is grounded upon a great Miſtake; 'tis your Opinion, not ours, that deſtroys it: for with us it lies fairly in theſe three reſpects of it. (1.) We find that at the firſt inſtitution of Circumciſion, *Abraham* the Father, at ninety years old, and all the Men of his Houſe, were firſt circumcis'd, *Gen.* 17. 25, 26, 27. Anſwerably, at the firſt inſtitution of Baptiſm, Parents, Maſters of Families, &c. being adult Believers, were firſt baptiz'd. (2.) After the circumciſion of *Abraham* and the Men of his Houſe, their Infant-ſeed were alſo circumcis'd, the Promiſe belonging to them as well as their Parents. Anſwerably, under the Goſpel the whole Families of Believers were baptiz'd, and the Promiſe runs to their Infants under the Goſpel, as it did before, *Acts* 2. 39. (3.) As in the days of Circumciſion, if any ſtranger, that had not been circumcis'd in his Infancy, ſhould afterwards become a Proſelyte, and joyn himſelf to the Lord, he was to be circumcis'd, of whatever age he was: So now, if any Infidel ſhall be converted, he is to be baptiz'd upon his Perſonal Profeſſion of Faith. And ſo much for the Analogy. As for your correſpondency of Identity, I cannot underſtand it.

I meet with little more in your firſt Part wherein I have any concernment, only there I find four Arguments in Mood and Figure againſt the Innovation of *Symbolical Rites* by humane authority, into the Worſhip of God; which is certainly the beſt Page in your Book. And of them I have nothing to ſay, but that they are good Ware; and I very well know the Mark and Number of that Parcel of Goods, and to whom they properly belong.

But yet before I diſmiſs your Book, I think my ſelf concern'd to vindicate one place of Scripture more, *viz. Rom.* 11. 16, 17. which I alledg'd in the beginning, for the confirmation of our firſt Propoſition, *viz.* That God's *Covenant* with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. is the ſame *Covenant* for ſubſtance we *Gentile Believers* are now under. *If the firſt-fruits be holy, the lump is alſo holy. And if the root be holy, ſo are the branches; and if ſome of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild Olive, were'ſt grafted in among them, and with them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the Olive-tree, boaſt not againſt the branches,* &c. This place is deſervedly of great value with us, to prove that we *Gentile Believers*, with our Infant-ſeed, are inveſted under the Goſpel with the ſame ſubſtantial Privileges that the Jews and their Infants formerly enjoy'd. Here, without opening one term, you proceed in your wonted manner confidently to deny the Arguments of our learned Divines from this place. I ſhall therefore open this famous Text, and regularly deduce the right of *Gentile Believers Infants* to Baptiſm from it; and here, keeping to the Rules above,

(1.) I note that *ver.* 13, 14, 15. give us the true level and ſcope of the Apoſtle's Argument, which is to prove the calling in again of the Jews, tho' for the preſent broken off; and on this ground to excite himſelf to all diligence for their converſion, and ſuppreſs all glorying and boaſting in the *Gentile Believers*, as if they were more worthy than thoſe, becauſe they fill their rooms and places.

(2.) To prove the calling again of the Jews, he argues ſtrongly, *ver.* 16. from the *Federal* Holineſs deriv'd to the Branches from their Root or Anceſtors, namely, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, with whom the *Covenant* was made, *Gen.* 17. *For if the firſt-fruit be holy, the lump is alſo holy. And if the root be holy, ſo are the branches,* (i. e.) *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* being in Covenant with God. A *Federal* Holineſs is from them deriv'd to the branches. And this can be no other than a *Federal* Holineſs, becauſe thoſe their Anceſtors were utterly uncapable to tranſmit any inherent Holineſs to them, that being the incommunicable Prerogative of God. This *Federal* Holineſs lying ſtill in the Root, (the Covenant with *Abraham*) will recover the branches again to life, tho' at preſent many of them be broken off; as *Job* ſpeaks in another caſe, *Job* 14. 7, 8, 9. *There is hope of a tree though it be cut down, that it will ſprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not ceaſe, though the* *root thereof wax old in the earth, and the ſtock thereof dry in the ground; yet through the ſcent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.*

(3.) We affirm by the authority of this Text, that all the Jewiſh Nation was not broken off, but only a part of it: So the 17th Verſe plainly declares, *And if ſome of the branches be broken off*, &c. Not *all*, but *ſome*; for many of them were converted to *Chriſt*. We read of Three thouſand at one Sermon, *Acts* 2. and multitudes more at other times: All theſe converted Jews ſtood in the Apoſtles time as branches in the true Olive, ſtill enjoying all their Privileges; and that which brake off them that were broken off, was nothing elſe but their own unbelief, *ver.* 20. *Well then, becauſe of unbelief, they were broken off.* For at the promulgation of the Goſpel, a new Article was added to their *Creed*, namely, *That this ſame Jeſus whom they had crucified, is the promiſed and true Meſſiah.* This ſome believ'd, and ſo ſtood by Faith, ſtill enjoying all their ancient Privileges of the *Covenant*: Others believed not, and their Unbelief broke them off.

(4.) We find in this place two ſorts of Branches growing upon this Root *Abraham*; ſome *natural Branches*, namely, *Jews by Nature*, embracing Chriſt by Faith; others *wild and foreign Branches*, *viz. Gentiles by Nature*, but ingrafted by Faith, and by their ingrafture growing among the natural Branches, and with them partaking of the Root and Fatneſs of the Olive tree, *verſ.* 17. that is the rich Privileges of the Covenant and Promiſe to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. *I will be a God to thee, and to thy Seed.* This is the ſweet Juice or Fatneſs of the Olive-tree, which both ſorts of branches live upon, *verſ.* 17. ſome on the external, others on the internal, ſome on both.

(5.) Theſe naturally wild, but now ingrafted branches, *viz.* the *Believing Gentiles*, being grafted by Faith amongſt the natural branches, and with them ſucking the fatneſs of the ſame Root and Olive, that is to ſay, the Privileges, Ordinances and Franchiſes of the Church, we cannot but judge it to be a natural, clear and neceſſary Conſequent, that the ſame Privileges the natural branches once had, and the remaining branches, amongſt whom the *Gentile Believers* were ingrafted, then had; the very ſame the *Gentile Believers* and their Children do now enjoy by vertue of their intereſt in the ſame Root; elſe we cannot underſtand how we ſhould be ſaid to *partake with them of the root and fatneſs of the Olive.* Certainly the Sap is the ſame which the Root ſends into all the Branches, whether they be natural or ingrafted ones; and is as plentifully communicated to the ingrafted as to the natural branches; for the watering of this Olive with the more rich and plentiful Grace of the Goſpel, muſt make the Olive-tree as fat and flouriſhing as ever it was to ſupply all its branches, and more than ever before.

Seeing then we *Gentiles* have (1.) the ſame grafting into the true Olive; and (2.) that our preſent grafting in is anſwerable to their preſent caſting out; and (3.) that their re-ingrafting in the end of the World ſhall be the ſame for ſubſtance that ours now is, and their own firſt was: For when they were firſt taken in, they and their Children were taken in together; when they were broken off, they and their Children were broken off together; and when they ſhall be taken in again, they and their Children ſhall be taken in again; and (4.) Seeing all theſe their expected Mercies are ſecur'd to them by the Covenant with *Abraham, Iſaac* and *Jacob*, which will extend again to them when their Unbelief ſhall be taken away: Methinks (as was ſaid before) nothing can be clearer than this Concluſion, *That we Gentile Believers are now inveſted with the ſame Privileges they once enjoy'd, and our Children have the ſame Federal Holineſs or relation to the Covenants theirs had*, by being grafted amongſt them, and living on the ſame Sap they did, and that by the ſame Promiſe, *Acts* 2. 39.

But you will ſay, There's no mention here made of the grafting in of our Children with us. We reply, Neither is there any mention here made of the breaking off of their Children with them, which yet was ſo. Nor was there need to ſay it, ſeeing both their Infants and ours are comprehended in the Parents, as Twigs are comprehended in the Branch, or Buds in the Graft; and the one being holy, ſo is the other: And this Federal Holineſs of the Children is not only mention'd in this Chapter, *verſ.* 16. but alſo in 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. *Now are your children holy.* And the very ſame Promiſe which convey'd the fatneſs of the Olive to *Abraham*'s natural Seed manifeſtly extends it ſelf to the *Gentile Believer*'s Seed, *Acts* 2. 38, 39. And if Men will not ſhut their Eyes, and ſtudy Evaſions, what can be plainer from Scripture in this Explication and Application of this place! We have with us the conſent of the generality of Orthodox Expoſitors; the Senſe it ſelf is genuine, eaſie and unconſtrain'd, agreeable with the letter and ſcope of the Text; whether the Senſe you ſet up againſt it be as probable as this, we come next to examine. And truly, Sir, your Anſwer is as ambiguous as a *Delphick Oracle*; for (1.) you tell us, *pag.* 8. That *the ingrafting ſpoken of in this place is into the inviſible Church by election.* We ſay it is into the viſible Church by profeſſion of Faith, for we know not how to underſtand any breaking off from the inviſible Church, nor falling from Election; but 'tis like you better conſider'd the Conſequents of that Opinion drawn upon you by Mr. *Sydenham* in his 85th Page; and therefore nauſeating thoſe Dregs of *Arminianiſm*, you ſpeak more orthodoxly to the point, *pag.* 27. where you honeſtly acknowledge, That *the Church of the Jews and Gentiles, as to the true Eſſence and inward Subſtance of either, is one and the ſame; in which reſpect the believing Gentiles (according to the* Apoſtle's *Metaphor) are here ſaid to be grafted in amongſt them, and with them to be made partakers of the Root and Fatneſs of the* Olive-tree; *and in reference hereunto it's rightly added by the Apoſtle, that* the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. *The inward Subſtance of the Church and Covenant of Grace whereon it is founded, being invariable, and which ſhall for ever remain immovable, though the outward Form and Adminiſtration be not ſo.* Well then, from hence we have gain'd two things: (1.) That the Church of the Jews and Gentiles are eſſentially and ſubſtantially the ſame Church. (2.) That the Jews were not broken off from the inviſible Church, or from Faith and Election, for theſe you truly ſay are invariable and immovable; and if you had denied it, the Apoſtle aſſures us, that *the foundation of God ſtands ſure*, and that *the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.*

*tance.* But what then was their breaking off, and the *Gentiles* grafting in, which made this great alteration in the Church? Can it be any thing elſe but our ingrafting into the viſible Church by the profeſſion of our Faith, from whence the Jews were broken off from their Unbelief? For certainly from the *Inviſible Church* they were not broken off, and into the *Inviſible Church* multitudes of profeſſing Chriſtians are not ingrafted. 'Tis evident therefore, by grafting us into the *Olive-tree*, he means the *viſible Church*; and by the Fatneſs thereof, the Ordinances and Privileges of that *Church*: Though we deny not but all ſincere Profeſſors are Members of the *inviſible Church* alſo, and do belong to the Election of Grace; but that's not the breaking off or grafting in here ſpoken of. And now having given up Mr. *Tombes*'s Notion of the *Inviſible Church* and *Election*, you are again put to your ſhifts, and muſt either ſhuffle and ſeek to hide your ſelf in an heap of ſtrange and unintelligible Diſtinctions, or (which had been much fairer) honeſtly have yielded the Cauſe; and where ever you met with them, I find a whole Troop of Diſtinctions rallied together for this purpoſe, *pag.* 23, 24.

*This grafting in* (ſay you) *may be either into the viſible or inviſible Church; either by Faith or profeſſion of Faith; or by ſome outward Ordinance. Children may be either grown Men or Infants. The ingrafting in, may be either certain or probable. Certain, either by reaſon of Election or their natural Birth, being Children of Believers. Probable, as being likely; either becauſe frequently or for the moſt part it happens ſo: Though neceſſary, and ſo not certain*; the thing to be prov'd is, That the Children of Believers are in the Covenant of Free Grace in Chriſt, and by vertue thereof to be baptiz'd into the Communion of the *viſible Church*.

*Reply.* Words enough, and Diſtinctions enough to reduce the Text to an indiviſible point. But whither doth all this tend? I will ask you two or three plain Queſtions, and then make what uſe you pleaſe of your Diſtinctions. (1.) Whether the breaking off of the Jews, and the ingrafting of the Gentiles, here ſpoken of, have relation to the *inviſible Church* by Election, or to the *viſible Church* by Profeſſion of Faith and ſome outward Ordinance? (2.) Whether if it were into the *viſible Church* by profeſſion of Faith that the *Gentile Believers* were grafted in, as doubtleſs it was, (and by relinquiſhing the former ſenſe you here ſeem to yield it, ſaying this Ingrafture may be certain upon the account of natural Birth, being Children of Believers) then I would fain know why you ſo ſtate the *Queſtion*, as to make the certainty of Believers Childrens Intereſt in Chriſt, to be the only ground of their admiſſion into the Communion of the *viſible Church*? This (ſay you) muſt firſt be prov'd, or no Baptiſm for them.

Alas poor Infants, to what hard Terms are they here tied up! very much harder than the Terms any of your own Society are tied to; and if Baptiſm muſt be ſuſpended till this point can be clear'd, that the Perſon to be baptiz'd be firſt in Chriſt, and in the Covenant of Free-grace, as to the ſaving Benefits thereof, then farewell to all Baptiſm, both of Infants and adult Profeſſors too: For how can you prove that the Perſons you baptiſe are all or any of them really in Chriſt? May they not deceive you as *Simon Magus* did *Peter*? I did not think you had proceeded in this matter upon a Certainty, but a Probability; and if you proceed with yours upon the grounds of Probability, how come you to tie up the Children of Believers to a certainty of their Intereſt in Chriſt, as the *antecedent ſuſpending Condition* of their Baptiſm? We need diſpute no more about the *proper Subjects* of Baptiſm, for by this account we have loſt the Ordinance of Baptiſm it ſelf.

We thought, Sir, that our Childrens Title to Baptiſm was derived to them from their believing Parents, as the Children of the Jews was to Circumciſion, from their circumcis'd and profeſſing Parents; and that the ſame Promiſe which convey'd their Children's Privilege to them, *Gen.* 17. had convey'd the Right of Believers *Children* to *Baptiſm* unto them alſo, *Acts* 2. 38, 39. and that the root being holy, the branches are holy alſo, that is, federally holy, *Rom.* 11. 16. but to this you make ſuch an Anſwer as aſtoniſhes me to read, *pag.* 26. where allowing *Abraham* to be the Root, you ſay, *The Holineſs here ſpoken of, is firſt in reſpect of God's Election; Holineſs perſonal, and inherent in God's intention*; Epheſ. 1. 4. *He hath choſen us in him, that we ſhould be holy.* (2.) *'Tis alſo Holineſs derivative, but not from any Anceſtors, but from* Abraham *only; and that not as a* natural, *but a* ſpiritual Father, *wherein he is a lively Image or Figure of Chriſt, and is derived from the Covenant of Grace, which paſſed in his Name to him and his Seed. And laſtly, It ſhall be inherent, being actually communicated by the Spirit of God, when they ſhall be actually call'd.*

*Reply.* Here we ſee into what *Brakes* and *Pits* Men run themſelves, when they depart from the plain and ſafe Path in Explications of Scripture. Here is ſuch a *tripartite Diſtinction* of Holineſs as I never met with before. (1.) *Here is perſonal Holineſs inherent in God's Intention.* By this you muſt either mean Sanctification decreed for them, and to be beſtow'd on them at the time of their calling; and then it is coincident with the third Member of your Diſtinction: Or elſe you mean, That it is Holineſs inherent in the *Intention* of God, as an Accident in its Subject; and then the Simplicity of God's Nature reſiſts your incongruous Notion. But it would be a leſs crime to confound the firſt with the laſt Member of your vain and ſelf-created Diſtinction, than to ſpeak things ſo repugnant to the ſimple and uncompounded Nature of God.

Or if your meaning be, That this Holineſs is in God by way of *Intention*, but in them by way of *Inheſion*, that will not deliver you out of your confuſion neither, but run you into greater; for then you confound the *immanent* with the *tranſient* Acts of God, and make the ſame thing at the ſame time to be purely in *Intention*, and in *Execution*; or to be only in God's Purpoſe to beſtow hereafter, and yet at the preſent inherent in the Perſons he intends it for; ſo that I muſt leave your ſtrange Notion of Perſonal Holineſs inherent in God's Intention, to be clear'd by a more *Metaphyſical Head* than mine; or elſe to ſtand among other rare and unintelligible Notions, to be admired and applauded by the ignorant Reader.

But then, when we come to the Second Member of your Diſtinction, I am as much at a loſs to find your Sence as before: For there you tell us, *The Holineſs here ſpoken of, is a Derivative Holineſs alſo, and that from* Abraham *only, and from him not as a natural, but a ſpiritual Father, reſembling Chriſt herein.*

*Reply.* This word *derivative* is an equivocal word, and may ſignifie either *inherent perſonal Holineſs*, or *federal Holineſs*, for both of them are derived. If you ſay as the former, it looks too black and horrid for me to believe you mean it, tho' you ſhould ſay you mean it; for then you make *Abraham* not only the Figure and Image of Chriſt (as you ſpeak) but Chriſt himſelf, by attributing to *Abraham* Chriſt's incommunicable Property and Prerogative. Then *Abraham* may ſay to all his Children, as Chriſt doth, *John* 15. 4, 5. *I am the Vine, ye are the Branches*, &c. I am he that ſanctifies you. But if you mean the laſt, (as neceſſarily you muſt, if you mean any thing that hath Orthodox Sence in it), then this *derivative Holineſs* you ſpeak of, is not perſonal Holineſs, or internal Sanctification, but *federal Holineſs*, derived from Covenanted Anceſtors, or Parents to their Children; and therein you come over to us, and to the true Sence of the Text. But why muſt this be ſqueezed from you with ſo much difficulty? And why did you hide this *federal Holineſs* under an equivocal Term, leſt you ſhould ſeem to yield the Controverſie with a Word? this is not fair.

*Object.* If you ſay we are too haſty, and triumph before the Victory; for tho' you do yield it to be a *federal Holineſs*, yet it is ſuch as can be derived from no other Father or Progenitor, but *Abraham* only.

*Sol.* Yes, Sir, I hope you will allow *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, at leaſt, to be the Root and Firſt-fruit, as well as *Abraham*, ſeeing the Covenant was jointly and expreſly made with them all three; and thereby they became the Root and Firſt-fruit of that holy Nation: And if that People be called the Seed of *Abraham*, they are alſo called the Seed of *Jacob*; and if Fatherhood be aſcribed to *Abraham*, it is aſcribed to *Jacob* too, *Iſa.* 58. 14. And if *Abraham* be firſt named in the Covenant, ſo is *Jacob*; ſee *Lev.* 26. 42. But if you allow theſe three Patriarchs, belike that's all you will allow; for you ſeem to ſay, that no *federal Holineſs* can be derived from any other Progenitors. Good Sir, whatever your own private Opinion be in this matter, allow us to believe otherwiſe, as long as thoſe Scriptures, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. and *Acts* 2. 39. ſtand in our Bibles; for we cannot think but the federal Holineſs of Children reſults from the immediate Parent's Faith, or Covenant Intereſt, as well as from the remoter Progenitors; elſe we cannot underſtand how the *Corinthians* Children ſhould be holy, or how the Promiſe ſhould belong to the Children of them that are afar off, *viz.* the Gentiles, who could derive no ſuch thing to their Children by a Lineal Deſcent from *Abraham*, but only as they became ingrafted Branches by Faith; and ſo ſuck the Fatneſs of the Olive to themſelves, and to their Buds, or Children, as the natural Branches did. I deſire you to conſider alſo, how this Covenant paſſed, as you ſay it did, to *Abraham* and his Seed in Chriſt's Name, if it be the ſame with *Adam*'s Covenant? Did that paſs to *Adam* in Chriſt's Name too?

I have now diſpatched what I at firſt promiſed and intended, *viz.* the Confutation of my Friends Miſtakes about the Covenants, and the Vindication of thoſe Scriptures, by which our Arguments deduced from one of them, are confirmed. And now I have no further Concernment with Mr. *Cary*'s *Solemn Call*, ſave only to note his high Confidence, raſh and moſt Unchriſtian Cenſures, of all his differing Friends and Brethren, with which he concludes his Diſcourſe, wherein he calls Infants Baptiſm.

(1.) *A great abuſe in the Divine Worſhip*, Page 242, 243. And yet he that ſo calls it, never looked half way into the Controverſie, nor is able without manifeſt ſhuffling, and contradiction, both to the Words of God, and his own Words, to anſwer our Arguments, as is here made too evident.

(2.) That it is no other, than a change of a Divine Inſtitution, and making void the Commandment of Chriſt, the horrid Sin charged by Chriſt upon thoſe Hypocrites, the Scribes and Phariſees, *Mat.* 15. 6. With no better than theſe doth he rank and aſſociate the many thouſands of God's choice and dear People, who differ in this circumſtantial Point from him.

(3.) He compares it with the Sin of *Nadab* and *Abihu*. And with that of *Iſrael*, with reſpect to the Ark, 1 *Chron.* 15. 13. a Sin which provoked the Lord to execute Judgment, by an immediate Stroke in Fire from Heaven upon them. Thus Mr. *Cary* is ready to *call for Fire from Heaven upon his Brethren.* Alas! Poor Man, he knows not what Spirit he is of, as Chriſt told the Diſciples in a like caſe. 'Tis well we are not in his Hands to execute the Wrath, as well as charge the Guilt upon us. But I hope all this is but Raſhneſs in him.

(4.) He affirms it to be no leſs than *a tranſgreſſing of the Law, a changing of the Ordinances; and a breaking of the everlaſting Covenant.* If it be a tranſgreſſing of the Law, he ſhould have ſhewn us in what Scripture that Law that forbids it is, or where God hath repealed his former Grant to the Children of his Covenant People: And for the *changing of the Ordinances*, I am of Opinion, 'tis he that is guilty of that Sin, and not we; for we have proved God ſetled this Priviledge upon the Infant Seed of his People, that the Promiſe under the Goſpel continues ſtill to them, and if he exclude them from Baptiſm, he changes the Ordinance of God. And for breaking the everlaſting Covenant, for which he cites *Iſa.* 24. 5, 6. the Lord make him ſenſible of the Danger he hath put himſelf under, from that very Text he produces againſt us; for it's manifeſt, that the Covenant there ſpoken of, is God's Covenant with *Abraham*, renewed with the *Iſraelites* at *Sinai*, which in that Text is truly called an *everlaſting Covenant*; when mean time Mr. *Cary* hath pronounced it to be an *Adam's Covenant*, and now utterly aboliſhed. Who is it, Sir, that fights againſt, and changes this everlaſting Covenant, you or we, that are for its continuance to us and our Children?

(5.) He affirms theſe things to be of higheſt Concernment to us. If ſo, then ſure it muſt follow, that Repentance from dead Works, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, muſt be inferior things to them; for nothing can be higher than the higheſt, or equal with it. And then by making them the chief Fundamentals in Religion, as that Expreſſion doth, (if it be not a vain and ſinful Hyperbole) the Salvation or Damnation of Men depends upon compliance, or non-compliance with them. And then whither muſt you ſend all God's People in the World, that differ from you? Sir, I find your Brethren in the Appendix to their Confeſſion of Faith, *page* 110. placing one of theſe which you make of higheſt Concernment, among the other Circumſtances of Religion: And doubtleſs that is in its proper place. Nor do I ſee how they can free themſelves from participation in your Sin, 'till they have admoniſhed you for it, and cauſed you to expugn it out of your Book.

(6.) That it is a ſetling of your Threſholds by Gods's Threſhold. The Words you recite from *Ezek.* 43. 8 which ſpeaks of the *Idolatrous Kings of Judah and Iſrael,* building Temples and Altars for their Idols, in, or near the Courts of the Temple of God: As the *Engliſh Annotations* on the Text will inform you, an Abomination that defiled God's Holy Name, a Wickedneſs not to be named, and for which the Lord conſumed them; and calls it Whoredom in the next words. Here, Sir, you have exceeded all the Bounds of Society and Chriſtian Charity; and made this circumſtantial Difference about the proper Subject of Baptiſm, the groſſeſt Heatheniſh Idolatry in the World: And conſequently diſſolved the Bonds of Chriſtian Charity, and broken off all Communion with us; for with ſuch Idolaters you ought not to have any Communion.

Your more wiſe and moderate Brethren in the place above cited, tell us, *They are loath hereby to alienate their Affections or Converſations from any that fear the Lord, and are willing to participate of the Labours of thoſe whom God hath endued with Abilities above themſelves; qualified and called to the Miniſtry of the Word; deſirous of Peace, and not of renewed Conteſts hereabout.* This is a Language of another Air. And if they be (as I dare not ſuſpect but they are) ſincere in that Profeſſion, they dare not comprobate ſuch a Deſperate and Unchriſtian Cenſure as yours is: If they do, then we may eaſily gueſs what our Lot and Treatment ſhall be, whenever *Anabaptiſm* get the Aſcendent in *England.* We may expect as Civil Uſage as is due to groſs Idolaters, and no better. But I hope better things.

(7.) You ſay, that as theſe things are of higheſt concernment, ſo *they ought to be our moſt ſerious practice and endeavour,* page 243. *ult.* Good Lord, whither hath Zeal for an Opinion tranſported you! *Our moſt ſerious practice and endeavour, Sir!* I thought the moſt ſerious practice of a Miniſter had been to preach Chriſt, and Salvation to the Souls of Men; and not to baptize. I am ſure St. *Paul* reckoned ſo, *Chriſt ſent me not to baptize, but to preach.* That is, Baptiſm is not my principal Work, or main Buſineſs. And Verſe 14th he *thanks God he had baptized none of them, but Criſpus and Gaius.* I believe he never utter'd ſuch an Expreſſion about his other Work of preaching Chriſt. And for all Chriſtians, I thought the ſecuring of their Intereſt in Chriſt, living in the Duties of Communion with him, watching their Hearts, and mortifying their Corruptions, had been the Object Matter of their moſt ſerious practice, and faithful endeavour; and not the Litigations about Baptiſm. But I hope theſe were only inconſiderate Expreſſions, falling from your Pen, whilſt you were in a Paroxiſm of Zeal, or a Tranſport in the height of a conceited Triumph. But whatever was the cauſe, I am ſure you ought to revoke and repent ſuch Words.

(8.) You wiſh, *your Teſtimony riſe not up at laſt as a Witneſs againſt us.* Sir, we do not apprehend any Cauſe we have to fear your Teſtimony againſt us, or ſevereſt Cenſures of us, whilſt we are ſatisfy'd, that as you neither have a Faculty or Commiſſion to be our Judge, ſo neither is there any convincing Evidence in your Reply to our Arguments. But I think you have much more cauſe to fear, leſt thoſe Arguments ſhould come in at laſt as a Witneſs againſt you, who deny and contemn them; when mean time you are put to moſt lamentable Shifts, even Contradictions, and ſomewhat worſe, to eſcape the Point and Edge of them.

(9.) To conclude, You tell us, we muſt not expect the ſpecial Preſence of Chriſt to be afforded to us, without our compliance in theſe Points with you.

Sir, We never yet deſerted the Judgment or Practice of Infants Baptiſm, and yet have had (bleſſed be Jeſus Chriſt for it) great and manifold, ſweet and ſignal Proofs and Evidences of his Preſence with us: He hath owned and bleſſed our Miniſtry to the Converſion of many; and there are ſome, and thoſe not mean or few, of our Spiritual Children, now in your Societies in *England,* who have acknowledged us to be the Inſtruments of their Converſion: The Lord lay it not to their Charge, who now deſert that Miniſtry in which they firſt received Chriſt. But as for the Departure of his Preſence, I aſſure you, Friend, I am more afraid of the Rents and Diviſions you now renew ſo unſeaſonably among the Churches of Chriſt, than of any one thing amongſt us beſide. It grieved my Soul to ſee you, *Quieta movere,* awake a ſleeping Controverſie, eſpecially in ſuch a Seaſon, when we are little more than half delivered from our Enemies and Dangers you *take us by the heel,* as *Jacob* did his Brother, whilſt but yet in the Birth. Sir, except you return to a more quiet and Chriſtian Temper, than you ſeem here to be in, I am out of hope that ever you and I ſhall ſee thoſe bleſſed Days, we have ſo often, with pleaſure, comforted our ſelves with the hopes of. However extend your Charity (if you have any left) ſo far, as to believe that I am one, notwithſtanding all this), that am ſtudiou of the Churches Peace, and inquiſitive into th Rules of Duty, not daring to hold any Truth God in Unrighteouſneſs; and yet well ſatisfy'd am, in the Path of my Duty, wherein, tho' w cannot walk together, yet I hope to meet you the end of our way, in our Father's Houſe, whe perfect Light and Peace dwells.

And here I had put an end to this Debate, h I not received your Return to ſome of theſe Shee whilſt the laſt of them was under my Hand wherein I only find Four Things in which I a concerned. In general, you tell me, *You are convinced of any Error, by what I have ſaid.* I ſorry to hear it: But conſidering the Nature Error on one ſide, and the Difficulty of Self-den on the other, you have not much deceiv'd Expectation. More particularly, (1.) You ſay, As to your hooking the *Sinai* Covenant into this Controverſie, I gave you the firſt occaſion of it; for when you ſhew'd me your Papers about God's Covenant with *Abraham*, I told you, that you were beſt firſt to try, if you could prove the Covenant at *Sinai*, to be a Covenant of Works; foraſmuch as our Divines are ſo far from *conceiting* the *Covenant* with *Abraham* to be a *Covenant* of Works, that they will not allow the *Sinai* Law it ſelf to be ſo; and to convince you of it, I lent you Mr. *Roberts*, and Mr. *Sedgewick*, on the Covenant, to enlighten and ſatisfie you about it: But little did I think, you had Confidence enough to enter the Liſts, with two ſuch learned and eminent Divines, and make them to follow your triumphant Chariot, ſhackled with the incomparable *Baxter* and *Allen*, *Sydenham* and *Burthogg*, like three Pair of Noble Priſoners of War. But whatever was the occaſion, (ſetting aſide your Sin) I am not ſorry you have given a fit Opportunity to enlighten the World in that Point alſo.

(2.) You ſeem to fancy in your Letter, that I was once of your Opinion about the Moral Law, becauſe you find theſe Paſſages in a Sermon of mine, upon *John* 8. 36. *If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, then are you free indeed*, viz.

*That the Law required perfect working, under pain of that Curſe; accepted no ſhort Endeavours, admitted no Repentance, and gave no Strength.* But finding me here pleading for the Law, you think you find me in a Contradiction to that Doctrine.

The Words I own, the Contradiction I poſitively deny; for I ſpeak not there, and here, *ad idem*: For in that Sermon, and in thoſe very Words you cite, I ſpeak againſt the Law, not *as God intended it, when he added it to the Promiſe*; but as the Ignorance and Infidelity of unregenerate Men, make it to themſelves a Covenant of Works, by *looking upon it as the very Rule and Reaſon of their Juſtification before God.* This was the Stumbling-ſtone, at which all Legal Juſticiaries then did, and ſtill no ſtumble, *Rom.* 9. 31, 32, 33. In this Sence the Apoſtle in his Epiſtles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, argues againſt the Law, and ſo do I in the Words you cite; but vindicate the Law in the very ſame Sermon you mention, as conſiſtent with, and ſubſervient to Chriſt, in the former Sence; and there tell you, *The Law ſends us to Chriſt to be juſtified, and Chriſt ſends us back to the Law to be regulated.* The very ſame double Sence of the Law you will find in this Diſcourſe, and from the miſtaken end and abuſe of the Law, which the Apoſtle ſo vehemently oppoſeth, I here prove againſt you, that the Law in this Sence cannot conſiſt with, or be added to the Promiſe, and therefore make it my Medium to prove againſt you, That the true Nature and Denomination of the *Sinai* Law, can never be found in this Sence of it, but it muſt be eſtimated and denominated from the Purpoſe and Intention of God, which I have proved to be Evangelical. Try your Skill to faſten a Contradiction betwixt my Words in that Sermon, and this Diſcourſe. I know you would be glad to find the ſhadow of one, to make ſome ſmall Excuſe, or Attonement, for the many Faults, of that Nature, you have here committed.

(3.) *Your Letter alſo informs me, that you hear you are anſwered by one Hand already, and for ought you know, many more may be employed againſt you, and I for one; and ſo we ſhall compaſs you about like Bees.*

*Reply.* I have only ſeen Mr. *Whiſton's* little Book againſt your Brother *Grantham*, wherein he hath baffled two of your principal Arguments; but you only come in collaterally there, and muſt not look upon it as a full Anſwer to your Book, but only as a Laſh for your Folly, *en paſſant*. And for our compaſſing you about like Bees, methinks you ſeem to be greatned in your own Fancy, by the ſuppoſition, or expectation, of a multitude of Opponents. You know as well as I, who it is that glories in this Motto, *Unus contra omnes.* Sir, I think your Mind may be much at reſt in that matter. Of all the ſix famous Adverſaries mentioned in your Title-Page, there are but two living: And you know, *Mortui non mordent*; and of the remaining two, one of them, *viz.* Mr. *Baxter* is almoſt in Heaven, living in the daily Views, and chearful Expectations of the *Saints Everlaſting Reſt with* GOD; and is left for a little while among us, as a great Example of the Life of Faith: And it is queſtionable with me, whether ſuch a great and heavenly Soul can find any leiſure or diſpoſition to attend ſuch a weak and trivial Diſcourſe as this.

And as for my ſelf, you need not much fear me; I have not, neither do I intend to vibrate my Sting againſt you, unleſs I find you infecting or diſturbing that Hive to which I belong, and to which I am daily gathering and carrying Honey; and then, who but a Drone would not ſting?

(4.) To conclude, in the Cloſe of your Letter you fall into the former Strain of Love, aſſuring me, *That the ancient Friendſhip of ſo many Years, ſhall ſtill continue on your part.*

*Reply.* All that I ſhall return to this, is only to relate a ſhort Story out of *Plutarch*, in the Life of *Alexander*; where he tells us, That whilſt he was warring in the *Indies*, one *Taxiles*, an *Indian* King, came with his Company to meet him, and ſaluting *Alexander*, ſaid, *What need you and I to fight and war one upon another? If thou comeſt not to take away our Water, and the Neceſſaries of Life from us, for which we muſt needs fight: As for other Goods, if I am richer than thee, I am ready to give thee of mine; and if I have leſs, I will not think ſcorn to thank thee for thine.* *Alexander* highly pleaſed with his Words, made him this Reply, *Thinkeſt thou, that this Meeting of ours can be without Fighting? No, no; thou haſt won nothing by all thy fair Words; for I will fight and contend with thee in Honeſty and Courteſie, and thou ſhalt not exceed me in Bounty and Liberality.*

I ſay with *Taxiles*, I had never armed againſt you, had you not come to take away our Water, and the Neceſſaries of Life; I mean, the Covenant of God with *Abraham*, which contains the rich Charter of the Gentile Believers Children, and make it an aboliſhed *Adam's* Covenant, and told us, that we muſt come up to the Primitive

Purity in theſe things; that is, in renouncing it as a Covenant of Grace, and relinquiſhing Infants Baptiſm, as grounded thereon.

Sir, Were my own Father alive, I muſt and would oppoſe him, ſhould he attempt what here you do. Infant-Baptiſm with you, is not *Singing of Pſalms*, that plain and heavenly Goſpel Ordinance with you is not, and will you take away our *Benjamin* alſo? What! the Covenant of God, with *Abraham* and his Children in their Generations? *All theſe things are againſt us.* No, Sir, we cannot part with that Covenant, as an aboliſh'd *Adam's* Covenant; nor will I give it up for all the Friendſhip in the World.

And yet I will ſay with *Alexander*, I will contend with you in Friendſhip and Courteſie, even whilſt I earneſtly contend againſt you for the Truths of GOD, which you have here oppoſed, and I have endeavoured to vindicate.

One Word more before I part with you; I do aſſure you, and the whole World, that in this Controverſie with you, I have not knowingly or adviſedly miſrepreſented your Sence: If you ſhall ſay I did ſo in my Second Argument, from the Words, *p.* 179. I aſſure you, both my ſelf, and others could underſtand you no otherwiſe than I did in the Papers I ſent you; and when you told me, you meant there was no Pardon in either of thoſe Covenants, but that it plainly directed to *Abraham's* Covenant, you will find I have given you as fair a Choice as you can deſire, either to ſtand to your Words in the firſt Sence, wherein I underſtood them, (or which will be the ſame to me) to your own Sence, in which you afterwards explained it to me. And whereas I blame you over and over in my *Epiſtle* and *Concluſion*, for putting the proper Subject of Baptiſm, amongſt the higheſt Things in Religion: Let the Reader view your Concluſion, and ſee whether you do, or not. If you ſay, you ſpeak of the Covenant there, as well as of Baptiſm: I allow that you do ſo; yet I hope 'tis equally as bad; nay, indeed and truth, a great Aggravation of your Fault, to make this Article, *viz. God's Covenant with* Abraham, *Gen.* 17. *is an aboliſhed* Adam's *Covenant*, one of the higheſt Concernments of a Chriſtian; the Baptiſm *only* of Adult Believers another. My Conſequences from your Words are juſt and regular, how ſtarting ſoever they ſeem to you.

If you think fit to rejoin to this my Anſwer, I deſire you will avoid as much as you can, a tedious Harangue of Words, and ſpeak ſtrictly and regularly to my Arguments, by limiting, diſtinguiſhing, or denying, as a Diſputant ought to do: If ſo, I promiſe you a Reply; but if I find no ſuch thing, it ſhall paſs with me but for waſte Paper; nor will I waſte Time about it. The Lord give us Unity in Things neceſſary, Liberty in Things indifferent, and Charity in all Things.

# Sacramental Meditations

Upon divers Select Places of

# SCRIPTURE.

WHEREIN

**Believers** are aſſiſted in preparing their *Hearts*, and exciting their *Affections* and *Graces*, when they draw nigh to GOD in that moſt Awful and Solemn Ordinance of

# The Lord's Supper.

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## TO THE

# READER.

Christian Reader,

CHRIST *may be ſaid to be crucified three ways; by the* Jews actually, *in the Sacrament* declaratively, *and by Unbelievers at his Table* interpretatively. *Among Sins, Blood-guiltineſs is reckon'd one of the moſt hainous; and of all Blood-guiltineſs, to be guilty of the Blood of Chriſt, is a Sin of the deepeſt guilt, and will be aveng'd with the moſt dreadful Puniſhment*, 1 Cor. 11. 17, 29. *If Vengeance be taken ſevenfold on him that ſlew* Cain, *what Vengeance ſhall be taken on him that* crucifies afreſh the Lord of Glory?

*The heavieſt blow of Divine Juſtice is ſtill ready to avenge the abuſe of the beſt Mercy: What can the Heart of Man conceive more ſolemn, more ſacred, or more deeply affective, than the repreſentation of the moſt gracious love of the* Father, *and the moſt grievous paſſion of the* Son? *What Sin can be more provoking to God, than the ſlight and contempt of thoſe moſt awful Myſteries? And what Puniſhment can be more terrible, than for ſuch a wretched Soul to eat and drink Damnation to it ſelf?* Melancthon *records a very dreadful Example of God's righteous Judgment upon a company of prophane wretches, who in a Tragedy intended to act the Death of Chriſt upon the Croſs. He that acted the Souldier's Part, inſtead of piercing with his Spear a Bladder full of Blood hid under his Garment, wounded him to death that was upon the Croſs, who falling down, kill'd him who (in a diſguiſe) acted the Part of the Woman that ſtood wailing under the Croſs. His Brother who was firſt ſlain, ſlew the Murderer who acted the Souldier's Part, and for ſlaying him was hang'd by order of Juſtice. Thus did the Vengeance of God ſpeedily overtake them, and hang'd them up in Chains, for a Warning to all that ſhould ever dare to dally with the great and jealous God.*

*Theſe are terrible Strokes, and yet not ſo terrible as thoſe which are more ordinarily, but leſs ſenſibly, inflicted on the inner man for the abuſe of this Ordinance.*

*To prevent theſe Judgments, and obtain thoſe Bleſſings which come through this* Ordinance, *great regard muſt be had to two things, viz.* 1. The Inbeing. 2. The Activity of true Grace.

Firſt, *Examine thy ſelf,* Reader, *whether there be any gracious Principle planted in thy Soul, whereby thou art alive indeed unto God. It was an ancient abuſe of the* Sacrament, *(condemn'd and caſt out by the* Carthaginian *Council) to give it unto dead Men. Dead Souls can have no Communion with the living God, no more benefit from this Table, than the* Emperor's *Gueſts had from his Table, where Loaves of Gold were ſet before them to eat. There is more than a ſhew of Grace in the Sacrament; it hath not only the Viſible Sign, but the Spiritual Grace alſo, which it repreſents. See that there be more than a Shew and Viſible Sign of Grace alſo in thy Soul, when thou comeſt nigh to the Lord in that Ordinance. See to the exerciſe and activity, as well as to the truth and ſincerity of thy* Grace. *Even a Believer himſelf doth not eat and drink worthily, unleſs the Grace that is in him be excited and exercis'd as this Ordinance.*

Counſil. Carthag. Can. 6. *Placuit defunctorum corporibus non detur Euchariſtia*, &c.

*It is not Faith inhering, but Faith realizing, applying and powerfully working. It is not a diſpoſition to humiliation of the Heart for Sin, but the actual thaw-*

*ing and melting of the Heart for Sin,* whilſt thou lookeſt on him whom thou haſt pierced, and mourneſt for him as one that mourneth for his only Son, for his firſt born. *Nor is it a diſpoſition or principle of love to Chriſt that is only requir'd, but the ſtirring up of that Fire of love, the exciting of it into a vehement flame.*

*I know the Excitations and Exerciſes of Grace are attended with great difficulties. They are not things within our command, and at our beck. O! 'tis hard, 'tis hard indeed* Reader, *even after God hath taken the Heart of Stone out of thee, and given thee an Heart of Fleſh, to mourn actually for Sin, even when ſo great an occaſion and call is given thee to that work at the Lord's Table; for the ſame power is requiſite to excite the act that was required to plant the Habit.* Gratia gratiam poſtulat.

*However, the Duty is thine, though the Power be Gods; why elſe are his People blamed, becauſe they ſtirred not up themſelves to take hold of him?* Iſa. 64. 7.

*To aſſiſt thee in this work, ſome help is offered in the following Meditations: 'Tis true, it is not the reading of the beſt Meditations another can prepare for thee that will alter the temper of thy Heart, except the Spirit of God concur with theſe Truths, and bleſs them to thy Soul; but yet theſe Helps muſt not be ſlighted, becauſe they are not ſelf ſufficient. Man lives not by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God; yet it were fond Vanity and Sin for any Man upon that ground to caſt away Bread, and expect to live by a Miracle without it; we muſt lift up our Hearts to God for a Bleſſing, and then eat; do the ſame here, firſt pray, then read, and the Lord quicken thee by it for Duty. There are two things of ſpecial concernment to the Reader, when thou art to addreſs thy ſelf to any ſolemn Duty, eſpecially ſuch as this,*

1. *Prepare for thy Duty diligently.*
2. *Rely not upon thy Preparations.*

1. *Prepare with all diligence for thy Duty; take pains with thy dull Heart; cleanſe thy polluted Heart, compoſe thy vain Heart; remember how great a preſence thou art approaching. If* Auguſtus *thus reproved one that entertain'd him without ſuitable preparation, ſaying,* I did not think we had been ſo familiar; *Much more may thy God reprove thee for thy careleſs neglect of due Preparation for him.*

Non putabam me tibi tam familiarem.

2. *But yet take heed, on the other ſide, that thou rely not upon thy beſt Preparations. It is an ingenious and true Note of* Luther, *ſpeaking to this very point of Preparation for the* Sacrament, '*Never are Men more unfit, than when they think themſelves moſt fit, and beſt prepared for their Duty; never more fit, than when moſt humbled and aſhamed in a ſenſe of their own unfitneſs.*'

Tunc peſſime diſpoſitus quando aptiſſime.

*That the Bleſſing of God, and the Breathings of his good Spirit, may accompany theſe poor Labours to thy Soul, is the Hearts deſire of*

Thy Servant in Chriſt,

*JOHN FLAVEL.*

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# The Firſt MEDITATION,

## UPON

## PSAL. LXXXIX. 7.

*God is greatly to be feared in the Aſſembly of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are about him.*

THERE are ſpecial Seaſons wherein the Saints approach near unto God in this Life, wherein the Lord comes near unto them.

It pleaſeth the Majeſty of Heaven ſometimes to admit poor Worms of the Earth to ſuch ſenſible and ſweet perceptions of himſelf, as are found above all expreſſion, and ſeem to be a tranſient glance upon that Glory which glorified Eyes more ſteadily behold above: *Believing, we rejoyce with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory, or glorified joy*; as it is, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. And yet how ſweet and excellent ſoever theſe foretaſts of Heaven are, Heaven it ſelf will be an unſpeakable ſurpriſe to the Saints when they ſhall come thither.

*Innerrabili, & glorificato.* Montanus.

Now among all thoſe Ordinances wherein the bleſſed God manifeſts himſelf to the Children of Men, none are found to ſet forth more of the Joy of his Preſence than that of the *Lord's Supper*: At that bleſſed Table are ſuch ſenſible Embraces betwixt Chriſt and Believers, as do afford Delight and Solace beyond the Joy of the whole Earth.

And where ſuch ſpecial manifeſtations of God are, ſuitable diſpoſitions and preparations ſhould be found on our part to meet the Lord.

And certainly we ſhall find reaſon enough for it, if we will conſider the importance of this Scripture before us; *God is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.* Wherein we have, 1. the Object; 2. the Subject; 3. the Mode of Divine Worſhip.

*Firſt*, The Object of Worſhip, God: God is to be fear'd; in all Divine Worſhip, Men and Angels have to do with God: *All things* (ſaith the Apoſtle)

Apoſtle) *are open and naked to the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, Heb. 4. 13. *with whom we have ſpeech or buſineſs.* So it may be ſenſed: when we worſhip, we draw nigh to God, and that about the greateſt concerns and weightieſt buſineſs in the World.

*Secondly*, The Subject, or the Perſons that approach unto God in his Worſhip, *his Saints, and all that are about him.* By *Saints* many Interpreters do in this place underſtand the *Angels*, call'd *Saints* from the Purity and Holineſs of their Nature, and ſo make the next clauſe exegetical of this. Thoſe that before were call'd Saints in reſpect of their *Nature*, are in the next words ſaid to be ſuch as are round about him; his *Satellites*, Attendants, or thoſe that ſtand as Servants about him, to do his pleaſure, where they are deſcrib'd by their Office; both theſe ſeem to be grounded upon the precedent Verſes: *Who in the Heaven can be compared to the Lord? Who among the Sons of the mighty* (or of God, ſo the Angels are call'd, *Job* 1. 6.) *can be likened to the Lord?* And tho' it be true, that the Angels worſhip and ſerve the Lord with the greateſt Reverence and Dread, (for theſe are his *nigh ones*, or ſuch as are round about him) yet there is no neceſſity to limit this Scripture ſo narrowly, by excluding the People of God on Earth; they alſo are his Saints, and more frequently ſo ſtiled, tho' they be Saints of a lower Claſs and Order; and they alſo are round about him as well as the *Angels*, and when they worſhip him, he is in the midſt of them, St. *Matth.* 18. 20. and the place where they aſſemble to worſhip is call'd the place of his Feet, *Iſa.* 60. 13. But if we find not the Saints on Earth in the direct and immediate ſenſe of this Text, yet we muſt needs meet them in the rebound and conſequence: for if Creatures ſo much above us as the Angels, do perform their Service, and pay their Homage to the higheſt Majeſty with ſo much fear and reverence, ſhall not inferiour Creatures, the poor Worms of the Earth, tremble at his preſence? And this brings us to the third thing, namely,

*Thirdly*, The Mode or Manner in which the Worſhip of God is to be perform'd, *viz.* with great fear and reverence, *God is greatly to be feared.* *Piſcator* tranſlates it, *Vehementer formidandus*, to be vehemently fear'd; and oppoſes it to that formal, careleſs, trifling, vain Spirit, which too often is found in thoſe that approach the Lord in the Duties of his Worſhip. The Obſervation hence will be this:

Obſ. *That the greateſt compoſedneſs and ſeriouſneſs of Spirit is due to God, from all thoſe that draw nigh unto him in his Worſhip.*

And this is no more than what the Lord expreſly requires at our hands, *Lev.* 10. 3. *I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh unto me:* So *Heb.* 12. 28. *Let us have grace, whereby we may ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a conſuming Fire.*

And as this diſpoſition and temper of ſpirit is due to every act and part of God's Worſhip, ſo (to accommodate this general to our particular occaſion) it is eſpecially due to this great and ſolemn Ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

It is the Obſervation of the *Caſuiſts*, that *Sacramentum & mortis articulus æquiparantur*; The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the very point of Death, require equal ſeriouſneſs. A Man's Spirit ſhould be as deeply ſolemn and compos'd at the Lord's Table, as upon a Death-bed: We ſhould go to that Ordinance, as if we were then going into another World.

The Primitive Chriſtians us'd to ſit up whole Nights in Meditation and Prayer, before their participation of the Lord's Supper; and theſe Nights were call'd *Vigiliæ*, their *Watches.* Such was the Reverence the Saints had for this Ordinance (which they uſually call'd *Myſterium tremendum*, a tremendous Myſtery) that they would not give Sleep to their Eyes, or Slumber to their Eye-lids, when ſo great and ſolemn a Day drew near. *Chryſoſt. lib.* 3. *de Sacerdot.*

And that all this ſolemn Preparation is no more than needs will convincingly appear to us upon the following Grounds and Reaſons.

*Reaſon* 1. From the ſolemn Nature and Ends of this Ordinance; for what is the expreſs deſign and uſe of it, but a lively repreſentation of the Lord's Death? 1 *Cor.* 11. 26. *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come.* Jeſus Chriſt is therein ſet forth crucified before us, and not to make a bare repreſentation of it to us, as a thing wherein we have no perſonal intereſt or concernment, but to repreſent his Death *lively*, and ſeal our Title to it *firmly*; *This is my body, which is broken for you*, ver. 24.

Now, which of theſe is to be attended with a dead, careleſs and ſlight Spirit? Is't the repreſentation of Chriſt's Death? God forbid. O! if there be any Subject of Meditation in the World able to drink up the very Spirit of a Man, this is it.

The Sun fainted, the Heavens mourn'd in black, the very Rocks rent in pieces when this Tragedy was acted, and ſhall our Hearts be more ſenſleſs and obdurate than they at the repreſentation of it? But lo, here is more than a Repreſentation; *Chriſt* is ſet forth in this Ordinance as crucified for you, as ſuffering and enduring all this in your room and ſtead. Now

Suppoſe, Reader, thy ſelf to be juſtly condemn'd to the torture of the *Rack* or *Strappado*; and that thy Father, Brother, or deareſt Friend preferring thy Life to his own, would become *Ranſomer*, by undergoing the Torment for thee, and all that is left for thee to ſuffer were only by way of ſimpathy with him. Suppoſe now thy ſelf ſtanding by that Engine of Torture, and beholding the Members of thy dear Friend diſtorted, and all out of joint, hearing his doleful Groans extorted by the extremity of Anguiſh, and under all theſe Torments ſtill maintaining a conſtant Love to thee; couldſt thou ſtand there with dry Eyes? Could thy Heart be unaffected and ſtupid at ſuch a ſight? Write him rather a Beaſt, a Stone, than a Man, that could do ſo.

But this is not all: The Believer's Intereſt in Chriſt is ſeal'd, as well as the Sufferings of Chriſt repreſented in this Ordinance.

And is a ſeal'd Intereſt in Chriſt ſo cheap or common a thing, as that it ſhould not engage, yea, ſwallow up all the powers of thy Soul? O, what is this! what is this!

The Seal of God ſet to the Soul of a poor Sinner, to confirm and ratifie its Title to the Perſon of Chriſt, and the ineſtimable Treaſures of his Blood! Surely, as the ſealing up of a Man to Damnation is the ſum of all Miſery, and that poor Creature that is ſo ſeal'd hath cauſe enough to mourn and wail to Eternity, ſo the ſealing up of a Soul to Salvation is the ſum of all Mercy and Happineſs, and the Soul that is ſo ſeal'd hath cauſe enough to lie at the Feet of God, overwhelm'd with the ſenſe of ſo invaluable a Mercy.

*Reaſon* 2. As the Nature and Ends of this Ordinance call for the greateſt compoſedneſs of Spirit, ſo the danger of unworthy receiving ſhould work our Hearts to the moſt ſerious frame; for if a man be here without his Wedding-garment, if he eat and drink unworthily, it is at the greateſt peril of his Soul that he doth ſo; 1 *Cor.* 11. 37. *Wherefore whoſoever ſhall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.*

To prophane and undervalue that Body and Blood of the Lord, is a Sin above meaſure ſinful, and the Puniſhments of ſuch Sins will be moſt dreadful; for ſtill the more excellent the Bleſſings are that come by any Ordinance, the more dreadful the Curſes are that avenge the abuſe of ſuch Mercies. How ſoon may a man draw fearful Guilt upon his Body, by an heedleſs management of ſuch ſacred Myſteries! *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep,* Ver. 30.

Mr. *Tho. Goodwin's* Epiſtle to Mr. *Fenner's* Sermons.

It is a moſt weighty Note that a worthy Pen ſets upon this Scripture; 'They diſcern'd not the Body of his Son Jeſus Chriſt in his Ordinances, but inſtead of that holy, reverend, and deep-dy'd behaviour which was due to it, both from their inner and outward man, as being a Creature of the higheſt and deepeſt Sanctification that ever God ſanctified; ſanctified not only to a more excellent and glorious Condition, but alſo to many Ends and Purpoſes of far higher and dearer concernment, both for the glory of God, and benefit of men themſelves, than all other Creatures whatſoever, whether in Heaven or Earth: They handl'd and dealt by it in both kinds as if it had been a common unſanctified thing: Thus they diſcern'd not the Lord's Body.

And as they diſcern'd not his Body, ſo neither did God (in ſome ſenſe) diſcern theirs, but in thoſe ſore Strokes and heavy Judgments which he inflicted on them, had no other regard or conſideration, than as if they had been the Bodies of his Enemies, the Bodies of wicked and ſinful Men; thus drawing the Model and Platform of their Puniſhment (as uſually he doth) from the ſtructure and proportion of their Sin.

Thus the Juſt and Righteous God builds up the Breaches that we make upon the Honour belonging to the Body of his Son, with the ruins of that Honour which he had given unto ours, in Health, Strength, Life, and many other outward comforts and ſupports.

O then what need is there of a moſt awful and compos'd Spirit, when we approach the Lord in this Ordinance?

*Reaſon* 3. As the danger of unworthy receiving ſhould compoſe us to the greateſt Seriouſneſs, ſo the remembrance of that frame and temper Chriſt's Spirit was in when he actually ſuffer'd thoſe things for us, ſhould compoſe our Spirits into a frame more ſuitable and agreeable to his: When we ſee his Death, as it were, acted over again before our Eyes, was his Heart roving and wandering in that day? Did he not with Senſe and Mind the work he was going about? Was his Heart, like thine, ſtupid and unaffected with theſe things? Look but upon that Text, *Luke* 22. 44. and you ſhall ſee whether it were ſo or no. It's ſaid, (when this Tragedy drew nigh, and his Enemies were ready to ſeize him in the Garden) *That being in an agony, he prayed more earneſtly, and his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground:* And *Mat.* 26. 38. he ſaith, *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death.* His Soul was full of ſorrow, and is thine full of ſtupidity? God forbid.

If thy Heart be cold, Chriſt's was hot: if thou canſt not ſhed a Tear, he poured out clods of Blood from every part. Oh, how unſuitable is a dry Eye and hard Heart to ſuch an Ordinance as this!

*Reaſon* 4. As the frame Chriſt's Spirit was in at his Death ſhould command the moſt ſolemn frame upon our Spirits, at the recognizing of it, ſo the things here repreſented require and call for the higheſt exerciſe of every Grace of the Spirit in our Souls; for we come not thither as idle *Spectators*, but as active *Inſtruments*, to glorifie God by exerciſing every Grace upon Chriſt, as crucified for us. Behold, here are among the reſt,

1. The proper Object of Faith.
2. The flowing Spring of Repentance.
3. The powerful Attractive of Love.

*Firſt*, The *proper Object of Faith* is here. This Ordinance, as a Glaſs, repreſents to thine Eye that glorious Perſon whom the Father ſaid, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, Mat. 17. 5. of whom he ſaid, *I have laid help upon one that is mighty.* This was he that *was made ſin for us, who had no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. who trod the Winepreſs alone, and is here to be ſeen in his red Garments: Every drop of his precious Blood hath a Tongue calling for Faith to behold it, pour'd forth as a Sacrifice to God for Sin. *This* (ſaith he) *is the Cup of the New Teſtament in my blood, which was ſhed for many, for the remiſſion of ſins.*

And what footing could thy Faith find for Pardon and Salvation any where elſe? 'Tis Chriſt crucified that Faith claſps, as the laſt and only hope and refuge of a poor Sinner; here all Believers drop Anchor. This is that bleſſed Object on whom they take the dead gripe or laſt graſp, when their Eye-ſtrings and Heart-ſtrings are breaking. When you ſee the Blood of Chriſt flowing forth, how can Faith be ſilent in thy Soul? When he bids thee, as it were, to put thy Finger into his ſide, ſhews thee his Hands and his Feet there, it will cry out in thy Soul, *My Lord, and my God.*

*Secondly*, The *flowing Spring of Repentance* is here. If there be any Fire that can melt, or Hammer that can break a hard Heart, here it is, *Zech.* 12. 10. *They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn.* Nothing lays a gracious Soul lower in it ſelf, than to ſee how low Chriſt was laid in his Humiliation for it.

Here the evil of Sin is alſo repreſented in the cleareſt Glaſs that ever the Eye of Man ſaw it in. The Sufferings of the Son of God, diſcover the evil of Sin more than the everlaſting Torments of the Damned can do. So that if there be but one Drop of ſpiritual Sorrow in the Heart of a Chriſtian, here, methinks, it ſhould be ſeen dropping from the Eye of Faith.

*Thirdly,* The moſt attractive Object of Love is here: Put all created Beauties, Excellencies, and Perfections together, and what are they but blackneſs and deformity, compared with the lovely Jeſus? *My Beloved* (ſaith the enamour'd Spouſe) *is white and ruddy,* Cant. 5. 10. Behold him at the Table in his perfect Innocency, and unparallell'd Sufferings. This is he *who was rich, but for our ſakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich,* 2 Cor. 8. 9. This is he that parted with his Honour in his Inclinations, that he might be capable to part with his Life for our Redemption.

Behold here the degrees of his Sufferings, and by them meaſure the degrees of his Love. Behold in his Death, as in the Deluge, all the Fountains beneath, and the Windows of Heaven above opened; the Wrath of God, the Cruelty of Men, the Fury of Hell, breaking in together upon him: And how can this be repreſented, and thy Soul not aſtoniſhed at this amazing matchleſs Love of Chriſt? Surely one Flame doth not more naturally produce another, than the Love of Chriſt thus repreſented to a gracious Soul, doth produce Love to Chriſt, and that in the moſt intenſe degree.

*Uſe* 1. How naturally doth this Doctrine ſhame and humble the beſt Hearts for their ſinful Diſcompoſures, Vanity and Deadneſs? For the Roving and Wanderings of their Hearts, even when they come near the Lord in ſuch a ſolemn Ordinance as this is?

The holieſt Man upon Earth, may lay his Hand upon his Breaſt, and ſay, Lord, how unſuitable is this Heart of mine, to ſuch an Object of Faith as is here preſented to me? Doth ſuch a Temper of Spirit ſuit thine awful Preſence? Should the repreſented Agonies and Sufferings of Chriſt for me, be beheld with a Spirit no more concerned, pierced, and wounded for Sin? O how can I look upon him whom I have pierced, and not mourn, and be in bitterneſs for him as for an only Son, a Firſt-born! O the ſtupifying and benumbing power of Sin! O the efficacy of Unbelief!

It was charged upon the *Iſraelites,* as the great aggravation of their Sin, that they *provoked God at the Sea, even at the Red Sea,* Pſal. 106. 7. The place where their miraculous Salvation was wrought. But Lord Jeſus, my hard Heart provokes thee in an higher degree, even at the Red Sea of thy precious invaluable Blood, by which my eternal Salvation was wrought. O my God, what a Heart have I! Did the Blood of Chriſt run out ſo freely and abundantly for me, and cannot I ſhed one Tear for my Sins that pierced him? O let me never be Friends with my own Heart, 'till it love Chriſt better, and hate Sin more.

*Uſe* 2. This Scripture hath alſo an awakening Voice to all that come nigh to God in any of his Ordinances, eſpecially in this Ordinance. O Chriſtians! bethink your ſelves where you are, and what you are doing: Know you not that the King comes in to ſee the Gueſts? Yea, you do know, that God is in this place; an awful Majeſty beholds you. *All the Churches ſhall know, that I am he that ſearcheth the Heart and the Reins, and will give to every one as his Work ſhall be,* Rev. 2. 23.

Thy Buſineſs, Chriſtian, is not with Men, but with God, and the ſolemneſt Buſineſs that ever thy Thoughts were converſant about. Thou art here to recognize the Sufferings of thy Redeemer, to take the Seals and Pledges of thy Salvation from the hand of his Spirit; imagine the ſame thing which is now to be done ſpiritually, and by the Miniſtry of Faith, were but to be performed viſibly and audibly by the Miniſtry of thy Senſes.

Suppoſe Jeſus Chriſt did perſonally ſhew himſelf at this Table, and were pleas'd to make himſelf known in breaking of Bread, as once he did to the Diſciples. Suppoſe thou ſaweſt him appear in Heaven, *as a Lamb that had been ſlain:* Imagine thou heardeſt him ſay, Believer, this precious Blood of mine was ſhed for thee; there be Millions of Men and Women in the World naturally as good as thee, that ſhall have no Intereſt in it, or Benefit by it: But for thee it was ſhed for the Remiſſion of thy Sins, and it hath made full Satisfaction to God for them all: Thy Sins which are many, are therefore forgiven thee; my Blood hath purchaſed the eternal Inheritance of Glory for thee, and this Day I am come to deliver the Seals and Pledges thereof into thine hand, Take then the Seals of eternal Salvation this Day; Take then thine own Chriſt with all that he is, and hath, in thine Arms: Whatever I have ſuffered, done, or procured for any of my Saints, I have ſuffered, done, and procured the ſame for thee. Why, all this is here to be done as really and truly, tho' in a more ſpiritual way, at this Table; and ſhall not ſuch Buſineſs as this is fully fix and engage thy Heart? What then ſhall do it.

Awake Faith; awake Repentance; awake Love; yea, let all the Powers of my Soul be throughly awakened this Day to attend the Lord.

The

# The Second MEDITATION,

## UPON

## Jeremy 12. 2. *Thou art near in their Mouth, and far from their Reins.*

THIS Scripture gives us the Character and Deſcription of an Hypocrite; and he is here deſcribed two ways, *viz.*

1. By what he hath.
2. By what he hath not.

*Firſt*, The Hypocrite is deſcribed by what he hath, he hath God in his Mouth: *Thou art near in their Mouth*, (*i. e.*) they profeſs with a full Mouth, that they are thy People, ſaith *Piſcat*; or they ſpeak much about the Law (as another ſenſes it) God and his Temple, Religion with its Rites are much talked of among them; they have him in their Prayers and Duties; and this is all that the Hypocrite hath of God. Religion only ſanctifies his Tongue, that ſeems to be dedicated to God, but it penetrates no farther, and therefore,

*Secondly*, He is deſcribed by that he hath not, or by what he wants: *And*, or *but thou art fat from their Reins*, (*i. e.*) they feel not the Power and Influences of that Name which they ſo often invocate and talk of, going down to their very Reins, and affecting their very Hearts; ſo we muſt underſtand this Metaphorical Expreſſion here, as the oppoſition directs: For the Reins, having ſo great and ſenſible a Sympathy with the Heart, which is the Seat of the Affections and Paſſions, upon that account it is uſual in Scripture, to put the Reins for thoſe intimate and ſecret Affections, Thoughts, and Paſſions of the Heart, with which they have ſo near Cognation, and ſo ſenſible a Sympathy. When the Heart is under great Conſternation, the Loins or Reins are ſeiz'd alſo, as *Dan.* 5. 6. Then the *King's Countenance was changed, and his Thoughts troubled him, and the Joints of his Loins were looſed.* On the contrary, when the Heart is fill'd with Delight and Gladneſs, the Reins are ſaid to rejoyce, *Prov.* 23. 16. *Yea, my Reins ſhall rejoice, when thy Lips ſpeak right things*, Totus lætitia diſſiliam. I ſhall even leap for Joy. So then, when the Prophet ſaith, God is far from the Reins of the Hypocrite; the meaning is, he feels not the Heart-affecting Influence and Power of Religion upon his Heart and Affections, as God's People do. And hence the Note will be.

Doct. *That God comes nearer to the Hearts and Reins of his People in their Duties, than he doth to any hypocritical, or formal Profeſſor.*

By God's nearneſs, we underſtand not his Omnipreſence, that neither comes nor goes; nor his *Love to his* People, that abides but the ſenſible ſweet Manifeſtations and Ourlets of it to their Souls. So in *Pſal.* 145. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, and unto all that call upon him in truth.*

Note the Reſtriction and Limitation of this glorious Priviledge; 'tis the peculiar Enjoyment of ſincere and upright-hearted Worſhippers. Others may have Communion with Duties, but not with God in them.

But that God comes nigh, very nigh, to upright Hearts in their Duties, is a truth as ſenſibly manifeſt to Spiritual Perſons, as that they are nigh the Fire, when they feel the comfortable heat of it refreſhing them in a cold Seaſon, when they are almoſt ſtarved and benumbed with Cold. Three things make this evident.

*Firſt*, Sincere Souls are ſenſible of God's Acceſſes to them in their Duties, they feel his Approaches to their Spirits. *Lam.* 3. 57. *Thou dreweſt near in the day that I called upon thee; thou ſaidſt, Fear not.* And what a Surprize was that to the Church? *Cant.* 2. 8. *It is the Voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh*, &c. Certainly there is a felt Preſence of God, which no Words can make another to underſtand; they feel that Fountain flowing abundantly into the dry Pits, the Heart fills apace, the empty Thoughts ſwell with a fulneſs of Spiritual Things which ſtrive for vent.

*Secondly*, They are ſenſible of God's Receſſes, and Withdrawments from their Spirits, they feel how the Ebb follows the Flood, and how the Waters abate. So you find it in *Cant.* 5. 6. *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone, my Soul failed when he ſpake: I ſought him, but I could not find him; I called, but he gave me no Anſwer.* The Hebrew is very pathetical; *He was gone, he was gone.* A ſad change of the Frame of her Heart quickly followed.

*Thirdly*, The Lord's nearneſs to the Hearts and Reins of his People in their Duties, is evident to them from the Effects that it leaves upon their Spirits. For look, as it is with the Earth and Plants, with reſpect to the approach or remove of the Sun, in the *Spring* and *Autumn*: So it here as Chriſt ſpeaks, *Luke* 21. 29. *When ye ſee the Fig-tree, and all the Trees ſhoot forth, we know that Summer is nigh at hand.* An approaching Sun renews the Face of the Earth, and makes Nature ſmile. The Trees bud and bloſſom, the Fiſhes riſe, the Birds ſing; it's a kind of Reſurrection to Nature from the Dead. So is it when the Lord comes near the Hearts and Reins of Men in Duty: For then they find that.

*Firſt*, A real Taſte of the Joy of the Lord is here given to Men, the Fulneſs whereof is in Heaven; hence call'd, 2 *Cor.* 1. 22. *The earneſt of his Spirit.* And 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Glorified Joy*; or a ſhort Salvation. O what is this! What is this! Certainly it is ſomething that hath no Affinity with Fleſh, or groſs Corporeal Pleaſures; but is of another Nature, ſomething which tranſcends all that ever was felt or taſted in this World, ſince we were firſt converſant among ſenſible Objects.

Dr. Preſton when dying ſaid, *I ſhall change my Place, not my Company.*

*Secondly*, A mighty ſtrength and power coming into their Souls, and actuating all its Faculties and Graces. When God comes near, new Powers enter the Soul; the feeble is as *David*, Pſal. 138. 3. *In the day that I cried, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedeſt me with ſtrength in my Soul.* Cant. 1. 12. *Whilſt the King ſitteth at his Table, my Spikenard*, &c. Hope was now, and Faith was weak, little ſtrength in any Grace, except Deſires; but when the Lord comes, ſtrength comes with him. Then as it is, *Neh.* 8. 10. *The Joy of the Lord is your ſtrength.* O the vigorous Sallies of the Heart to God! Pſal. 63. 8. *O the ſtrength of Love*, Cant. 8. 6. Duties are other manner of things than they were wont to be. *Did not our Hearts burn within us*, Luke 24. 32.

*Thirdly*, A remarkable Transformation and Change of Spirit follows it.

Theſe things are found to be marvellouſly aſſimilating. The ſights of God, the felt preſence of God, is as Fire, which quickly aſſimilates what is put into it to its own likeneſs. So 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. They are ſaid to be *changed from Glory to Glory.* It always leaves the Mind more refined and abſtracted from groſs material things, and changed into the ſame Image. They have a Similitude of God upon them, who have God near unto their Hearts and Reins.

*Fourthly*, A vigorous working of the Heart Heaven-ward; a mounting of the Soul upwards. Now the Soul ſhews that it hath not forgot its way home again. It is with ſuch a Soul as ſenſibly embraces Chriſt in the Arms of Faith, as it was with *Simeon*, when he took him Bodily into his Arms. *Now* (ſaith he) *let thy Servant depart in peace, for mine Eyes have ſeen thy Salvation.* O! it would have the Wings of a Dove, to fly away from this polluted World, this unquiet World, and be at reſt.

1. Infer. *Then certainly there is an Heaven, and a State of Glory for the Saints.* Heaven is no Dream or Viſion. It is ſenſibly taſted and felt by Thouſands of Witneſſes in this World; they are ſure it is no miſtake. God is with them of a truth, in the way of their Duties They do not only read of a glorified Eye, but they have ſomething of it, or like it in this World. *The pure in heart do here ſee God*, Mat. 5. 8. The Saints have not only a Witneſs without them in the Word, that there is a State of Glory prepared for Believers, but they have a Witneſs in themſelves. Theſe are not the Teſtimonies of craz'd Brains, but of the wiſeſt and moſt ſerious of Men; not conjecturally delivered, but upon taſte, feeling, and trial. O bleſſed be God for ſuch ſenſible Confirmations, ſuch ſweet Prælibations.

2. *Infer.* But, O, what is Heaven! And what that State of Glory reſerved for the Saints! Doth a Glimps of God's Preſence in a Duty, go down to the Heart and Reins? O how unutterable then muſt that be which is ſeen and felt above, where God comes as near to Men as can be? *Rev.* 22. 3, 4. *The Throne of God and the Lamb ſhall be in it, and his Servants ſhall ſerve him; and they ſhall ſee his Face.* And 1 *Theſ.* 4. 17. *And ſo ſhall we be ever with the Lord.* O, what is that! *Ever with the Lord?* Chriſtians, what you feel and taſte here by Faith, is part of Heaven's Glory; but yet Heaven will be an unſpeakable Surprizal to you, when you come thither for all that: *It doth not yet appear what we ſhall be*, 1 John 3. 1, 2.

3. *Infer.* See hence the neceſſity of caſting theſe very Bodies into a new Mold by their Reſurrection from the Dead, according to that, 1 *Cor.* 15. 41. *It is ſown in weakneſs, but raiſed in power.* How elſe could it be a Co-partner with the Soul in the ineffable Joys of that Preſence above?

Certainly, my Friends, that which is to be a Veſſel to contain ſuch ſtrong Liquor as this, had need be ſtrongly hooped, leſt it flies to pieces, as old Bottles do when fill'd with new Wine. The State of this Mortality cannot bear the fulneſs of that Joy. Hold, Lord, ſtay thy Hand (ſaid a choice Chriſtian once), thy Creature is but a Clay-Veſſel, and can hold no more. If a tranſient Glimps of God here, be felt in the very Reins, if it ſo work upon the very Body by Simpathy with the Soul, O what vigorous Spiritual Bodies, doth the State of Glory require! And ſuch they ſhall be, *Phil.* 3. 21. *Like unto Chriſt's glorious Body.*

4. *Infer.* Is God ſo near to his People above all others in the World? How good is it to be near them that are ſo near to God? O, it would do a Man's Heart good to be near that Perſon who hath lately had God near to his Soul. Well might *David* ſay, *Pſal.* 16. 3. *All my delight is in the excellent of the Earth.* And again, *Pſalm* 119. 63. *I am a Companion of all ſuch as fear thee.* O, this is the Glory of that Society; not the communication of their Gifts, but the ſavour of God on their Spirits. If any thing be alluring in this World, this is, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. *That ye may have fellowſhip with us, and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Chriſt Jeſus.* It's ſaid, *Zech.* 8. 23. of the Jews, the time ſhall come, when there ſhall be ſuch a Preſence of God among that People, that *ten Men out of all Languages ſhall take hold of the Skirts of him that is a Jew; ſaying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.*

Chriſtians, if there were more of God upon you, and in you, others would not be tempted to leave your Society, and fall in with the Men of the World; they would ſay, we will go with you, for God is with you.

5. *Infer.* If God be ſo near to the Heart and Reins of his People in their Duties, O, how aſſiduous ſhould they be in their Duties? *It's good for me to draw nigh to God*, Pſalm 73. 28. Good indeed; the World cannot reward the expence of time at this rate, with all its Glory, *James* 4. 8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you: Thou meeteſt him that rejoiceth and worketh Righteouſneſs; thoſe that remember thee in thy ways*, Iſai. 64. 5.

*Obj.* It would be an Encouragement indeed, if I might thus meet God in the way of Duty, but that's but ſeldom I can ſo meet God there, in ſenſible powerful Outlets of his Grace and Love. I am moſt dead and cold there. I feel not Communion with God, going down to my Heart and Reins.

*Sol.* Firſt, you draw nigh to God; but is it in truth, or in meer formality? God is only nigh to ſuch as call in truth upon him, *Pſalm* 145. 18.

Secondly, If your Hearts be ſincere, yet are they not ſluggiſh? Do you ſtir up your ſelves to take hold of God? Many there be that do not, *Iſa.* 64. 7. and *Cant.* 5. 3, 5.

Thirdly, Have you not grieved the Spirit of God, and cauſed him to withdraw from you, O remember what Pride and Vanity hath been in you after former manifeſtations, *Eph.* 4. 33.

Fourthly, Nevertheleſs wait for God in his ways; his coming upon our Souls is oftentimes, yea, moſtly, a ſurprizal to us, *Cant.* 6. 12. *Or ever I was aware, my Soul made me as the Chariots of Aminadab.*

6. *Infer.* What ſteddy Chriſtians ſhould all real Chriſtians be? For lo, what a Seal and Witneſs hath Religion in the Breaſt of every ſincere Profeſſor of it? True Chriſtians do not only hear by Report, or learn by Books the reality of it, but feel by Experience, and have a ſenſible proof of it in their very Hearts and Reins, their Reins inſtruct them as it is, *Pſal.* 16. 7. They learn by ſpiritual ſenſe and feeling, than which nothing can give greater confirmation in the ways of God.

There are two ſorts of Knowledge among Men, one Traditional, the other Experimental: This laſt, the Apoſtle calls a *knowing in our ſelves*, Heb. 10. 34. and oppoſes it to that Traditional Knowledge which may be ſaid to be without our ſelves, becauſe borrowed from other Men.

Now this experience we have of the Power of Religion in our Souls, is that only which fixes a Man's Spirit in the ways of Godlineſs. It made the Hebrews take joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods; no Arguments or Temptations can wreſt Truth out of the hand of Experience, *Non eſt diſputandum de guſta.* For want of this, many Profeſſors turn aſide from Truth in the Hour of Trial. O, Brethren, labour to feel the Influences of Religion upon your very Hearts and Reins; this will ſettle you better than all Arguments in the World can do: By this the ways of God are more endeared to Men, than by any other way in the World. When your Hearts have once felt it, you will never forſake it.

# The Third MEDITATION,

## UPON

## Rom. 7. 28. *I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.*

THis Chapter is the very Anatomy of a Chriſtians Heart, and gives an Account of the moſt ſecret Frames, and inward Workings of it, both as to Graces and Corruptions; and this Verſe is a Compendium of both; for the Words are a mournful Complaint, uttered with a deep ſence of an inward preſſure, by reaſon of Sin; wherein we are to conſider Three Things:

1. The Perſon complaining.
2. The Matter of Complaint.
3. The Diſcovery of that Matter.

*Firſt*, The Perſon complaining, I find: I *Paul*, tho' I come not behind the chiefeſt of all the Apoſtles, tho' I have been wrapt into the Third Heaven, and heard things unutterable; yet I for all that, find in me a Law. Never was any meer Man more deeply ſanctified; never was any lived at an higher rate of Communion with God; never any did Chriſt more Service in this World; and yet he found a Law of Sin in himſelf.

*Secondly*, The Matter of the Complaint, which conſiſts in a double Evil he groaned under, *viz.* 1. The preſence of Sin at all times. 2. The Operation of Sin, eſpecially at ſome times.

Firſt, The preſence of Sin at all times: *Evil* (ſaith he) *is preſent with me*, it follows me as my Shadow doth. By Evil we muſt underſtand no other Evil but Sin, the Evil of Evils; which in reſpect of Power and Efficacy, he alſo calls a Law, becauſe as Laws by reaſon of their annexed Rewards and Puniſhments, have a mighty power and efficacy upon the Minds of Men; ſo Sin, in dwelling Sin, that Root of all our Trouble and Sorrow, hath a mighty efficacy upon us.

And this is the mournful Matter of his Complaint: 'Tis not for outward Afflictions, tho' he had many; nor for what he ſuffered from the Hands of Men, tho' he ſuffered many grievons things; but 'tis Sin dwelling and working in him, that ſwallows up all other Troubles, as Rivers are loſt in the Sea; this Evil was always with him, the conſtant Reſidence of Sin was in his Heart and Nature.

Secondly, And what further adds to his Burden, as it dwelt in him at all times, ſo it exerted its efficacy more eſpecially at ſome times, and thoſe the ſpecial Times, and principal Seaſons in his whole Life: When I would do good (ſaith he) any ſpiritual good, and among the reſt, when I addreſs my ſelf to any ſpiritual Duty, or heavenly Employment; when I deſign to draw near to God, and promiſe my ſelf Comfort and Redreſs, in Communion with him, then is Evil preſent. O, if I were but rid of it in thoſe Hours, what a Mercy ſhould I eſteem it, tho' I were troubled with it at other times! Could I but enjoy my Freedom from it in the Seaſons of Duty, and Times of Communion with God, what a Comfort would that be? But then is the ſpecial Seaſon of its Operation. Never is Sin more active and buſie, than at ſuch a time; and this, O, this is my Miſery and Burden.

*Cum ad optima quæque contendo, experior aliam legem, tunc maxime inſurgit & præcipitur lex carnis.* Tolletus.

Thirdly, The next thing to be heeded here, is the diſcovery of this Evil to him, over which he ſo mourns and laments. *I find then a Law*, ſaith he, I find it (*i. e.*) by inward Senſe, Feeling, and ſad Experience. He knew there was ſuch a thing as Original Sin in the Natures of Men, when he was an Unregenerated Phariſee; but tho' he had then the notion of it, he had not the ſence and ſeeling of it as now he had; he now feels, what before he traditionally underſtood and talk'd of. *I find a Law*, q. d. what or how others find, I know not: Some may boaſt of their *Gifts*, and ſome may talk more than becomes them of their *Graces*; they may find *Excellencies* in themſelves, and admire themſelves too much for them; but for my part, *I find a Law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent*. I am ſure I find a bad Heart in the beſt ſeaſon, a proud, dead, wandring, hard Heart. I find it wofully out of order, God knows, and this is my miſery. Hence note,

Doct. *That the beſt Chriſtians do ſenſibly feel, and ſadly bewail the workings of their Corruptions, and that in the very ſeaſons and opportunities of their communion with God.*

Bring thy Thoughts, Reader, cloſe to this point, and ſadly ponder theſe three things in it:

Firſt, In what ſpecial acts *Chriſtians* uſe to feel the working of their Corruption in the ſeaſon of their communion.

Secondly, Why is it that Corruption ſtirs and troubles them more at ſuch a time than at others.

Thirdly, Upon what account this is ſo great a burden to every gracious Heart.

Firſt, As to the firſt of theſe, namely, the ſpecial actings of Corruption in the ſeaſons of communion, they are ſuch as have a natural aptitude and deſign to deſtroy all communion betwixt God and the Soul, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit*. It's contrary to the Spirit, and by reaſon of that contrariety, a poor Chriſtian cannot do the things that he would.

How many times have ſome *Chriſtians* lamented this upon their *Knees*, with bleeding *Heart* and weeping *Eyes*? Lord, I came hither to enjoy thee, I hop'd for ſome light, ſtrength, and refreſhment in this Duty. I promis'd my ſelf a good hour, my Heart began to warm and melt in Duty, I was nigh to the expectation and deſire of my Soul, but the unbelief, deadneſs, and vanity of my Heart hath ſeparated betwixt me and my God, and withheld good things from me.

Three things are requiſite to communion with God in Duties:

*Firſt*, Compoſedneſs of Thoughts.

*Secondly*, Activity of Faith.

*Thirdly*, Excitation of Affections. And all theſe are ſenſibly obſtructed by innate Corruption; for by in-dwelling Sin,

*Firſt*, The order of the Soul is diſturb'd by ſending forth multitudes of vain and impertinent Thoughts, to infeſt and diſtract the Soul in its approaches to God: The ſenſe of this evil gave occaſion to that Prayer, *Pſal.* 86. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy name*. How much have we to do with our own Hearts upon this account every day? Abundance of Rules are given to cure this Evil, but the corruption of the Heart makes them all neceſſary.

*Secondly*, The activity of Faith is clogg'd by natural Unbelief: O, what difficulties is every Work of Faith carried through! *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief*, Mark 9. 24. It cramps the hand of Faith in every part of its work; the Soul ſenſibly feels it ſelf bound and fetter'd by its own Unbelief, ſo that it cannot *aſſent* with that fulneſs, clearneſs, and determinateneſs that it would, it cannot *apply* with that ſtrength, certainty and comfort it deſires; and thus are the Wings of Faith pinion'd, that when we ſhould ſoar aloft in the higheſt acts of ſweet communion with God, we can but flutter upon the Earth, and make ſome weak eſſays and offers Heaven-ward, which oft-times are fruſtrated and put by, through the Unbelief that is in us.

*Thirdly*, The excitation of the Affections is rendred difficult, by reaſon of that natural deadneſs and hardneſs that is in the Heart. Alas, it's naturally an Heart of Stone, and as eaſie it is to diſſolve or melt the Rocks into a ſweet Syrup, as the Heart into Spiritual and Heavenly Affections towards God. There is ſcarce any one thing in this World that *Chriſtians* more paſſionately bewail, and are more ſenſibly afflicted for, than the deadneſs and hardneſs of their own Hearts. Nothing is found ſufficient ſometimes to affect and raiſe them; and yet if they be not excited out of their Torpor and Stupidity, they cannot have communion with God in Duties.

Secondly, And if we enquire into the reaſons why poor Chriſtians find themſelves more infeſted by natural Corruption in the ſeaſons of Duty than at other times, the reaſons are obvious to him that conſiders, 1. that Duty irritates it; 2. Satan excites it; 3. God permits it to be ſo.

1. Corruption is irritated by Duty, it's provok'd by that which bridles and purges it: Nothing is found more deſtructive to Sin than Communion with God is, and therefore nothing makes a fiercer oppoſition to all Fellowſhip and Communion betwixt the Soul and its God than Sin doth. As Waters ſwell and rage when they are obſtructed by a Dam, ſo do our Corruptions when obſtructed and check'd by Duty. Sin would fain make Men leave praying, and Prayer would fain make Men leave ſinning.

2. As *Duty* irritates it, ſo *Satan* excites it, eſpecially in ſuch ſeaſons. When *Joſhua* the High-Prieſt ſtood before the Lord, Satan was ſeen ſtanding at his right hand to reſiſt him, *Zech.* 3. 1. How hard is it for a Chriſtian then to be dexterous, apt, and ready for Spiritual Works, whilſt Satan ſtands at his right hand, the working hand, to make reſiſtance!

The Devil is aware that one hour of cloſe, ſpiritual, and hearty converſe with God in Prayer is able to pull down what he hath been contriving and building many a Year. Now this envious Spirit having an eaſie acceſs to the Fancy, that buſie and unruly power of the Soul, will not be wanting to create ſuch Figments and Notions in it as, like a rapid Stream, ſhall carry away the Soul and its thoughts from God in Duty. Oh, what ado have moſt Chriſtians to prevent the Sallies and Excurſions of their Hearts from God at ſuch times!

3. As Satan exerciſes it, ſo the Wiſe and Holy God, for good ends to his People, permits it to be ſo.

This Thorn in the Fleſh keeps them humble; theſe lamented Diſtractions and Corruptions in their Duties deſtroys their dependance upon them. For if we be ſo prone to Pride and Confidence in our Duties, amidſt ſuch ſenſible workings and minglings of Corruption with them, what would we be if they were more pure and excellent? Theſe things alſo make the Saints weary of this

World, and to groan within themſelves after the more perfect ſtate wherein God ſhall be enjoy'd and ſeen in more perfection and ſatisfaction. But,

Thirdly, This in the mean time cannot but be a very grievous affliction and preſſure to the gracious Soul, to be thus clogg'd and infeſted by its own Corruptions in the very ſeaſon of its communion with God. For,

*Firſt*, By this the Soul is render'd very unſuitable to that holy preſence it approaches, *Hab.* 1.13. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look upon iniquity.* Muſt the great and bleſſed God wait upon a poor Worm till it be at leiſure to attend him? Muſt he be forſaken for every trifle that comes in the way of its Fancy? Oh, how provoking an Evil is this! *Surely God heareth not vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it*, Job 35.13. This unſuitableneſs of our Spirits to the Lord cannot do leſs than cover our Faces with Shame; *Ezra* 9. 6. *O my God, I am aſhamed, and even bluſh to look up unto thee.*

*Secondly*, By this thoſe Benefits and Comforts are intercepted, which are better than Life; there is a ſenſible preſence of God; there are manifeſtations of Pardon, Peace and Love; there are reviving influences and freſh anointings of the Spirit, there are a thouſand Mercies of this kind, that in their ſeaſon are communicated to Men in the way of Duty; and would it not grieve a man to the very Heart and Soul, to be defeated of thoſe ineſtimable Treaſures, by the breaking forth of the Unbelief, Pride, or Vanity of his own Heart, when ſuch Mercies are almoſt in his hand? *Your iniquities* (ſaith the Prophet) *have ſeparated betwixt you and your God, and your ſins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear*, Iſa. 59.2. O cruel Covering! O diſmal Cloud! that hides the Face of God from his People, that they cannot behold it. *Wherefore am I come from Geſhur* (ſaith *Abſalom*) *if I may not ſee the King's face?*

What do I here upon my Knees, ſaith a *Chriſtian*, if I may not ſee God? Duties are nothing to me without God; the World and all its comforts are dry and taſteleſs things to me without God; His manifeſted Favour and ſealed Love are the very Life of my Life, and from this the Corruptions of my own Heart have cut me off.

*Thirdly*, By theſe things the beauty and excellency of Duties are defaced. Theſe dead Flys ſpoil that excellent Ointment; for wherein conſiſts the beauty and true excellency of Duties, but in that ſpirituality and heavenly temper of Soul with which they are perform'd? This makes them ſuitable to their Object, *John* 4.24. Take away Spirituality from Duties, and then you may number them among your Sins, and the matters of your ſhame and ſorrow. Take away the Heart from Duty, and what remains but a dead Carcaſs without life or beauty?

*Fourthly*, By theſe things gracious Souls are greatly puzzled and perplexed about their eſtate and condition; this is the Fountain of their fears and doubtings. O, when a man ſees ſuch deadneſs in his Heart towards God, ſuch ſtiffneſs in his Will to the Will of God, ſuch a liſtleſs careleſs temper to all that is ſpiritual, how (thinks he) can this conſiſt with a renew'd ſtate and temper? Sure no Chriſtian is troubled with ſuch an Heart as mine is, eſpecially when it ſhall be found in its ordinary courſe, ſo free, nimble, and indefatigable in its purſuits and entertainments of things ſenſual and earthly. There it is as the Chariots of *Aminadab*, but here, like *Pharaoh*'s Chariots; there it as much needs the *Curb*, as it doth the *Spar* here. *Lord*, ſaith the poor Soul, *I know not what to do: if I do not look into my heart, I cannot be ſincere; and if I do, I can have no comfort.* This is a ſad Perplexity indeed.

*Fifthly*, and Laſtly, By theſe things the Spirit of God is griev'd, and that which grieves him cannot but be a grief and burden to us: His motions are quench'd by theſe Corruptions, his ſanctifying deſigns (as much as lies in us) obſtructed by them, ſurely then there is cauſe enough why a Chriſtian ſhould follow every vain thought with a deep ſigh, and every ſtirring of unbelief with a ſad tear.

The uſefulneſs of this point is great and exceeding ſeaſonable, when we are to draw nigh to God, and addreſs our ſelves to *Spiritual Duties*; it may to great purpoſe be improv'd by ways,

1. Of Information.
2. Direction.
3. Conſolation.

We may greatly improve it for our information in the following particulars.

Hence we may take our meaſures of the wonderful and aſtoniſhing grace and condeſcenſion of God to his People, who notwithſtanding all that Evil which is preſent with them in the good they do, will not reject their *Perſons* or *Duties* for all that.

How doth Free Grace make its own way thro' ſwarms of Vanity! how doth it break thro' all the deadneſs, infidelity and hardneſs of our Hearts to do us good! Though Evil be preſent with us, our gracious God will not be abſent from us notwithſtanding that.

How greatly was the Spouſe amaz'd at the unexpected Condeſcenſion and Grace of Chriſt in this matter? *Cant.* 2. 8. *It is the voice of my beloved, behold, he cometh leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills. It is the voice of my beloved*; That abrupt broken expreſſion ſhews a perfect Surprize: She ſaw Mountains of Guilt and Unworthineſs betwixt Chriſt and her Soul, and yet, behold, he comes ſkipping over all thoſe Mountains and Hills: O free Grace, rich and admirable Grace, which with ſo many *notwithſtandings* and *nevertheleſſes* will ſave and comfort the poor unworthy Soul!

2. How little reaſon have any of us to be proud of our beſt performances! *There is not a juſt man upon earth, that doth good, and ſinneth not*, ſaith *Solomon*, Eccleſ. 7. 20. If there be ſomething ſupernaturally good in our Duties, yet there is abundance of natural evil commixed with that good; the evil is wholly *ours*, the good wholly God's: we have no reaſon then to glory in our beſt Performances.

It hath been a Queſtion with ſome, Whether ſome ſhort tranſient act of a regenerate Soul may not be free from Sin; but it was never queſtion'd, whether any continued act, much leſs a courſe of actions could be without Sin. Evil will be preſent with us in all we do; 'twill be with us in our Cloſets, preſent even in the awful preſence of the holy God, in the moſt high and ſolemn Duties of Religion, in the moſt pure and ſpiritual actions that paſs from us: Ceaſe then, as from Dependance, ſo from Pride and Conceitedneſs in all you do. Whilſt our Natures are ſanctified but in part, and our Principles mixt, our Duties and Performances can never be pure. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one*; Job 14. 4.

3. How are we all oblig'd to bleſs God for *Jeſus the Mediator*, to make us and our ſinful Duties acceptable to God? Sad were our caſe if this High-Prieſt did not *bear the iniquity of our holy things*, as it is *Exod.* 28. 38. 'Tis his Oblation and Interceſſion that *obtains* and *continues* our Pardon for our Prayer-ſins, our hearing ſins, our Sacrament-ſins; theſe alone would eternally damn us, if we had no other, did not Free-grace *make us accepted in the beloved*, Eph. 1. 6. When Evil is preſent with us, then is Chriſt our Advocate preſent with the Father for us; and thence it is that we are not deſtroy'd upon our Knees, and that the Jealouſie of God breaks not forth as Fire, to devour us in our very *Duties*.

4. If Evil be preſent with us, yea, inherent in us, in our beſt *Duties*, what need had *Chriſtians* then to watch againſt the external occaſions of Sin, and to keep a cloſe guard upon their Senſes, eſpecially when they have to do with God?

There's danger enough from within, you need not open another Door from without. This natural Corruption is too active in it ſelf, if there be no irritation by any external occaſion; how much more when the Eye and Ear are open'd and unguarded, and occaſions are offer'd it from without. Watching is half the Work of a Chriſtian, whilſt he is praying, *Eph.* 6. 18. The *Arabian* Proverb is as *inſtructive* as it is *myſtical*, *Shut the Windows, that the Houſe may be light*.

5. If Evil be preſent when we would do Good, if it infeſt us in our *beſt Duties*, then certainly there is no Reſt to be expected for any of God's People in *this* World. Where ſhall we go to be free from Sin? If any where, let us go to our *Cloſets*, to our *Knees*, to the *Ordinances of God*; yea, but even there Evil is and will be preſent with us; if we cannot be free from Evil there, it's vain to expect it elſewhere in this World. Only in Heaven Believers reſt from Sin, when once they are abſent from the Body, and preſent with the Lord. Sin ſhall no more be preſent with them; which ſhould make all that hate Sin long for Heaven, and be *willing to be diſſolved, and be with Chriſt*.

2. For *Direction*. Let all that experimentally ſee and feel what the Apoſtle here mourns over, carefully attend ſuch *Directions*, as may prevent the ſpoil of their *Duties* by the working of their *Corruptions* in them.

Tho' no *Rules* are found ſufficient to prevent wholly the influence of our Corruptions upon *Duties*, yet own it as a Special Mercy, if it may in any meaſure be prevented or reſtrain'd: In order whereunto I ſhall hint briefly theſe following *Rules*, which the Experience of many *Chriſtians* hath recommended, as exceeding uſeful in this caſe.

Rule 1. *Be more diligent in preparation for your Duties, if you would meet with leſs interruption in your Duties.* The very Light of Nature teacheth ſolemn Preparation to all important and weighty buſineſs; And is there more weighty and concerning buſineſs in all the World than that which thou tranſacteſt with God in *Duties*? Angels approach not this God with whom thou haſt to do, without profound Reſpects to his immenſe *Greatneſs* and awful *Holineſs*, *Iſa.* 6. 3. When you ſtretch forth your *Hands*, it is requir'd that you firſt prepare your *Hearts*, *Job* 11. 13.

Rule 2. *Realize the preſence of God in all your Duties, and awe your Hearts all that you are able by that conſideration.* O, think what a piercing holy Eye beholds thy Heart, and trys thy Reins. Wouldſt thou not be really aſham'd, if thy thoughts were but vocal to Men, and the workings and wandrings of thy Heart viſible to thoſe that joyn with thee in the ſame Duty? O, if the Preſence of God were more realiz'd, certainly your Hearts would be better ſecur'd againſt the Incurſions of your *Corruptions*.

Rule 3. *Labour for a deeper meaſure and degree of Sanctification*; many other Rules are but *Spiritual Anodynes*, to give preſent eaſe, but this is the way to a real Cure. A thouſand things may be found helpful to put by a vain Thought for the preſent, but then it returns again, and it may be with more ſtrength: This is the proper method to dry the Spring, when others are but attempts to divert the Stream: If Habits of Grace were more deeply radicated, Acts of Grace would be more eaſie to us, and flow more freely from us.

Rule 4. Laſtly, *Conſider what an aggravation it is to your Evil, to vent it ſelf in the ſpecial preſence of God in his Duties.* See how *Paul* mourns over it in the Text. It is not only a Sin, but an affronting of God to his Face: This grieving of his Spirit is the ſpoil of thy Duty; it is (as one aptly calls it) *obex infernalis*, and helliſh Bar or *Remora* to all ſweet and free intercourſe of the Soul with God.

3. *Conſolation.* But whilſt I am repreſenting the evil of it to ſome, it may be there are others overwhelm'd with the ſorrowful ſenſe of it, even to diſcouragement and deſpondency: Poor *Chriſtian*, is this thy caſe? Are all the Afflictions in the World nothing to thee, in compariſon with this Evil which is preſent with thee when thou wouldſt do good? Well, tho' thou canſt not do the good thou wouldſt, nor free thy ſelf yet from the Evil thou wouldſt, rather than live, be freed from, there are four things that may give much relief to thy penſive Soul.

1. *Tho' the preſence of Evil, even in thy beſt Duties, be ſad, yet thy grief and affliction for it is ſweet.* That is a ſad *Sin*, but this is a ſweet *Sign*. It is not *heart-evils*, *heart-wandrings* in Duties, *hardneſs* and *unbelief* that Hypocrites mourn for, but more *groſs* and *external Evils*. Let this trouble for Sin comfort thee when the preſence of Sin grieves thee.

2. *God accepts through Jeſus Chriſt what you do ſincerely, tho' you can do nothing purely and perfectly*, Cant. 5. 1. Your Sincerity is your Evangelical Perfection; the Evil that is preſent is not imputed; the Good that is preſent is (notwithſtanding that commix'd Evil) accepted, which is ſtrong Conſolation.

3. *You find your Caſe was the Caſe of bleſſed* Paul, *a man of eminent Sanctity.* And if you conſult all the Saints, one by one, you will find them all ſick of this Diſeaſe; ſo that your Caſe is not ſingular.

4. *Your Juſtification is perfect, and without ſpot, tho' your Sanctification be not ſo*; and the time is coming, when your Sanctification ſhall be as your Juſtification is, and after that no more complaints.

# The Fourth MEDITATION,

## UPON

## Epheſians, 1. 13. *In whom alſo, after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with the holy Spirit of Promiſe.*

FROM his Doxology and ſolemn Thankſgiving, *ver.* 3. the Apoſtle enumerates the principal Chriſtian Privileges that gave the occaſion of that Thankſgiving, among which this Text is not the leaſt, tho' laſt nam'd.

In this one Verſe we have the two noble acts of Faith diſplay'd, its direct act call'd *Truſting*, and its *reflex* act, which in order of Nature and Time follows it, and is implied in the word *Sealing*.

In the latter Clauſe (to which I ſhall confine my Meditations) four things muſt be remark'd, *viz.* 1. The *Subject*, 2. *Nature*, 3. *Author*, and 4. *Quality* of Aſſurance.

1. The *Subject* of Aſſurance, which is and can be no other than a Soul that hath clos'd with Chriſt by Faith: reflex acts neceſſarily preſuppoſe direct ones. Never was any Unbeliever ſeal'd, except to Damnation: Aſſurance is peculiarly the Prerogative of Believers.

2. The *Nature* of Aſſurance; he calls it *Sealing*, an apt Metaphor to expreſs the nature of it; for Aſſurance, like a Seal, both confirms, declares and diſtinguiſhes; it confirms the grant of God, declares the purpoſe of God, and diſtinguiſhes the perſon ſo privileg'd from other men.

3. The *Author* of Aſſurance, which is the *Spirit*, he is the Keeper of the Great Seal of Heaven, *Rom* 8. 16.

4. Laſtly, the *Quality* of this Spirit of Aſſurance, or the Sealing Spirit: He ſeals in the quality of an holy Spirit, and of the Spirit of Promiſe, *as an holy Spirit*, relating to his previous ſanctifying work upon the ſealed Soul. *As the Spirit of Promiſe*, reſpecting the *Medium* or *Inſtrument* made uſe of by him in his Sealing Work, for he ſeals by opening and applying the Promiſes to Believers from the Spirit's order. The Note will be this:

Doct. *That the Privilege of Sealing follows the Duty of Believing.*

There is no Seaſon more proper to treat of the Sealing of the Spirit, than at a Sealing Ordinance; nor can I handle the Spirit's Sealing-work in a more profitable method, than in ſatisfying theſe five Queries particularly, and then applying the whole.

1. *What is the Spirit's Sealing, and how perform'd.*
2. *Why none are ſeal'd till they believe.*
3. *Whether all Believers are ſeal'd.*
4. *What is the Privilege of being ſeal'd.*
5. *What are the Effects of the Spirit's ſealing.*

1 Query. *What is the Spirit's Sealing-work? and how is it performed?*

*Anſw.* The Sealing of the Spirit is, his giving a ſure and certain Teſtimony to the reality of that Work of Grace he hath wrought in our Souls, and to our intereſt in Chriſt and the Promiſes, thereby ſatisfying our Fears and Doubts about our eſtate and condition.

Every matter of weight and concernment is to be prov'd by two ſufficient Witneſſes, *Deut.* 19. 15. Our Sincerity and Intereſt in Chriſt are matters of the deepeſt concernment to us in all the World, and therefore need a farther Witneſs to confirm and clear them, than that of our own ſpirits, *Rom.* 8. 16. Three things concur to the Spirit's ſealing-work.

He ſanctifies the Soul; he irradiates and clears that Work of Sanctification; he enables it thereby to apply Promiſes.

The firſt is his *material* or *objective Seal*, the latter his *formal Sealing*. None but the Spirit of God can clear and confirm our Title to Chriſt, for he only ſearcheth the deep things of God, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10. and it's his Office, *Rom.* 8. 16, to witneſs with our Spirits.

This Seal or Witneſs of the Spirit muſt needs be true and certain, becauſe Omniſcience and Truth are his eſſential Properties: He is *Omniſcient*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10. and therefore cannot be deceiv'd himſelf. He is the *Spirit of Truth*, John 14. 17. and therefore cannot deceive us; ſo that his Teſtimony is more infallible and ſatisfactory than a Voice from Heaven, 2 *Pet.* 1. 19.

If an Angel ſhould appear, and tell us, Chriſt had ſaid to him, Go and tell ſuch a man, that I love him, that I ſhed my Blood for him, and will ſave him; it could never give that repoſe and ſatisfaction to the Mind as the internal Witneſs or Seal of the Spirit doth; for that may be a deluſion, but this cannot. The witneſs of our own heart may amount to a ſtrong probability, but the witneſs of the Spirit is demonſtration, 1 *John* 4. 24.

So that as it is the deſign and work of *Satan* to caſt in *Doubts* and *Fears* into *gracious Hearts*, to perplex and entangle them, ſo oppoſitely it is the work of the *Spirit* to clear and ſettle the ſanctified Soul, and fill it with Peace and Joy in believing, *John* 16. 7. *Rom.* 14. 17.

In ſealing he both atteſts the *fidem quæ creditur*, the Doctrin or Object of Faith, and the *fidem qua creditur*, the infuſed Habit or Grace of Faith: Of the former he ſaith, *This is my Word*; of the latter, *This is my Work*; and his Seal or Teſtimony is evermore agreeable to the written word, *Iſa.* 8. 20. So that what he ſpeaks in our Hearts, and what he ſaith in the Scripture, are evermore concordant and harmonious *Teſtimonies*.

To conclude; In ſealing the Believer he doth not make uſe of an audible Voice, nor the Miniſtry of Angels, nor immediate and extraordinary Revelations, but he makes uſe of his own *Graces*, implanted in our hearts, and his own *Promiſes* written in the Scriptures; and in this method he uſually brings the doubting trembling heart of a Believer to reſt and comfort.

2 Query. *Why are none ſealed till after Believing?*

*Anſw.* It cannot be denied, but that many perſons in the ſtate of Nature and Unbelief, may have grounded Confidences, and falſe Comforts built thereupon. This is evident from *Matth.* 7. 22. *Many will ſay unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have not we propheſied in thy name?* And *John* 8. 54, 55. *Of whom ye ſay that he is your God, and yet ye have not known him.* And beyond all is that ſtartling Scripture, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5. —— *Who were once enlightned, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come if they fall away,* &c.

But for any, except real Believers, to have thoſe *Witneſſes* and *Sealings* of the Spirit deſcrib'd above, is utterly impoſſible, and will evidently appear to be ſo, whether we conſider the Author, Nature, Object, Mediums, End and Deſign of this Work.

*Firſt,* Conſider the *Author* of this Work, the *Spirit of God,* who is an holy Spirit, as the Text calls him, and the *Spirit of Truth,* as Chriſt calls him, *John* 14. 17. and it cannot be that ever he ſhould give Teſtimony to a Lye, or give a falſe Witneſs, quite croſs to the very tenour of the written Word, as he muſt do, ſhould he ſeal an Unbeliever. What though they be Elect? yet whilſt unregenerate, they have no actual Intereſt in Chriſt and the Promiſes, and therefore can have none ſeal'd by the Spirit. *Prius eſt predicare de eſſe quam de cognoſci;* We muſt be Saints before we can be known to be ſo.

*Secondly,* Conſider but the *Nature* of this Work, and it cannot be that ever an Unbeliever ſhould be ſeal'd by the Spirit; for Aſſurance is produc'd in our Souls by the reflexive acts of our Faith: The Spirit helps us to reflect upon what hath been done by him formerly upon our Hearts; *Hereby we know that we know him,* 1 John 2. 3. To know that we know, is a reflex act; now it's impoſſible there ſhould be a reflex before there hath been a direct act. No man can have the evidence of his Faith, before the Habit be infus'd, and the Vital Act firſt perform'd.

*Thirdly,* Conſider the *Object-matter,* to which he ſeals, and it will be found to be his own ſanctifying Operations upon our Hearts, and conſequently to our Privileges in Chriſt, *Rom.* 8. 16. 1 *Joh.* 3. 24. The thing or matter atteſted is, that *Chriſt* abideth in us, and that we are the Children of God; but no ſuch thing can be ſeal'd till we believe, for neither our Adoption nor Sanctification can be before Faith.

*Fourthly,* Conſider the *Mediums* or *Inſtruments* uſed by the Spirit in his Sealing-work: The *Promiſes* are his ſealing Inſtruments, and on that account he is call'd *the Spirit of Promiſe* in the Text; not only becauſe he is the Spirit promiſed, but as the *Promiſes* contain the Spirit, ſo the Spirit uſes the Promiſes, (*i. e.*) clears them to our Underſtandings, and helps us to apply them to our Souls. But this he never doth, nor can do, till the Soul by Faith have Union with Chriſt; for till then it hath no right in the Promiſes.

*Fifthly,* and laſtly, Conſider the *End* and *Deſign* of this Work of the Spirit, which is to ſecure to the Soul its peace, pardon, and ſalvation in Chriſt, he ſeals Believers to the day of Redemption, *Eph.* 4. 30. (*i. e.*) to their compleat Salvation: ſo then it muſt be equally impoſſible for an Unbeliever to be ſeal'd as to be ſav'd.

3 Query. *The next enquiry is, Whether all Believers are ſeal'd by the Spirit?*

*Anſw.* The reſolution of this Query will depend upon ſeveral Diſtinctions that muſt be made upon this matter.

1 *Diſtinction.* We muſt diſtinguiſh the different Kinds of the Spirit's ſealing; all his Sealing-work is not of one kind, nor to one and the ſame uſe and end.

There is an *Objective Seal* which diſtinguiſhes the Perſon, and a *Formal Seal* which clears and ratifies his Intereſt in Chriſt and Salvation. The firſt he doth in *Sanctifying* us, the ſecond in *Aſſuring* us.

When he ſeals us *Objectively,* that is, when he ſanctifies us really by the infuſion of Grace, he ſeals us by way of diſtinction from other men, which is one end of ſealing; for tho' in reſpect of God's decree and purpoſe there was a difference betwixt *us* and *others* before time, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. and altho' in regard of Chriſt's Intention in his Death there was a difference betwixt us and others, *John* 17. 9. yet all this while there is no perſonal, actual difference betwixt us and others, till Sanctification do make one, *Eph.* 2. 3. and 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. but the Sanctification of the Spirit makes a real difference in the ſtate and temper of the Perſon; 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. and manifeſts that difference which Election put betwixt us and others before time, 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 4, 5. And yet all this while a man may not be formally ſeal'd, (*i. e.*) his Sanctification may be very doubtful to himſelf, and he may labour under great fears about it.

2 *Diſtinction.* The Seaſons of the Spirit's ſealing muſt be diſtinguiſh'd, and theſe are to ſome,

1*ſt,* Immediately upon the Soul's firſt cloſing with Chriſt at Converſion, eſpecially when Converſion is wrought at riper age, and is uſher'd in by a greater degree of the Spirit of Bondage, and deep inward Terrors. Thus the *Prodigal* (the Emblem of a Convert ſo brought home to God) was entertain'd with the fatted Calf and Muſick, but all find not this preſently, as ſome do.

2*ly,* Times of eminent Communion with God are ſealing times. There are extraordinary outlets of Peace, Joy, and Comfort, at ſome ſeaſons, in Duty, which makes the ſtate of the Soul very clear, and baniſhes all Scruples and Fears from the Heart.

3*ly,* Others are ſeal'd upon ſome eminent hazard they have been expos'd to for Chriſt, or ſome extraordinary Sufferings they have undergone for Chriſt, wherein they have carried it with eminent meekneſs, patience, and ſelf-denial, 2 *Cor.* 1. 4, 5. Thus the *Martyrs* were many times ſeal'd in the depth of their *Sufferings.*

4*ly,* It's uſually found that a ſealing-time follows a dark day of deſertion and ſore combats with Temptation; *poſt nubila Phœbus.* So that Text, *Rev.* 2. 17. is expounded by ſome, *To him that overcometh will I give the white ſtone, and the new name.*

*5ly*, Dying-times prove Sealing-times to many Souls, if their whole Life hath been like that Day deſcrib'd by the Prophet, *Zech.* 14. 17. neither dark nor light, a Life betwixt *Hopes* and *Fears*, yet at Evening time it hath been light.

3 *Diſtinction.* Laſtly, We muſt diſtinguiſh the ſeveral ways and manners of ſealing: Some are extraordinary and immediate, vouchſafed only to ſome perſons, at ſome *ſpecial times* and *ſeaſons.* Thus *Zacheus* was in an extraordinary and immediate way aſcertain'd of his Salvation, *Luke* 19. 9. *This day is Salvation come to this houſe.* And ſo the Palſie-man, *Mark* 2, 5. *Son,* (ſaith Chriſt) *thy ſins be forgiven thee.* But theſe immediate ways are ceaſed, no man may now expect by any new Revelation or Sign from Heaven, by any Voice or extraordinary Inſpiration, to have his Salvation ſeal'd, but muſt expect that Mercy in God's ordinary way and method, ſearching the Scriptures, examining our own Hearts, and waiting on the Lord in Prayer.

The Learned *Gerſon* gives an inſtance of one that had been long upon the Borders of Deſpair, and at laſt ſweetly aſſur'd and ſetled; and being ask'd how he attain'd that Aſſurance, he anſwer'd, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione*,&c. Not by any new Revelation, but by ſubjecting my Underſtanding to, and comparing my Heart with the written Word.

And Mr. *Roberts*, in his Treatiſe of the Covenants, ſpeaks of another that ſo vehemently panted after the Sealings and Aſſurance of the Love of God to his Soul, that for a long time he earneſtly deſir'd ſome Voice from Heaven; and ſometimes walking in the ſolitary Fields, earneſtly deſir'd ſome miraculous Voice from the Trees or Stones there: This was denied him, but in time a better was afforded in a Scriptural way.

Now to reſolve the Query out of theſe Diſtinctions.

*Firſt*, Tho' all *Believers* have not the *formal Sealings* of the Spirit, they have the *objective* or *material Seal*; that is, the Spirit is in them as a ſanctifying Spirit, putting a real difference betwixt them and others, when he is not with them by way of Evidence and Aſſurance of Sanctification.

*Secondly*, Tho' all *Believers* are not ſeal'd at one and the ſame time, yet there are few, if any *Believers*, but do meet with one ſeaſon or other in this life, wherein the Lord doth ſeal them, if not at their firſt cloſe with Chriſt, as many have been ſealed, yet in ſome choice and eminent ſeaſon of communion with God: ſuch *precious ſeaſons* moſt *Chriſtians* can ſpeak of; tho', as *Bernard* ſpeaks, it be *rara hora, brevis mora*, ſeldom, but ſweet: Or if not in the courſe of their *active Obedience*, 'tis a thouſand to one but they ſhall meet it in the way of their *paſſive Obedience*, if God exerciſe them eminently under the Croſs, or after a dark cloud of deſertion, or in a dying hour.

*Thirdly*, and laſtly, Though God now ſeals not men in an extraordinary and immediate way by Revelation, immediate Inſpiration, or Voices from Heaven, yet moſt *Chriſtians* are ſealed in the ordinary way of the Spirit, under one Ordinance or other, in one Duty or other.

4 Query. *What is the Privilege of being ſealed by the Spirit?*

*Anſw.* Much every way; words cannot expreſs the Riches of this Mercy: for let us but conſider the four following particulars, and you will admire the Mercy.

*Firſt*, Conſider whoſe act and proper work Sealing is. God doth not ſend *Angels* upon this Errand; though, if he did, that would be a great honour to poor Duſt and Aſhes, but he ſends his Spirit to do it. Oh, the Condeſcention of the great God to men! this is a greater honour than if millions of *Angels* were imploy'd about it.

And then, as to certainty and ſatisfaction, it is beyond all other *ways* and *methods* in the World; for in *miraculous Voices* and *Inſpirations* it's poſſible there may, *ſubeſſe fallum*, be found ſome Cheats or Impoſture of the Devil; but the *Spirit's Witneſs* in the Heart, ſuitable to his Revelation in the Scripture, cannot deceive us.

*Secondly*, The Concluſion or Truth ſeal'd is raviſhing and tranſporting. All Chriſtians vehemently pant for it, ſew have the enjoyment of it for any long continuance; but whilſt they do enjoy it, they enjoy Heaven upon Earth, a Joy beyond all the Joys of this World. To have this Concluſion ſurely ſealed, *Chriſt is mine*, my Sin is pardon'd, I ſhall be ſaved from Wrath thro' him; O, what is this! what is this!

*Thirdly*, Conſider the Subject or Perſon ſealed, a poor ſinful wretch, that haſt ten thouſand times over-grieved the good Spirit of God, by whom notwithſtanding thou art ſealed to the Day of Redemption: Thou haſt by every Sin deſerved to be ſealed up to Damnation: Thou haſt reaſon to account and eſteem thy ſelf much inferior in *Graces* and *Duties* to many thouſands of the Saints that are panting after this Privilege, and cannot obtain it: O the *Riches* of the *Goodneſs* of God!

*Fourthly*, and laſtly, Conſider the *Deſigns* and *Aims* of the Spirit in his ſealing thy Soul, which are;

1. To ſecure Heaven to thee for ever.

2. As intermediate thereunto, to bring very much of Heaven into thy Soul, in the way to it; indeed to give thee two Heavens, whilſt many others muſt ſuffer two Hells.

5 Query. *Laſtly*, we will enquire, *What are the effects of the Spirits ſealing upon our Souls, by which we may diſtinguiſh and clearly diſcern it from all deluſions of Satan, and all Impoſtures whatſoever?*

*Anſw.* The genuine and proper *effects* and *fruits* of ſealing are, 1. Inflamed Love. 2. Renewed Care. 3. Deep Abaſements. 4. Encreaſe of Strength. 5. A deſire to be with the Lord. 6. Improved Mortification to the World.

Whereſoever theſe are found conſequent to our Communion with God, and his maniſeſtations of himſelf to us therein, they put it beyond all doubt that it was the Seal of his own bleſſed Spirit, and no Deluſion.

1. The Sealings of the Spirit cannot but inflame the Love of the Soul in a very intenſe degree towards God; one Flame doth not more naturally beget another, than the Love of God doth kindle the love of a gracious Soul to him: *We have known and believed the love that God hath to us,* 1 John 4. 16, 19. When Chriſt had forgiven much to that poor Woman that had ſin'd much, and maniſeſted

pardoning Mercy to her Soul; O, how much was her Love to Chriſt inflamed thereby? *Luke* 7. 47.

Renewed Care and Diligence follows the Sealings of the Spirit. Now is the Soul at the Foot of Chriſt, as *Mary* was at the *Sepulchre*, with Fear and great Joy. He that travels the Road with a rich Treaſure about him, is afraid of a Thief in every Buſh. This is exemplified in the Spouſe, who had endured many a ſad Day and Night in Chriſts abſence, and ſought him ſorrowing: But when ſhe had regained his felt and ſenſible Preſence, it's ſaid, *Cant.* 3. 4. *I found him whom my Soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go.*

She doth not (as Mr. *Durham* ſpeaks) lay by Diligence, as if all were done; but is of new taken up, with as great care to retain and improve this Mercy, as before ſhe was ſollicitous to obtain it. Whether a Believer want or have, whether he be ſeeking or enjoying, there is ſtill matter of Exerciſe for him in his Condition.

Deep Abaſement, and great Humblings, uſe to follow the eminent Appearances of God to the Souls of Men. *Lord* (ſaith that Diſciple) *how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf to us, and not unto the World?* John 14. 22. When God ſealed the Covenant to *Abraham*, to be a God to him, at this *Abraham* fell upon his Face, *Gen* 17. 1, 2, 3. Never doth a Soul lie lower in the Duſt, and abhor it ſelf, than when the Lord makes the moſt ſignal Manifeſtations of his Grace and Love to it.

Increaſed ſtrength follows the Sealings of the Spirit. New Powers enter into the Soul, and a ſenſible Improvement of its Abilities for Duty: *Or ever I was aware* (ſaith the Spouſe), *my Soul made me as the Chariots of* Aminadab, *Cant.* 6.12.

Now the Wheels of the Soul being oiled with the Joy and Comfort of the Spirit, run nimbly in the Ways of Obedience. The Joy of the Lord is your ſtrength.

Fifthly, Sealings of the Spirit, inflame the Deſires of the Soul after Heaven, and make it long to go home. Nothing makes Death ſo undeſirable to the Saints, as the Doubts and Fears that hang upon their Spirits, about their Condition. Were their Evidences for Heaven clear, and their Doubts reſolved, they would, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, Phil.* 1. 23. If once the great Queſtion of our Intereſt in Chriſt be throughly decided, and all be clear, betwixt us and our God, we ſhall find Life the Matter of Patience, and Death the Object of Deſire.

Sixthly, and Laſtly, Improved Mortification to the World, flows naturally from the Sealings and Aſſurances of the Love of God to our Souls. It is with our Souls after ſuch a view of Heaven, and a ſealed Intereſt therein, as it is with him that hath been gazing upon that glorious Creature the Sun, when he comes to caſt his Eye again upon the Earth, all things ſeem dark and cloudy to him. He ſees no Beauty in any of thoſe things, becauſe of that excellent Luſtre which he lately beheld. *We know* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *that if our earthly houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolv'd, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens*; there's Aſſurance or Sealing: *For in this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be cloathed upon with our houſe which is from Heaven.* There's the natural effect of it, *2 Cor.* 5. 1, 2.

*Uſes.* The Point ſpeaks to three ſorts of Perſons, *viz.* 1. To thoſe that have not yet been ſealed. 2. To thoſe that once had, but now want this Comfort. 3. To thoſe that enjoy the Comforts of it.

*Firſt*, To thoſe that yet want this Mercy, who have not been formerly ſealed by any aſſurance of their Title to Chriſt, but all their Days have been clogg'd with Fears and Doubts of their Condition. To ſuch my Counſel is,

Firſt, That you be not quiet under theſe Uncertainties, but pant after the Aſſurance of Peace and Pardon. Say unto Chriſt as the Spouſe did, Cant. 8. 6. *Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart, as a Seal upon thine Arm:* Pant after it as *David* did, *Pſalm* 35. 3. *Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation.*

How can you look upon ſuch precious Promiſes, and not dare to taſte them? How can you hear others ſpeak of their Satisfaction, Peace, and Aſſurance, and be quiet until you alſo have attain'd it? What is it that hinders this Mercy that it cannot come home to your Souls? Is it your neglect of Duty? O ſtir up your ſelves to take hold of God! Is it want of a thorough Search and Examination of your State? O let not thine Eyes find reſt, 'till that be fully done: Is it ſome ſpecial Guilt upon thy Soul that grieves the Spirit of God? Be reſtleſs 'till it be removed. I know this Mercy is not at your Command, do what you can do; but yet I alſo know when God beſtows it, he uſually doth it in theſe ways of our Duty.

Secondly, To thoſe that once had, but now want this Bleſſing, who ſay as *Job* 29. 2, 3. *O that it were with me as in days paſt!* The Darkneſs is the greater to you, becauſe you have walked in the Light of the Lord. The Sum of Chriſt's Counſel in this Caſe is given in three words, *Rev.* 2. 5. *Remember, Repent, Reform.*

Firſt, *Remember*, (*i. e.*) ponder, conſider, compare time with time, and ſtate with ſtate, how well it once was, how ſad it now is.

Secondly, *Repent*, mourn over theſe your ſinful Relapſes; ſure you may challenge the firſt place among all the Mourners in the World. Your loſs is great. O better to have loſt the Light of your Eyes, than this ſweet Light of God's Countenance; your Sin hath ſeparated betwixt you and your God, O mourn over it.

Thirdly, *Reform*, Do your firſt Works again. O Chriſtian! conſider thy Heart is ſunk deeper into the World than it was wont to be. Thy Duties are fewer, and thy Zeal and Affection to God much abated. Return, return, O backſliding Soul, and labour to recover thy firſt Love to Chriſt, whatever Pains it coſt thee.

Laſtly, To thoſe that do enjoy theſe choice and invaluable Mercies, the Sealings of the Spirit.

Firſt, Take heed that you grieve not the good Spirit of God, *By whom you are ſealed to the Day of Redemption*, Eph. 4. 30. He hath comforted you, don't you grieve him: The Spirit is a tender and delicate thing, you may quickly deprive your ſelves of his Joy and Peace.

Secondly, Be humble under this Advancement and Dignity. If your Hearts once begin to ſwell, look out for humbling Diſpenſations quickly, 2 Cor. 12. 7. This Treaſure is always kept in the Veſſel of a contrite and humble Heart.

Thirdly, Keep cloſe to Duty; yea, tack one Duty to another by intermediate Ejaculations. If care of Duty be once remitted, you are not far from a ſad change of your Condition.

Fourthly, Improve all Ordinances, eſpecially this great Sealing Ordinance for your farther confirmation and eſtabliſhment. Act your Faith to the uttermoſt of its ability, upon Chriſt crucified, Comfort will flow in: The more the direct Acts of Faith are exerciſed, the more powerful and ſweet its reflex Acts are like to be.

# The Fifth MEDITATION,

## UPON

## John 1. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World.*

THE Scope of this Chapter, is to prove the Divinity and Eternal Godhead of Jeſus Chriſt. One of thoſe Arguments by which this great Article of Faith is confirmed and proved, is the Teſtimony of *John.* This Teſtimony of *John* is the more remarkable, becauſe it was before propheſied of him, that when the Meſſiah ſhould come, this Meſſenger ſhould go before his face to prepare the way for him, *Mal.* 3. 1.

Now among all the Teſtimonies that ever *John* gave of Chriſt, none ever was, or could be more full and clear than this in the Text.

*Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sins of the World.*

In which Words are remarkable, 1. The Preface to his Teſtimony. 2. The Teſtimony it ſelf.

Firſt, The Preface, or Introduction to *John*'s Teſtimony, *Behold.* There is a double uſe in Scripture of this Word. Sometimes its us'd by way of Indication, and ſometimes by way of Excitation. In the firſt it points out the Perſon; in the laſt it raiſes our Affections to him. In this place it hath both theſe Uſes.

*Behold the Lamb of God,* q. d. This is the great expectation and hope of all Ages. This Perſon whom you behold, is the Deſire of all Nations. Lo, this is God manifeſt in Fleſh. This is the great Sacrifice, *the Lamb of God.* Never did humane Eyes behold ſuch an Object before.

Secondly, The Teſtimony it ſelf, which muſt be conſidered two ways, as it reſpects, 1. The Truth and Reality. 2. The Vertue and Dignity of Chriſt its Object.

Firſt, *John*'s Teſtimony reſpects the Truth and Reality of the Object; this is the Lamb of God, the very Anti-type, to which all legal Sacrifices had reſpect, and from which they derived all their Value and Vertue; Grace and Truth came by Chriſt, as he had ſaid before, *ver.* 17. The Paſchal Lamb for daily Sacrifice, were but the Types and Shadows of this Lamb of God.

Secondly, His Teſtimony reſpects the Vertue and Dignity of Chriſt and his Blood. *He taketh away the Sin of the World.* The Greek word, αἴρειν, (as *De Dieu,* a learned Critick obſerves) anſwers both the Hebrew words, נשׂא סבל and *Iſa.* 53. and ſignifie not only to bear, but to bear away: *Portando expiat, expiando aufert, efficitque ut remittatur.* By bearing Sin, he expiates it; by expiating, takes it away, or procures the remiſſion of it. The Expreſſion ſeems to allude to the *ſcape Goat,* mentioned *Lev.* 16. 22. Thus Chriſt really and wholly takes away the Sin of the World, (*i. e.*) the Sin of all Believers in the World, for whom he was ſacrificed, as *Druſius* well expounds it, concurrent with the Stream of ſound Expoſitors.

So that this is a very full Teſtimony, which *John* gives to Chriſt, and it is given with great affection and admiration of him: *Behold,* yea, admire in beholding the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World; behold him with Affections ſuitable to ſuch an Object. *Ecce perſona a Deo ordinata in victimam ad expiandum peccata, Grotius.* Behold the Perſon appointed by God, for a Sacrifice to expiate Sin. Now tho' this Scripture be very fruitful in Practical Obſervations, yet it is not my purpoſe at this time to note or proſecute any of them, except this one, which riſes from the Præfatory Particle, or that Note of Admiration with which *John*'s Teſtimony of Chriſt is uſher'd in; *Behold the Lamb of God.* And the Note thence will be this:

Doct. *That Jeſus Chriſt the Lamb of God, is to be beheld with admiration and affection ſuitable to ſuch an Object.*

Firſt, *Carnally,* with an Eye of Fleſh. So Men ſaw him in the days of his fleſh, and deſpiſed him, *Iſa.* 53. 2. Carnal Eyes ſaw no Beauty in him that he ſhould be deſired.

Secondly, *Fiducially,* by the Eye of Faith; believing is ſeeing Chriſt, *John* 6. 40. Faith is to the Saints inſtead of Eyes; by it they make Chriſt preſent, tho' the Heavens have received him out of our carnal ſight.

Thirdly, *Beatifically,* by the glorified Eye. So the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, do by their mental Eye ſee him in Glory, and all the Saints, after the Reſurrection, ſhall with theſe Corporeal Eyes, ſee their Redeemer, according to *Job* 19. 26, 27.

The ſight of Chriſt by Faith (which is all the ſight of him that any Man now hath, or can have in this World) as it is much more excellent than the firſt, for *bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet believe,* John 20. 29. So it is much inferiour to the laſt, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. *For now we ſee darkly through a glaſs, but then face to face.* But tho' it be an inferiour Viſion, in reſpect of that which is immediate and perfect, yet the Eye of Faith is a precious Eye, and the Viſions of Chriſt by Faith, are raviſhing Viſions; and he that beholds Chriſt, the Lamb of God, by a ſteddy fixed Eye of Faith, cannot but admire, and be deeply affected with ſuch a ſight of him. The Views of Chriſt by Faith are raviſhing and tranſporting Views, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Whom having not ſeen ye love, in whom, tho' now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoyce with joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory.*

It is a diſparagement to ſo glorious an Object as Chriſt, to behold him, and not wonder; to ſee, and not love him. Certainly the admiration, love, delight, and joy of our hearts, are all at the Command of Faith: For let us but conſider what raviſhing Excellencies are in Chriſt, for the Eye of a Believer to behold and admire.

Firſt, God is in Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. He is God manifeſt in the Fleſh. 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. A God Incarnate is the World's Wonder: Here is Finite and Infinite join'd in one, Eternity matcht with Time, the Creator and Creature making but one Perſon. *The Lord hath created a new thing in the Earth, a Woman ſhall compaſs a Man,* Jer. 31. 22. 'Tis an Argument of weakneſs to admire little things, and of ſtupidity not to admire great things. Many Miracles (ſaith one) were wrought by Chriſt in the Fleſh; but the greateſt of all Miracles was his aſſumption of Fleſh.

Secondly, The Wiſdom of God is in Chriſt; yea, *in him are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge,* Col. 2. 3. Never did the Divine Wiſdom diſplay its glorious Beams in the Eyes of Men and Angels in any Work of God, ſince the beginning of time, as it hath done in the deſignation of Chriſt to be the Lamb of God, a Sacrifice for Sin. *Behold the Lamb of God*; and in him, behold the unſearchable Wiſdom of God, in recovering the Elect perfectly from all the danger of Sin, and yet making Sin more dreadful to them, by the way of their recovery from it, than ever it could be made by any other Conſideration.

Infinite Wiſdom, in ſuiting the Sinners Remedy to the Cauſe of his Diſeaſe. The Diſeaſe was the Pride of Man; the Remedy was the Humiliation of the Son of God. Man affected to be as God, that ruin'd him, God comes down, aſſumes Fleſh, and will be found in faſhion as a Man, that ſaved him.

O profound Wiſdom! which from the loſs and ruine of our Primitive Glory, which was the undoing of us Soul and Body, takes the occaſion of raiſing us to a far better ſtate, and ſettles us in it, with a much better ſecurity than the former.

Who but Jeſus Chriſt, the Wiſdom of God (as he is call'd, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24) could ever have ordered and over-ruled the worſt of Evils, ſo as by occaſion of the breach of the Law to raiſe more Glory to God, than ever could have been given to him, by the moſt punctual Obſervation of its Commands, or by the moſt rigorous Execution of its Penalties. O the aſtoniſhing depth of Wiſdom!

Thirdly, The Love of God is in Chriſt. Behold the Love of God in the higheſt and moſt triumphant diſcovery that ever was, or can be made of it in this World, 1 *Joh.* 4. 10. *Herein is Love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our Sins.* O here, here is the Love of God to Sinners; he manifeſts Love to us in our daily Proviſions, Protections, Deliverances, and Comforts. That we have Health to eat, when others groan under pains, therein is Love. That we have Bread to eat, when others are ready to periſh, therein is Love. O! but to have Chriſt to be a Propitiation for us, when the Angels that fell were left deſperate, therein was Love indeed. All the Love that breaks out in the variety of Providences for us in this World, in our Health and Eſtates, in our Relations and Comforts, is nothing compar'd with this Love. *Herein is Love indeed.*

Fourthly, The tender Mercies of God over poor Sinners are in Chriſt: As Chriſt is the Mercy promiſed, *Luke* 1. 72. the Capital Mercy, ſo he is the Channel through which all the ſtreams of God's Mercy flow freely to the Sons of Men, *Jude* 21. The Mercy of God to Eternal Life, or his ſaving Mercies, are only diſpenſed to us through Jeſus Chriſt. *Behold the Lamb of God!* A Lamb prepared by the aſtoniſhing Mercy of God, a Sacrifice for us, when no Sacrifice laid out for fallen Angels. Mercy alone hath made this difference; Mercy opened its tender Eye, and looked through Chriſt upon us in the depth of our Miſery: In Chriſt it is, that the milder Attribute of Mercy is exerciſed upon us, whilſt ſevere Juſtice puniſhes them.

Fifthly, All the hopes of poor Sinners are in Chriſt, *Col.* 1. 27. 'Tis by the Blood of the Lamb then we have hope towards God: In his Oblation, and no where elſe, our hope of Salvation finds footing. On him it is the Anchor of Hope is fixed, and the Soul ſtayed, when the ſtorms of fear and inward trouble do ariſe, and beat violently upon it.

Sixthly, The Salvation of our Souls to Eternity is in Chriſt, *Acts* 4. 12. *Neither is there any other Name given under Heaven, by which we muſt be ſaved.* He is the Ark in whom we are preſerved, *Jude v.* 1. Look as the ſprinkling of the Blood of the *Paſchal Lamb,* upon the Door-poſts of the *Iſraelites,* was that which preſerved them from the deſtroying Angel; ſo the Blood of Chriſt the Lamb of God, typified by that Blood, ſaves Believers from the Wrath to come.

But who can open the unſearchable Riches, or recount the raviſhing Excellencies found in Chriſt? Angels, and the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect, behold and admire for evermore the incomparable Excellencies of Chriſt! Heaven would be no Heaven to them, if they could not behold Chriſt there, *Pſalm* 73. 25.

But my buſineſs rather lies in improving this Point, than endeavouring farther to unfold it; for new Wonders will appear in Chriſt, if we behold him to Eternity.

*Uſe.* And all the improvement I ſhall make of it, ſhall be in one Uſe of Exhortation, beſpeaking every one of you, whatever your preſent Condition and Eſtate be, *to behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the World.* And,

Firſt, If there be found among you any that are ſenſible of a ſtony hard Heart, which cannot relent and mourn for all the wrong done to Jeſus Chriſt by ſin, whoſe affections are benumb'd and ſtupified by ſin; ſo that no Conſiderations they can urge upon their own Hearts, are able to thaw them, and cauſe a relenting pang for ſin. To ſuch I would direct the Words of this Text, as the moſt effectual means to melt ſuch Hearts. Look hither hard Heart, *Behold the Lamb of God.* Conſider, believe and apply what is here ſenſibly repreſented, and thy Heart is hard indeed, if it relent not upon ſuch a view of Chriſt. It's ſaid, *Zech.* 12. 10. *They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn.* Behold the Son of God brought as a Lamb to the ſlaughter, for thee a vile polluted Sinner: Behold the invaluable Blood of this ſacrifice ſhed for thee: Bring thy thoughts cloſe to this ſubject; think who it is that was made a Lamb for ſacrifice, for whom he endured all his unſpeakable ſufferings, how meekly and willingly he endured all the Wrath of God and Men; ſtanding in his perfect innocency to be ſlain for thee: Behold, he was made ſin for thee, who had no ſin, that thou who hadſt no Righteouſneſs, mighteſt be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him. O, whoever loved thee at that rate Chriſt hath done? Who would endure that Miſery that Chriſt did endure for thy ſake? Would thy Father, or the Wife of thy Boſom, or thy Friend, that is as thy own ſoul, be content to feel that for thee (tho' but one hour) which Chriſt felt, when his ſweat was as it had been great drops of Blood falling down to the ground? Nay, thou wouldſt never take ſuch a Cup for the ſaving of thine own Child, as Chriſt drank off, when he cried, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Behold how he loved thee!

Surely if the Rocks rent aſunder at his Paſſion, thy Heart is harder than a Rock, if it thaw not at ſuch a ſight as this. Fix thine Eyes a while here, and thine Eye will affect thy Heart.

*Secondly*, Is there any among us that make too light of ſin, and are eaſily overcome by every Temptation to the commiſſion of it? O come hither, and *behold the Lamb of God*, and you cannot poſſibly have ſlight thoughts of ſin, after ſuch a ſight of Chriſt. See here the price of ſin, behold what it coſt the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to expiate it. Did he come into the World as a Lamb, bound with the Bands of an irreverſible Decree to die for ſin: Did he come from the Boſom of the Father to be our Ranſomer, and that at the price of his own Life? Did the hand of ſevere Juſtice ſhed the Heart-blood of this immaculate Lamb, to ſatisfie for the wrongs thy ſins have done to God? And yet canſt thou look upon ſin as a light matter? God forbid.

I remember when the Worthies of *Iſrael* brake through the Hoſt of the *Philiſtins*, and brought unto *David* the Waters of the Well of *Bethlem*: It's ſaid, 2 *Sam.* 23. 17. *He would not drink thereof, but poured it out before the Lord, and ſaid, Be it far from me, that I ſhould do this: Is not this the Blood of the Men that went in jeopardy of their Lives?*

He longed for it, and yet would not taſte it, how pleaſant ſoever it would have been to him, conſidering what hazard was run to obtain it.

Ah Chriſtian, it was but the hazard of their Blood, that gave check to *David*'s Appetite to the Water; and if the Water had coſt an equal quantity of their Blood, yet it had been but a low Argument to diſſwade him from drinking it, to this Conſideration that now lies before thee. Thy ſin actually coſt the Blood of Chriſt, one drop whereof is more valuable than all humane Blood, and yet wilt thou not deny thy Luſts, nor reſiſt a Temptation for his ſake? *Behold the Lamb of God ſlain for thy ſin*; and thou canſt never have ſlight Thoughts of it any more.

Thirdly, Is there any among you that droop, and are diſcouraged in their Spirits, becauſe of their manifold aggravated Iniquities? who being overweighed with the burdenſome ſenſe of ſin, deſpond and ſink in their Minds; to ſuch I would apply the Words of my Text as a Sovereign Cordial to revive their Hearts and Hopes: *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſin of the World.*

If the Blood of the Lamb can take away the Sin of the World, it can take away thy Sin, tho' there be a World of Sin in thee: For do but conſider Chriſt as deſigned from Eternity to be our *Propitiation*, John 6. 27. *Him hath God the Father ſealed, as* ſacrificed in our room in the fulneſs of time, 1 *Cor*, 5. 7. *Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us*, as accepted by the Father with the greateſt content and pleaſure; even *as a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour*, Eph. 5. 2. as publickly juſtified and diſcharged by God the Creditor at his Reſurrection, 1 *Tim*. 3. 16. and *John* 16. 9. And laſtly, Conſider him as now in Heaven, where he *appears before God for us, as a Lamb that had been ſlain*, Rev. 5. 6. bearing the very Marks of his death, and preſenting them before God, as the moſt effectual and moving Plea to procure pardon and mercy for his People. Let theſe things, I ſay, be duly pondred, and nothing will be found more effectual to relieve the deſpondent Minds of poor Believers, againſt the ſinking ſence of their ſin.

He that repreſents himſelf in the Sacrament as wounded for you, ſhews at the ſame time, to the Father in Heaven, the real Body that was wounded; than which, nothing more effectually moves mercy, or ſtays the ſliding feet of a poor Believers hope: And that whether we conſider,

Firſt, The Dignity of the Body which was wounded, the moſt hallowed and deeply ſanctified thing that ever was created, *Luke* 1. 35. *That holy thing.*

Secondly, Or his Vicegerency in ſuffering. *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions*, Iſa. 53. 5. It was for that hard, proud, vain, dead Heart, that thou complaineſt of: Or,

Thirdly, The End and Deſign of thoſe Wounds, which was to repair the Honour of God, and the violated Law; the Language of that Blood (which is ſaid to ſpeak better things than the Blood of *Abel*, Heb. 12. 24.) is this.

Father, have theſe poor Souls wounded thy Name, thine Honour, thy Law? Behold the Wounds thy Juſtice hath inflicted on me for reparation of all that wrong they have done thee! Oh how ſweetly doth the Blood of the Lamb ſettle the Conſcience of a poor drooping Believer.

Fourthly, Is there any among you, that are faint-hearted and ready to ſhrink away from any Sufferings for Chriſt, as unable to bear and endure any thing for his ſake? To ſuch I would ſay in the words of this Text, *Behold the Lamb of God*. Did Chriſt ſuffer ſuch grievous things for you, and cannot you ſuffer ſmall matters for him? Alas, what is the Wrath of Man, to the *Wrath of the great and terrible God*. Beſides, he was an *innocent Lamb*, and deſerved! not to ſuffer the leaſt degree of Penal Evil upon his own account, but thou haſt deſerved Hell, and yet ſhrinkeſt under the ſuffering of a moment. Did he ſuffer ſo much for you, and can you ſuffer nothing for him? Surely he in ſuffering for you, hath *left you an Example that you ſhould*

*ſhould follow his ſteps,* 1 *Pet.* 2. 21. What! is our Blood compar'd in dignity to the Blood of *Chriſt?* What! are our Sufferings compar'd in kind or degree to the Sufferings of *Chriſt?* Nothing is found to fortifie a man's ſpirit for *ſufferings*, as the meditation of *Chriſt's ſufferings* for us doth.

Fifthly, Is there any among you that are impatient under your own perſonal *tryals* and *troubles*, apt to howl under common *afflictions* from the hand of God, or ſwell with revenge under *injuries* from the hands of men? To ſuch I would ſay, *Behold the Lamb of God.* Was *Chriſt* a *Lamb* for meekneſs, and art thou a *Lion* for fierceneſs? Was he ſilent, not once opening his Mouth when he ſuffer'd moſt vile things from the hands of Sinners, and can you bear nothing? he ſuffer'd patiently, and deſerved it not; you ſuffer impatiently, and have deſerved infinitely more.

O that you would learn to be more Chriſt-like in all your *tryals* and *afflictions.* Let it not be ſaid that *Chriſt* carried it as a *Lamb* when he was tried, and we like *Swine*, grumbling or howling when we are tried. O get a Chriſt-like Temper.

Sixthly, Is there any among you that ſtagger at the Promiſes through Unbelief; that cannot rely upon a Word of promiſe, becauſe their own unbelieving hearts fill them with unworthy ſuſpicions of the power, faithfulneſs, or willingneſs of God to perform them to them? O that ſuch would *behold the Lamb of God*, as repreſented in this Ordinance! Are not all the Promiſes of God ſealed to Believers in the Blood of this Lamb? *Heb.* 9. 17, 18, 19, 20. Are not all the Promiſes of God in *Chriſt*, Yea and Amen, to all that are in him? 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. Or is there any thing put into any Promiſe of greater value than the Blood of the Lamb, that was ſhed to purchaſe it? Or is not the giving of *Chriſt* to die for us the accompliſhment of the *greateſt* Promiſe that ever God made to us? And after the fulfilling thereof, what ground remains for any to doubt the fulfilling of leſſer Promiſes?

Laſtly, Is there any among you that deſire to get up your Affections at this Table, to have your hearts in a melting temper, to awaken and rouze up all the powers of your Souls in ſo great an occaſion for it as this? *Behold the Lamb of God*, and this will do it.

*Chriſt* calls off your Eyes and Thoughts from all other Objects to himſelf, *Iſa.* 65. 11. *I ſaid, behold me, behold me.* Fix the Eye of Faith here, and you will feel a pang quickly coming upon your hearts like that, *Cant.* 2. 5. *Stay me with the Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, I am ſick with love.* Your eye will affect your hearts; whilſt you behold, your hearts will melt within you.

# The Sixth MEDITATION,

## UPON

## Romans 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?*

THIS Scripture contains a moſt weighty Argument to encourage and confirm the Faith of *Chriſtians* in the expectation of all ſpiritual and temporal Mercies. It proceeds from the greater to the leſſer affirmatively. He that deliver'd his Son for us, what can he deny us after ſuch a gift? Every word hath its weight.

Did not God ſpare (*i. e.* abate) any thing which his Juſtice could inflict upon his Son, his *own Son*, oppoſed here to his *adopted Sons*, as being infinitely more excellent than they, and moſt dear to him above and beyond all others? but on the contrary *deliver'd him up*, how dear ſoever he was unto him, to humiliation, contradiction of Sinners, to all ſorrows and temptations, yea, to death, and that of the Croſs, and all this *for us*, for *us ſinners*, for *us enemies to God*, for *us unlovely wretches? How ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* How is it imaginable that God ſhould with-hold, after this, *Spirituals* or *Temporals* from his People? how ſhall he not call them effectually, juſtifie them freely, ſanctifie them throughly, and glorifie them eternally? how ſhall he not cloath them, feed them, protect and deliver them?

Surely if he would not ſpare or abate to his own Son one ſtroke, one tear, one groan, one ſigh, one circumſtance of miſery, it can never be imagin'd that ever he ſhould after this deny or withhold from his People, for whoſe ſakes all this was ſuffer'd, any Mercies, any Comforts, any Privilege, ſpiritual or temporal, which is good for them and needful to them. So that in the words we find, 1. a Propoſition, 2. an Inference from it.

The Propoſition opens the ſeverity of God's Juſtice to Chriſt; the Inference declares the *Riches* of his Mercy to us in Chriſt.

1. We have here before us a Propoſition, containing the ſeverity of Divine Juſtice towards Chriſt; and this is expreſſed two ways, *viz.*

1*ſt*, Negatively; he ſpared him not.

2*dly*, Affirmatively; he delivered him up for us.

1*ſt*, Negatively; *He ſpared not his own Son.* There is a threefold Mercy of God, *viz. Preventing Mercy*, which ſteps between us and trouble: *Delivering Mercy*, which takes us out of the hand of trouble: and *Sparing Mercy*, which tho' it do not prevent nor deliver, yet it mitigates, allays, and graciouſly moderates our Troubles; and tho' ſparing Mercy be deſirable and ſweet, yet it is the leaſt and loweſt ſort of Mercy that God exerciſes towards any. Tho' it be Mercy to have the time of Sufferings ſhortned, or one degree of Suffering abated, yet theſe are the loweſt and leaſt effects of Mercy, and yet were denied to Jeſus Chriſt, when he ſtood in our room to ſatiſfie for us. God ſpared not one drop, he abated not one degree of that Wrath which Chriſt was to ſuffer for us.

*2dly,* Affirmatively; but on the contrary, *He delivered him up for us all.*

He delivered him, as a Judge by Sentence of Law delivers up the Priſoner to be executed. 'Tis true, *Pilate* deliver'd him to be crucified, and he alſo *gave himſelf for us*; but betwixt God's delivering, *Pilate*'s delivering, and his own, there is this difference to be obſerv'd: In *God* it was an act of higheſt Juſtice; in *Pilate* an act of greateſt Wickedneſs; in *himſelf*, an act of wonderful Obedience.

God, as by an act of higheſt Juſtice, delivered him up *for us*. *For us*, notes the Vicegerency of his Sufferings, not only for our *good*, as the final cauſe, nor only for our *ſins* as the meritorious cauſe, but for *us*, *(i. e.)* in our room, place or ſtead, according to 1 *Pet.* 3 18. & 2 *Cor.* 5. 14.

Secondly, We have alſo here before us a moſt ſweet and comfortable Inference and Concluſion, from this Propoſition. If God have ſo delivered him, *how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things?* For Chriſt comprehends all other Mercies in himſelf; therefore in giving him *for us*, all other Mercies are neceſſarily with him given *to us*.

And theſe Mercies the pooreſt, weakeſt Believer in the World may warrantably expect from God; for as God delivered him *for us*, all ſpiritual and temporal Mercies are thereby freely opened to us all, to the weak as well as to the ſtrong.

He ſaith not, Chriſt was delivered for all abſolutely, but *for us all*, *(i. e.)* all that believe, all that are elected and called; in whoſe Perſon it is manifeſt the Apoſtle here ſpeaks, as *Pareus* on the place well obſerves: hence theſe two Doctrinal Concluſions fairly offer themſelves.

Doct. 1. *That the rigor and ſeverity of Divine Juſtice was executed upon Jeſus Chriſt, when he ſuffered for us.*

Doct. 2. *That Believers may ſtrongly infer the greateſt of Mercies to themſelves, from the ſeverity of God's Juſtice to Jeſus Chriſt.*

I would willingly ſpeak to both theſe points at this time, each affording ſuch proper matter of meditation to us in ſuch a ſeaſon as this. To begin therefore with the firſt Obſervation.

Doct. 1. *That the rigor and ſeverity of Divine Juſtice was executed upon Jeſus Chriſt, when he ſuffered for us; God did not ſpare him.*

In *Zech.* 13. 7. you have God's Commiſſion given to the Sword of Juſtice, to ſmite his own Son, and that without pity; *Awake, O Sword, againſt the man that is my fellow, ſmite the Shepherd,* &c. When this Commiſſion came to be executed upon *Chriſt*, the Text tells us, *God did not ſpare him.* All the Vials of his Wrath were poured out to the laſt drop.

Two things require our attention in this point, 1. Wherein the ſeverity of *Juſtice* to *Chriſt* appeared; 2. Why muſt *Juſtice* be executed on him in ſuch rigor and ſeverity; why there could be no abatement, mitigation, or ſparing mercy ſhewn him in that day.

1. Wherein the ſeverity of *Divine Juſtice* to *Chriſt* appeared. And this manifeſts it ſelf in the conſideration of the following particulars.

Firſt, Let us conſider what *Jeſus Chriſt* ſuffered, and we ſhall ſee the ſeverity of *Juſtice* in his *Sufferings*, for he ſuffered all kinds of Miſeries, and that in the moſt intenſe degrees of them: his *Sufferings* were from all hands, from *Heaven*, *Earth*, and *Hell*; from his *Enemies*, who condemned him, buffeted him, reviled, ſcourged, and crucified him; from his own *Diſciples* and *Followers*, one of whom perfidiouſly betray'd him, another openly denied him, and all in the hour of his greateſt trouble forſook and abandon'd him.

He ſuffer'd in his Body the moſt exquiſite Torments; the Croſs was a cruel Engine of Torment, and more ſo to him than any other, by reaſon of the excellent *Craſis* and temperament of his Body, and his moſt acute and delicate ſenſe; for as the *Schoolmen* truly ſay, he was *optime complexionatus*, of the moſt exact and exquiſite complexion; and his Senſes remain'd acute and vigorous, no way blunted, during the whole time of his ſufferings, but full of life and ſenſe to the laſt gaſp, as may be gather'd from *Mark* 15. 39. *When the Centurion which ſtood over againſt him ſaw that he ſo cried out, and gave up the ghoſt, he ſaid, Truly this was the Son of God.*

He ſuffer'd in his Soul; yea, the ſufferings of his Soul were the very ſoul of his ſufferings; he felt in his inner man the exquiſite torments and inexpreſſible anguiſh of the Wrath of God. Hence was that preternatural bloody Sweat in the Garden; and hence that heart-rending outcry upon the Croſs, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

In all which Sufferings from Heaven, from Earth, from Hell, from Friends, from Enemies, there was no allay, no abatement of the leaſt degree of miſery. *God ſpared not his own Son,* (ſaith the Text) *but delivered him up.* Wherein the ſeverity of Divine Juſtice to Jeſus Chriſt is diſplay'd in theſe five remarkable Conſiderations following.

*Firſt, God ſpared not.* If mercy, pity, and forbearance might be expected from any hand, ſurely it might be God; he is the Fountain of mercy, *The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Jam.* 5. 11. The moſt melting and tender Compaſſions of a Mother to her ſucking Child are but Cruelty in compariſon with Divine Tenderneſs and Mercy, *Iſa.* 49. 15. *Can a Woman forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion upon the ſon of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*

*Can a Woman*, the more affectionate Sex, forget her ſucking Child, her own Child, and not a nurſe-child? only her own Child, whilſt it hangs on her Breaſt, and with the Milk from her Breaſt draws Love from her Heart; can ſuch a thing as this be in Nature? Poſſibly it may, ſome ſuch cruel Mothers may be found, but *yet I will not forget thee*, ſaith God. Tho' humane corrupt Nature may be ſo vitiated, yet from the divine Nature Compaſſion and Mercy are inſeparable; it flows as Waters flow from their Fountain, only here it reſtrain'd it ſelf, and let not out one drop to *Jeſus Chriſt*, in the day of his ſufferings. God, the God of Mercy, ſpared not.

*Secondly*, God *ſpared not*, ſaith the Text, (*i e.*) he abated not any thing which *Juſtice* could inflict: *Chriſt* was not ſpared one ſtroke, one tear, one groan, one drop, one ſigh, one ſhame, one circumſtance, no, not the leaſt, which *Juſtice* could demand as ſatisfaction for Man's Sin.

There be divers kinds of Mercy in God; there is in him preventing mercy, delivering mercy, and ſparing mercy. Now ſparing mercy (as Mr. *Caryl* on *Job* well obſerves) is the loweſt mercy of all the three; 'tis leſs mercy to be ſpar'd or abated ſome degree or circumſtance of miſery, than to have miſeries prevented by mercies ſtepping in betwixt us and it; it's leſs alſo than to be wholly deliver'd out of the hand of miſery. Either of theſe are greater acts of mercy than to abate a degree, or ſhorten an hour of our trouble; the leaſt abatement of any one circumſtance of miſery had been ſparing mercy, tho' it had been but the leaſt and loweſt act of mercy; and yet even *this* was denied to *Chriſt*, he was not abated one minute of time, or the leaſt degree of ſorrow, God ſpared not.

*Thirdly*, He *ſpared not his own Son*, τ̃ ὑιὸν ἴδιον: So ſtiled *Signanter* his own or his proper Son, in a ſpecial and peculiar manner nearer and dearer to him than *Angels*, who are his Sons by Creation, *Job* 1. 6. or any of the Saints, who are his Sons by Grace, in the way of Regeneration and Adoption, *John* 1. 12, 13. This was his own Son by Nature, a Son of an higher rank and order, *Pſal.* 2. 7. begotten in an ineffable manner, from all Eternity, in his own Divine Eſſence; and ſo is his Son by Nature, having the ſame Eſſence and Nature with the Father, being co equal, co-eſſential and co-eternal with the Father.

No Relation in Nature is ſo intimate, ſtrict and dear as *this*; our Children are not ſo much our own Children, are not ſo much our own Bodies as Chriſt was God's own Son; and yet tho' he were ſo dear to him, his other Self, his expreſs Image, his own dear Son, *he ſpared him not. God ſpared not his own Son.*

*Fourthly*, And that which makes a farther diſcovery of divine ſeverity towards *Jeſus Chriſt* is this, that *God ſpared not his own Son* in the day of his *greateſt diſtreſs*, when he cried to his Father in an Agony, that if it were poſſible the Cup might paſs from him: for of that day this Scripture is mainly to be underſtood, the day when he fell to the ground and pray'd, *That if it were poſſible the hour might paſs. When he ſaid, Abba Father, all things are poſſible to thee, take away this cup from me*, Mark 14. 35, 36. He beheld his own dear Son ſweltering great drops of Blood, crying, *If it be poſſible, let this hour this cup paſs*, and yet it could not be granted. O the Severity of God! he heard the cry of *Ahab*, and ſpared him; he heard the *Ninevites* cry, and ſpared them; he heard the crys of *Hagar* and *Iſhmael*, and ſpared them: yea, he hears the young *Ravens* when they cry, and feeds them; but when his own Son cried with the moſt vehement cry, that *the Cup* might *paſs*, he cannot be excus'd, he muſt drink it up, even the very dregs of the Cup of trembling, and that to the laſt drop. O, the Juſtice and Severity of God!

*Fifthly*, and laſtly, Conſider what the Father of Mercies did inſtead of ſparing the Son of his love, and the Text will inform you, that *he delivered him up for us all.* So 'tis noted in *Acts* 2. 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.*

There was a Conceſſion or Permiſſion to thoſe wicked Inſtruments that ſhed his Blood, a looſing of the Chain to thoſe Bandogs that compaſſed him about. Such a Conceſſion as was never given them before, for ſtill they were tied up from perpetrating their wickedneſs, but now the reſtraints of Providence are taken away, and he is deliver'd unto their will, his own Father delivers him into the hands of Cruelty. And thus you ſee wherein the Severity of Divine Juſtice to Chriſt was manifeſt.

In the laſt place, let us ſee the ground and reaſon of this Rigor and Severity to Chriſt: Now there are, among others, Three ſpecial Reaſons why Chriſt could not be ſpared.

The Honour of Divine Juſtice requir'd, that he ſhould ſuffer the utmoſt degree of puniſhment. It was meet that the Rights of Heaven ſhould be vindicated to the full, and that the Juſtice of God ſhould have the laſt Mite it could demand for ſatisfaction. And this was the ſpecial deſign and aim of God in the Sufferings of Chriſt, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* 3. 25, 26. It was *to declare his righteouſneſs*; and leſt we ſhould loſe the emphatical word, it is doubled and repeated, *to declare, I ſay, at this time his righteouſneſs.* And indeed herein God fully obtain'd his deſign; for never was Juſtice ſo honour'd before, to have ſuch a perſon as the Son of God at its Bar, and ſuch a Sum as his Blood paid down at once for our diſcharge. So that Juſtice triumphs as well as Mercy, and one Attribute is not robb'd to pay another.

As it was neceſſary to God's ſatisfaction, ſo it was neceſſary to ours alſo. If the Lord Jeſus had not made full payment to the utmoſt mite, we could never have had full ſatisfaction in our Conſciences, about that deep and dear concernment of our Souls, the remiſſion of Sin. Man is a guilty and a ſuſpicious Creature, and hard to be brought to an entire confidence in the Pardoning Mercy of God. Yea, it is impoſſible to perſwade a convinced Conſcience of the poſſibility of Remiſſion, except you can alſo prove the fulneſs of divine ſatisfaction; for Conſcience requires as much to ſatisfie it, as God doth to ſatisfie him. If God be ſatisfied, then Conſcience can be ſatisfied too, and ſecurely reſt upon that ground; but if there be any doubt of that, there is no appeaſing of an anxious and jealous *Conſcience.* Greatly therefore hath God conſulted our Peace in the ſeverity of his Juſtice to Jeſus Chriſt. *Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great ſhepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant*, Heb. 13. 20. Let the words be weigh'd; he is ſtiled the *God of Peace* when he brought back Chriſt from the dead. It was incenſed Juſtice that brought him back from the dead; and that which pacifies God, is the only thing in the World that is able to ſatisfie the Conſcience of a Sinner.

3. Therefore did God proceed with ſuch rigor and ſeverity with Jeſus Chriſt, that thereby the demerit and evil of Sin might be fully diſcovered to the World, and an everlaſting Caution left upon all Hearts to beware of contracting new Guilt.

If Juſtice had deſcended in a viſible form, and hang'd up millions of *Sinners* in Chains, it had not been ſuch a Warning as this againſt Sin. Nay, let me ſay, the grievous and external Torments that the Damn'd ſuffer in Hell, is not ſuch a demonſtration of the Evil of Sin as this is; for thoſe Torments are much unknown to Men till they feel them, and when they begin to feel them, it is too late to be convinc'd or caution'd againſt Sin then. But to ſee ſuch a Perſon as *Chriſt* expos'd to the utmoſt ſeverity of God's Wrath for our Sin, to ſee ſuch things done in the green Tree, may well make us cry out, *Lord, what will be done to the dry Tree?* O, the infinite Evil of Sin! O, the inflexible Severity of Divine Juſtice! It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

In a word; hereby Jeſus Chriſt is endear'd the more to his People, by ſuffering ſuch great and hard things in their place, and for their ſakes. The extremity of his Sufferings for us, commends the ſtrength of his Affection to us.

And thus you ſee the *Reaſons* of all this Severity to Jeſus Chriſt. God intended the ſweeteſt Mercies for you, and therefore prepar'd the bittereſt Sufferings for Chriſt: from his deep Sufferings you may confidently conclude the beſt of Mercies are deſign'd for you; as you will hear in the ſecond Doctrine, which for diſpatch I purpoſe to handle, as one Uſe of this point now before me.

O, the admirable and aſtoniſhing love of God to us poor Worms of the Earth, to deliver up his own Son into the hands of his Enemies, that thirſted for his Blood! Long had they been reſtrain'd from ſatisfying their Wickedneſs, and executing their Malice, till now; and this was the hour which he often ſpake of, *My hour is not yet come.* But, O, what a diſmal hour was it when it did come, when Providence let looſe both Devils and Men upon Chriſt, deliver'd him over to the will of his Enemies! And this was not all; Chriſt was not only deliver'd up into the hands of the worſt of Men, but, which was much more terrible, into the ſevere hands of Divine Juſtice, to grapple with the pure, unmix'd, and unallay'd wrath of the great and terrible God.

Laſtly, We will improve this point by a double Uſe, of *Information* and *Exhortation.*

### *Uſe* 1. *Of Information.*

The Severity of God's Juſtice to Jeſus Chriſt informs us what a dreadful evil Sin is, which ſo incenſes the Wrath of God even againſt his own Son, when he bare our Sins, and ſtood before the Bar of God as our Surety.

Come hither, hard Hearts, (hard indeed if this cannot break them) you complain you cannot ſee the evil of Sin, ſo as to be deeply humbled for it; fix your Eyes a while here, and intently conſider the point in hand: Suppoſe you ſaw a tender and pitiful Father come into open Court with Fury in his Face, to charge his own, his only, and his moſt beloved Son, and proſecute him to Death, and nothing able to ſatisfie him but his Blood, and be well pleas'd when he ſees it ſhed, would you not ſay, O, what horrid Evil hath he done? it muſt be ſome deep Wrong, ſome heinous Crime that he is guilty of, elſe it could never be that his own Father could forget his bowels of Pity and Mercy. Yet thus did the Wrath of God break forth againſt his dear Son, when he ſtood before the Bar charg'd, as our Surety, with the guilt of our Sins.

Secondly, Learn hence what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. Well might *Luther* cry out, *Nolo Deum abſolutum, Let me have nothing to do with an abſolute God.* Woe to them that ſtand before God in their own perſons, without Chriſt; how will Juſtice handle them! *For if theſe things were done in the green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry tree?* Luke 23. 31. Did the Son of God fear, tremble, ſweat clods of Blood? Did he ſtand amaz'd, and fall into ſuch an Agony of Soul when he drank that Cup, which he knew in a few hours he ſhould drink up, and then never taſte the bitterneſs of it more? How ſad is their caſe that muſt drink of that Cup for ever, a Cup that hath Eternity to the bottom!

Thirdly, How incomprehenſible and raviſhing is the love of God to Men, that would rather be ſo ſevere to Jeſus Chriſt, the Darling of his Soul, than make us the Objects of Wrath for ever? Which of you (though there be infinitely leſs Tenderneſs in your Hearts than God's) would lay your Hands upon a Child, the worſt Child you have, and put him to death, for the ſake of the beſt Friend you have in the World? But God with his own hand deliver'd his *Son*, his *only Son*, that from everlaſting was the delight of his Soul, who never offended him, to Death, the moſt curſed and cruel Death, and all this for Enemies: how unſpeakable is this Love, and paſt finding out!

Fourthly, Did not God ſpare his own Son? then let none of us ſpare our own Sins. Sin was that Sword which pierced Chriſt; O let ſorrow for Sin pierce your Hearts: If you ſpare Sin, God will not ſpare you, *Deut.* 29. 20. We ſpare Sin when we faintly oppoſe it, when we excuſe, cover and defend it, when we are impatient under juſt Rebukes and Reproofs for it; but all Kindneſs to Sin is Cruelty to our own Souls.

Fifthly, and laſtly, If God did not ſpare Chriſt, certainly he intends to ſpare Believers for his ſake.

The *Surety* could not be ſpar'd, that the *Principal* might be ſpar'd for ever. If God had ſpar'd him, he could not have ſpar'd us; if he afflicts his People, it is not for ſatisfaction to himſelf, but profit to us, *Heb.* 12. 10. Should God ſpare the Rod of Affliction, it would not be for our advantage; ſo many ſanctified Afflictions as are ſpared or abated, ſo many Mercies and ſpiritual Advantages are with-held from us. But as for thoſe Strokes of Juſtice that are the effects of God's vindictive Wrath, they ſhall never be felt by Believers for ever. All the Wrath, all the Curſe, all the Gall and Wormwood was ſqueez'd into *Chriſt's* Cup, and not one drop left to imbitter ours.

### *Uſe* 2. *Of Exhortation.*

Did not God ſpare his own Son, but give him up to Death for us all? Then poſſeſs your Hearts fully in the aſſurance of this great Truth, *That the greateſt and beſt of Mercies ſhall not be denied or with-held from you, if you be in Chriſt*; lay it down as a ſure Concluſion of Faith, and build up your Hope and Comfort upon it. This takes in the ſecond Obſervation, and ſurely never was any Truth better fortified, never any Inference more ſtrongly inferr'd. Henceforth ye may infer Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Mercies; all muſt be yours if you be Chriſt's, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21, 22, 23. Oh, make ſure that Chriſt is yours, and never heſitate at any other Mercy; for,

Firſt, God hath certainly a value and eſteem for his own Son infinitely above all other things; he is his own Son, his dear Son, *Col.* 1. 13. the *Beloved*, Eph. 1. 6. *The delight of his Soul*, Iſa. 42. 1. Nothing is valued by God at that rate that Chriſt is valued. If therefore he ſpare not the moſt excellent Mercy, but parts with the very Darling of his Soul for us, how ſhall he deny or with-hold any leſſer inferiour Mercy? it is not to be imagin'd, for he is *the Mercy*, emphatically ſo call'd *Luke* 1. 72.

Secondly, Jeſus Chriſt is a *Comprehenſive Mercy*, including all other Mercies in himſelf; he is the Tree of Life, all other Mercies are but the Fruits growing on him; he is the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, and whatever Comfort, ſpiritual or natural, refreſhes your Souls or Bodies, is but a *Beam* from that *Sun*, a Stream from that Fountain. If then God part with Chriſt to you, and for you, he will not with-hold other Mercies; he will not give the whole Tree, and deny an Apple; beſtow the Fountain it ſelf, and deny you the Streams. All ſpiritual Mercies are in him, and given with him, *Epheſ.* 1. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings, in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus.* All *Temporals* are in him, and given with him, *Matth.* 6. 33. they are Additionals to that great Mercy.

Thirdly, If God ſpar'd not Chriſt, the beſt Mercy, but deliver'd him up for us all when we were his *Enemies*, then certainly he will not deny leſſer Mercies when we are reconciled and made *Friends* to him. And this is the forcible Reaſon of the Apoſtle, which even compels aſſent, *Rom.* 5. 9. *Much more being now juſtified by his blood, we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him.* In a word,

Fourthly, and laſtly, If it were the very deſign and intention of God in not ſparing his own Son, to open thereby a Door for all Mercies to be let in upon us, then 'tis not imaginable he ſhould with-hold them. He will not loſe his deſign, nor lay ſo many Stripes upon Chriſt in vain; ſome ſhall ſurely have the benefit of it, and none ſo capable as Believers.

When God ſpared not his own Son, this was the deſign of it, and could you know the thoughts of his Heart, they would appear to be ſuch as theſe.

I will now manifeſt the *fierceneſs of my Wrath* to Chriſt, and the *fulneſs of my Love* to Believers. The *Pain* ſhall be his, that the *Eaſe* and *Reſt* may be theirs; the *Stripes* his, and the *healing Balm* iſſuing from them theirs; the *Condemnation* his, and the *Juſtification* theirs; the *Reproach* and *Shame* his, and the *Honour* and *Glory* theirs; the *Curſe* his, and the *Bleſſing* theirs; the *Death* his, and the *Life* theirs; the *Vinegar* and *Gall* his, the *ſweet* of it theirs. He ſhall groan, and they ſhall triumph; he ſhall mourn, that they may rejoyce; his Heart ſhall be heavy for a time, that theirs may be light and glad for ever; he ſhall be forſaken, that they may never be forſaken; out of the worſt of Miſeries to him, ſhall ſpring the ſweeteſt of Mercies to them. O Grace! Grace beyond conception of the largeſt Mind, or the expreſſion of the Tongues of Angels!

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# The Seventh MEDITATION,

## UPON

## Mark 9. 24. *And ſtraightway the Father of the Child cried, and ſaid with tears, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.*

THE occaſion of theſe words is to be gather'd from the Context, and briefly it was this: A tender Father brings a poſſeſs'd Child to Chriſt to be cur'd with *ſi potes*, a doubting Queſtion, *If thou canſt do any thing, have compaſſion upon us, and help us.* Words importing much natural affection and tender love to his Child. *Have Compaſſion* [*upon us*] *and* [*help us.*] If the Child be ſick, the Parent is not well; what touches the Child, is felt by his Father.

And as they import his natural affection to his Child, ſo alſo his own ſpiritual Diſeaſe, or the weakneſs of his Faith. His Child was poſſeſt with a dumb Devil, and himſelf with unbelieving doubts and ſuſpicions of Chriſt's ability to cure his Child: The Child had a ſick *Body*, and the Father an infirm *Soul*; Satan afflicted one by a *Poſſeſſion*, and the other by *Temptation*, Ver. 22.

Chriſt returns his doubting Language upon himſelf, *ver.* 23. *If thou canſt believe, all things are poſſible to him that believeth*; *q. d.* Doſt thou doubt of my ability to heal thy Child? Queſtion rather thy own ability to believe for his cure: If he be not heal'd, the cauſe will not be in my *inability*, but in thine own *infidelity*. Which he ſpeaks not to inſinuate, that Faith was in his own power, but to convince him of his weakneſs, and drive him to God for aſſiſtance, which effect it obtain'd; for immediately he *cried out, and ſaid with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*

O how good is it for men to be brought into the ſtreights of Affliction ſometimes! had not this man fallen into this diſtreſs, it's not like that he had (at leaſt not ſo ſoon) arrived either to the ſenſe of his Grace, or the weakneſs of it.

In the words we may note theſe three parts.

Firſt, A profeſſion of his Faith, *Lord, I believe.*

Secondly, A ſenſe of the weakneſs of his Faith, *Help thou my unbelief.*

Thirdly, The Affection with which both were uttered, *He cried out, and ſaid with tears.* If theſe Tears proceeded from the ſenſe and feeling of divine power enabling him to believe, as ſome think, then they were Tears of Joy, and would inform us of this great Truth.

Doct. 1. *That the leaſt and loweſt meaſure of true Faith is matter of joy unſpeakable to the poſſeſſor of it.*

If they proceeded from the ſenſe of the weakneſs of his Faith, then they give us this note.

Doct. 2. *That the remainders of Unbelief in the People of God do coſt them many Tears, they are the Burdens and Sorrows of gracious Souls.*

Doct. 1. *That the leaſt and loweſt meaſure of Faith is matter of Joy unſpeakable to the poſſeſſor of it.*

The Apoſtle, in 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. calls it precious *Faith*, and it well deſerves that Epithet, for the leaſt and loweſt degree of Saving Faith is of invaluable excellency; as will appear in theſe particulars.

Firſt, The leaſt degree of Saving Faith truly unites the Soul to Jeſus Chriſt, and makes it as really a Branch or Member of him, as *Moſes*, *Abraham*, or *Paul* were.

All Saving Faith receives Chriſt, *John* 1. 12. Indeed the ſtrong Believer receives him with a ſtronger and ſteadier hand than the weak one doth, who ſtaggers, doubts, and trembles, but yet receives him, and conſequently is as much intereſſed in the Bleſſed Privileges flowing from Heaven, as the greateſt Believer in the World. Such is *Chriſt's* complacency in our Perſons and Duties; his ſimpathy with us in our Troubles and Afflictions, and our intereſt in his Perſon and Purchaſe. And is not this matter of exceeding Joy? Is it not enough to melt, yea, overwhelm the Heart of a poor Sinner, to diſcover and feel that in his own Heart which entitles him to ſuch Mercies.

Secondly, From the leaſt degree of Saving Faith we may infer as plenary a remiſſion of Sin as from the ſtrongeſt. The weakeſt Believer is as compleatly pardoned as the ſtrongeſt, *Acts* 10. 43. *By him all that believe are juſtified from all things.* All that believe without difference of ſizes, ſtrength, or degrees, the leaſt as well as the greateſt, the Believer of a Day old, as well as the Fathers and Worthies of greateſt name and longeſt ſtanding.

Lo then, the leaſt meaſure of Faith entitles thee as really to the greateſt Bleſſing as the higheſt acts of Faith can do. 'Tis true, the ſtronger the acting of Faith is, the clearer the Evidence uſually is; but Intereſt in the Privilege is the ſame in both. If then thou canſt diſcern but the *weakeſt* act and *ſmalleſt* meaſure of Faith in thy Soul, haſt thou not reaſon, with him in the Text, to cry out, and ſay with tears, *Lord, I believe?* Canſt thou receive and read this Pardon of ſuch and ſo many Sins, and not wet it with thy Tears? O, it's matter of Joy unſpeakable.

Thirdly, The *leaſt* degree of Saving Faith inferſ thy Election of God; and if that be not matter of melting and tranſporting conſideration, nothing is. O, it's matter of more Joy, that our Names are *written in the Book of Life*, than that the Devils are ſubject to us, *Luke* 10. 20. From hence it may be inferred, that we are choſen of God, *Acts* 13. 48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*

Fourthly, The *leaſt* meaſure of Saving Faith is a Mercy greater than moſt Men ever partake of.

'Tis true, God is rich and bountiful in the *Gifts of Providence* to others, they have the good things of this Life, many of them more than their hearts can wiſh, *Pſal.* 73. 7. he enricheth many of them alſo with Endowments of the Mind, natural and moral Knowledge and Wiſdom, yea, and adorns them with *Homilitical Virtues*, that render them very deſirable and lovely in their converſes with Men; but there are but few to whom he gives ſaving Faith, *Iſa.* 53. 1. Believers are but a ſmall remnant among Men.

Fifthly, and laſtly, He that hath any, the leaſt degree of ſaving Faith, hath that which will never be taken from him, all other Excellencies go away at death, *Job* 4. 21. but this is a Spring that never fails, it ſprings up into everlaſting life, *John* 4. 14. A man may outlive his Friends and Familiars, his Eſtate and Health, his Gifts and natural Parts, but not his Faith: how great matter of Joy and Comfort is wrapt up in the leaſt degree of Faith!

*Uſe* 1. *Of Tryal.*

It concerns us then to examine our ſelves, whether our Faith be true, be it more or leſs, ſtronger or weaker, and till we diſcern its truth, it will yield us but little Comfort.

I confeſs, weak Believers are under great diſadvantages to Comfort, ſmall and weak things being uſually very inevident and undiſcernable; but yet in this Example before us we find weak Faith was made evident, though much Unbelief was mixed with it. *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief*; in which words many very uſeful ſigns of true, though weak Faith, did appear, and they are very relieving to weak Believers to conſider them; O, that we might find the like in us!

*Firſt*, His Faith gave him a tender melting Heart; *He cried out, and ſaid with tears.* Doth your Faith melt your Hearts, either in ſenſe of your own Vileneſs, or the Riches of Free Grace to ſuch vile Creatures?

*Secondly*, His Faith gave him a deep ſenſe of his remaining Unbelief, and burdened his Heart with it, *Help my unbelief*; and ſure ſo will yours, if it be but as a grain of Muſtard-ſeed in you.

*Thirdly*, His weak Faith carried him to Chriſt in fervent Prayers and Cries for his help to ſubdue Unbelief in him, and ſo will yours if your Faith be right. Oh, how often do the People of God go to the Throne of Grace upon that Errand? Help, Lord, my Heart is dead, vain, and very unbelieving; there's no dealing with it in my own ſtrength; Father, help me.

*Fourthly*, His weak Faith made him hunger and thirſt after greater meaſures of it; *Help my unbelief, i.e.* Lord, cure it, that I may believe with more ſtrong and ſteddy Acts of Faith; that I may not queſtion thy power any more, or ſay, *If thou canſt do any thing.* Why thus it will be with you, if you be true Believers, *Luke* 17. 5. *Lord,* (ſaid the Diſciples) *increaſe our Faith.*

Fifthly, There was a Conflict in his Soul betwixt Faith and Infidelity, Grace and Corruption, and this very ſenſible to him. Faith inclining him one way, and Unbelief carrying him another; and hence he ſpeaks like a Man greatly diſtreſſed betwixt the working of contrary Principles in his own Soul; and ſo you will alſo find it in your ſelves, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

*Uſe* 2. *Of Conſolation.* Well then, bleſs the Lord for the leaſt degree of ſaving Faith, and be not ſo diſcouraged at its Imperfections, as to over-look and ſlight the ſmalleſt working of Faith in your Souls. This poor Man was deeply ſenſible of his Unbelief, and yet at the ſame inſtant truly thankful for a ſmall meaſure of Faith, and ſo ſhould you. For,

Firſt, The leaſt meaſure of ſaving Faith, is more than all Creatures power could produce: 'Tis the Faith of the Operation of God, *Col.* 2. 12. 'Tis the Work of God that ye believe, *John* 6.29. Yea, 'tis the exceeding greatneſs of his Power, *Eph.* 1. 19. 20. No Miniſters of Chriſt, how excellent ſoever their Gifts are, no Duties or Ordinances, no Labour or Diligence of your own, without this mighty Power of God, can ever bring you to Faith.

Secondly, 'Tis juſt matter of Wonder and Aſtoniſhment, that ever one Spark of Faith was kindled in ſuch an Heart as thine is; an Heart which had no prediſpoſition or inclination, in the leaſt to believe; yea, it was not *Raſa Tabula,* like clean Paper, void of any Impreſſion of Faith, but fill'd with contrary Impreſſions to it; ſo that 'tis marvellous that ever your Hearts received the Stamp, or Impreſſion of Faith, on them.

It was wonderful that Fire ſhould fall from Heaven, and burn upon the Altar, when *Elijah* had laid the Wood in order upon it; but much more when he poured ſo much Water upon it, as not only wet all the Wood, but fill'd the Trenches, 1 *Kings* 18. 33. Juſt ſo was the Caſe of thy Soul, Reader, when God came to kindle Faith there. Thy Heart was dark and ignorant, neither acquainted with God, or thy own Condition; yea, thy Heart was a proud Heart, full of Self righteouſneſs, and Self-conceitedneſs, *Rom.* 3. 17. *Rom.* 10. 3. A Heart that would rather venture Eternal Damnation, than deny ſelf, and ſubmit to Chriſt; and yet the Light of the Lord muſt ſhine into this darkneſs, and the pride and ſtiffneſs of thy Heart muſt be broken and brought to yield, or there is no believing.

Beſide: How many and mighty Enemies did oppoſe the Work of Faith in thy Soul? Among which Satan, and thy own carnal Reaſonings were the principal, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. By them what Strong-holds and Fortifications were raiſed to ſecure thee from the Strokes of Conviction, that make way for Faith. Let but the State of thine own Heart, as it was by Nature, be conſidered, and thou wilt ſay, it was the wonderful Work of God, that ever thou waſt brought in any degree to believe.

Thirdly, Tho' thy Faith be weak, yet it is growing, if it be ſaving Faith. The largeſt Tree was once but a Kernel or Acorn: The moſt famous Believer at firſt, but a weak and doubting one. Be not diſcouraged therefore, God will fulfil all the good pleaſure of his Goodneſs in you, and the Work of Faith with Power. It were certainly much better for you to be bleſſing God for a little Faith, praying for the increaſe of Faith, and diligently attending thoſe means by which it may be improved and made flouriſhing in your Souls, than by a ſinful, ungrateful, and prejudicial deſpondency, at once to diſhonour God, and thus wrong your ſelves.

Doct. 2. *That the remain of Unbelief in gracious Hearts, do coſt them many Tears and Sorrows.*

There are many things that afflict and grieve the People of God from without, but all their outward Troubles are nothing to theſe Troubles that come from within.

There are many inward Troubles that make them groan, but none more than this, the Unbelief they find in their own Hearts. This Sin juſtly coſts them more trouble than other Sins; becauſe it is the Root from which other Sins do ſpring; a Root of Bitterneſs bearing Wormwood and Gall to the imbittering of their Souls. For,

Firſt, The Remains of Unbelief in the Saints, greatly diſhonour God; and what is a great diſhonour to God, cannot but be a great grief and burden to them: For look as Faith gives God ſpecial Honour above all other Graces, ſo Unbelief in a ſpecial manner, both wrongs and grieves him above all other Sins. Unbelief in Dominion makes God a Liar, 1 *John* 5. 10. and even the Relicks thereof in Believers, do ſhake their Aſſent to his Truths and Promiſes, and nouriſhes a vile Suſpicion of them in the Heart; And how do thoſe baſe Jealouſies reflect upon his Honour? Certainly it cannot but be a Grief to a gracious Heart, to ſee God diſhonoured by others, *Pſalm* 119. 36. and a much greater to diſhonour him our ſelves, *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.* Upon this ground we may juſtly cry out and ſay with Tears, *Lord, help our Unbelief.*

Secondly, The Remains of Unbelief in the Saints, doth not only diſhonour God, but defaces and ſpoils their beſt Duties, in which they at any time approach unto God. Is the Face of God clouded from us in Prayer, hearing, or receiving? Examine the Cauſe and Reaſon, and you will find that Cloud rais'd from your own unbelieving Hearts. Are your Affections cold, flat, and dead in Duty? Dig but to the Root, and you will find this Sin to lie there. If the Word do not work upon you as you deſire, and pray it might, 'tis becauſe it is not mingled with Faith, *Heb.* 4. 2. No Duties, nor Ordinances, no Promiſes, can give down their ſweet Influences upon your Souls, becauſe of this Sin. Now Communion with the Lord in Duties, is the Life of our Life: Theſe things are dearer to the Saints than their Eyes. Juſtly therefore do they bewail and mourn over that

that Sin, which obſtructs and intercepts their ſweeteſt Enjoyments in this World.

Thirdly, The Remains of Unbelief give advantage and ſucceſs to Satan's Temptations upon us. Doth he at any time afright and ſcare us from our Duty, or draw and entice us to the commiſſions of Sin, or darken and cloud our Condition, and fill us with inward Fears and Horror, without cauſe? All this he doth by the Mediation of our own Unbelief. The Apoſtle in *Epheſ.* 6. 16. calls Faith the Souls Shield againſt Temptation: And 1 *John* 5. 4. 'tis call'd the Victory by which we overcome, (*i. e.*) the Sword, or Weapon, by which we atchieve our Victories: And if ſo, then Unbelief diſarms us both of Sword and Shield, and leave us naked of Defence in the Day of Battle, a Prey to the next Temptation that befals us.

Fourthly, The Remains of Unbelief hinder the thriving of all Graces, it's a Worm at their Root, a Plant of ſuch a malignant quality, that nothing which is ſpiritual can thrive under the Droppings and Shadow of it. It's ſaid, *Heb.* 4. 2. That the Goſpel was preached to the *Iſraelites*, but it did not profit them, not being mixed with Faith in them that heard it. No Ordinances nor Duties, be they never ſo excellent, will make that Soul to thrive, where Unbelief prevails: You pray, you hear, you faſt, you meditate, and yet you do not thrive, your Spiritual Food doth no good: You come from Ordinances as dead, careleſs, and vain as you went to them; And why is it thus, becauſe of remaining Unbelief?

## USE I.

Let all the People of God bewail, and tenderly mourn over the Remainders of Infidelity in their own Hearts. There, there is the Root of the Diſeaſe; and ſurely, *Reader*, thy Heart is not free of ſuch Symptoms of it as appear in other Mens Hearts. For do but conſider,

*Sympt.* 1. What is our Impatiency to wait for Mercy, and Deſpondency of Spirit, if Deliverance come not quickly in the outward, or inward Streights of Soul or Body, but a plain Symptom of Unbelief in our Hearts? *He that believes, will not make haſte*, *Iſa.* 28. 16. He that can believe, can alſo wait God's time, *Pſal.* 27. 14.

*Sympt.* 2. And what means our Readineſs to uſe ſinful Mediums to prevent, or extricate our ſelves out of trouble, but a great deal of Infidelity lurking ſtill in our Hearts? Might but Faith be heard to ſpeak, it would ſay in thy Heart, let me rather die ten Deaths, than commit one Sin. It's ſweeter and eaſie to die in my Integrity, than to live with a defiled or wounded Conſcience. 'Tis nothing but our Unbelief, that makes us ſo ready to put forth our Hands to Iniquity, when the Rod of the Wicked reſts long upon us, or any eminent Danger threatens us, *Pſal.* 125. 3.

*Sympt.* 3. Doth not the Unbelief of your Hearts ſhew it ſelf in your deeper Thoughtfulneſs, and great Anxieties, about earthly Things, *Matth.* 6. 30. We pretend we have truſted God with our Souls to all Eternity, and yet cannot truſt him for our daily Bread. We bring the Evils of to Morrow upon us to Day; and all becauſe we cannot believe more.

O Reader! How much better were it to hear ſuch Queſtions as theſe from thee? How ſhall I get an Heart ſuitable to the Mercies I do enjoy? How ſhall I duly improve them for God? What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his Goodneſs? This would better become thee, than to afflict thy ſelf with, *What ſhall I eat, what ſhall I drink, or wherewithal ſhall I be cloathed?*

*Sympt.* 4. What doth the ſlaviſh Fear of Death ſpeak, but Remains of Unbelief ſtill in our Hearts? Are there not many Faintings, Tremblings, Deſpondencies of Mind, under the Thoughts of Death. O! if Faith were high, thy Spirit could not be ſo low, 2 *Cor.* 1. 2, 3. The more Bondage of Fear, the more Infidelity.

*Sympt.* 5. To conclude: What is the Voice of all thoſe Diſtractions of thy Heart in Religious Duties, but want of Faith, weakneſs in Faith, and the actual prevalence of Unbelief? You come to God in Prayer, and there a thouſand Vanities beſet you; your Heart is carried away, it roves, it wanders to the Ends of the Earth: Conſcience ſmites for this, and ſaith, Thou doſt but mock God, thy Soul will ſmart for this; thou feeleſt neither ſtrength nor ſweetneſs ariſing out of ſuch Duties. You enquire for Remedies, and fill the Ears of Friends with your Complaints, and it may be, ſee not the Root of all this to be in your own Unbelief: But there it is; and 'till that be cured, it will not be better with you.

## USE II.

Yet let not poor Chriſtians ſo mourn, as thoſe that have no hope or ground of Comfort even in this Caſe: For,

Firſt, Tho' there be remains of Unbelief in you, yet you have infinite cauſe to bleſs God that they are but remains. You once were in Unbelief, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. (*i. e.*) under the full Power and Dominion of it. Had God cut you off in that ſtate, you muſt certainly have periſhed. This is the Diſeaſe, but that was the Death of your Souls.

Secondly, Tho' Unbelief be in you, yet it is not in you *per modum quietis*, by way of reſt, as it is in all Unbelievers, but by way of daily Conflict, and as a Burden too heavy to be born. Now tho' the Sin be ſad, yet the Sorrow for it is ſweet; and your Conflicts with it, bring you under a very comfortable Sign of Grace, *Rom.* 7. 21.

Thirdly, This is a Diſeaſe under which all Chriſtians do labour more or leſs. There is not a Heart ſo holy in all the World, but is in ſome degree tainted and infected with this Diſeaſe. And this hath been evident, not only in all Chriſtians of all ſizes, but in all the Acts of their Faith. *Job*'s Faith triumphed in *Chap.* 13. 15. yet had its Eclipſe and Fainting-fit, in *Chap.* 19. 20. *Abraham* was a moſt renowned Believer, a great Pattern and Example of Faith: Oh! how high a pitch did his Faith mount to, in *Gen.* 22. 3.

and yet there was a time when it fainted, and failed him, as at *Gerar*, *Gen.* 20. 2, 10, 11. *David* in *Pſal.* 27. 1, 23. was not like *David* in 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. The Faith of *Peter* ſhone out like the Sun in a glorious Confeſſion, *Mat.* 16. 16. and yet was not only beclouded, but ſeemed to be gone down, and quite ſet in *Mat.* 26. 69. tho' it afterwards recovered it ſelf.

Fourthly, 'Tis not this or that degree of Unbelief that damns a Man, but the power and dominion of it that damns him. Indeed your Comfort much depends upon the ſtrength of your Faith; but your Salvation depends upon the truth of it. Moſt Chriſtians come to Heaven with a weak and doubting Faith, but few with their Sails fill'd with a direct and freſh Wind of Aſſurance.

Fifthly, There is enough in Chriſt to help Unbelief; *Lord*, ſaid this poor Man, *help my Unbelief.* He is an excellent Phyſitian, and knows how to relieve and cure thee: Go to him, and groan out thy Complaint, tell him, thy Heart is pained and troubled with this Diſeaſe; thou ſhalt find him a faithful, skilful, and merciful Saviour.

Sixthly, It's but a little while before this, with all other Diſeaſes bred by it in thy Soul, ſhall be perfectly healed; Sanctification is a Cure begun, Glorification is the Cure performed and compleated: The former hath deſtroy'd the Dominion, the latter will deſtroy the Exiſtence of it in thy Soul: When you come to Heaven, and never 'till then, will you find your ſelves well, and at eaſe in every part.

And thus much of the Second Point.

There are ſome general Obſervations ariſing from both parts of my Text conſidered together, *viz.* the thankful Acknowledgment of his Faith; and the ſorrowful Sence of his Unbelief. It ſhall ſuffice for a Concluſion to this Meditation only to note them; and they are theſe:

*Firſt*, That the deepeſt Sence of Sin muſt not exclude an humble and thankful Acknowledgment of the Grace of God in his People. 'Tis the fault of moſt to hide their Sins, and the fault of ſome to hide their Graces.

*Secondly*, Acceptance of our Perſons and Duties, is a pure Act of Grace. There's no Duty performed in a perfect Act of Faith; all is mix'd with Unbelief in ſome degree, the Honey and the Comb are mix'd together, *Cant.* 2. 8. No Duty as it comes from us is pure.

*Thirdly*, Juſtly may we ſuſpect that Faith for a falſe Faith, which boaſts of its own Strength, but never mourns in the Sence of Unbelief. Where there are no Conflicts with Sin, there can be no ſound Evidence of Sincerity.

*Fourthly*, Believers muſt not wonder to find ſtrange Viciſſitudes and Alterations in the State of their Souls. Sometimes a clear, and ſometimes a cloudy Day. Sometimes they have their Songs in the Night, and ſometimes their bitter Lamentations. If you ask, Why is it thus? the Anſwer is, there are Twins within you, contrary Principles ſtrugling in your Souls, and it is no wonder at all to find Peace and Trouble, Hope and Fear, Light and Darkneſs taking their Turns, and ſharing your Time betwixt them.

# The Eighth MEDITATION,

UPON

## Pſalm 40. 8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy Law is within my heart.*

CAſting my Eye upon this precious Text, I find it perplex'd and darkned with variety, yea, contrariety of Expoſitions: The *Jews* and *Socinians* generally refer all to *David*, denying Chriſt to be the Perſon here ſpoken of. Others refer the whole *Pſalm* to *Chriſt*, but the beſt Expoſitors refer it partly to *David*, and partly to *Chriſt*. That this Paragraph, in which my Text lies, refers to *Chriſt*, is plain from the *Apoſtle*'s allegation of it in *Heb.* 10. 5, 6, 7. In this and the two former Verſes there lie three great points of Truth, which you may take up in this order.

*Firſt*, The inſufficiency and rejection of all legal Sacrifices, as things of no vertue in themſelves to ſatisfie God or ſave men, *verſ.* 6. *Theſe thou wouldſt not*, (*i. e.*) thou never didſt appoint them to be the means of Salvation farther than they ſignified and pointed at me, and now muſt vaniſh when I come in a Body of Fleſh, according to that, *Col.* 2. 17.

*Secondly*, The introduction of a compleat and ſufficient means of Redemption, *verſ.* 7. *Lo, I come.*

*Thirdly*, The ſuitableneſs and agreeableneſs of this Work of Redemption to the Heart and Will of Jeſus Chriſt, *verſ.* 8. I delight to do thy Will, O my God; yea, thy Law is within my Heart; or as it is in the Hebrew, *in the midſt of my bowels.*

In the words we are to note two things, *viz.* 1*ſt*, The Riſe and Spring of Man's Redemption. 2*dly*, The acceptableneſs and ſuitableneſs of it to the Heart of Chriſt.

1*ſt*, The Riſe and firſt Spring of man's Redemption, the Will and Pleaſure of God. So it pleaſed the Lord to appoint and order it, that a remnant of poor loſt Sinners ſhould be ſaved.

The execution and accompliſhment of this good pleaſure of God, was that part which by agreement and conſent was committed to the Son, and is here call'd a *Law*, or Command laid upon him. And anſwerably to the Death of Chriſt is repreſented as an act of Obedience, *Phil.* 2. 8. and reſpected God's Command for it, *John* 10. 18. *This commandment have I received from my Father*; referring to the *Covenant of Redemption* which was betwixt them from everlaſting: and this was the riſe and firſt ſpring of our Redemption by Chriſt.

2*dly*, You have here the gratefulneſs and ſuitableneſs of this Work to the Heart of Chriſt; *I delight to do it, it is in my heart.* Lo, I come.

The Hebrew words note not ſimple conſent or willingneſs, but the higheſt pleaſure and complacency that can be; a Work which raviſhes his Soul with the delights of it. *I delight to do thy will*, and that other expreſſion, *Thy law is within my heart*, or bowels, hath as deep a ſenſe and ſignification as the former. It notes the greateſt care, ſollicitude and intention of mind, in keeping the moſt precious Treaſure that was committed to him, for ſo the Phraſe is us'd in *Prov.* 4. 21. and ſo did our Redeemer eſteem and reckon this Work, which was by the Father demandated and committed to him. Hence the Note is,

*Doct. That the Will of God to redeem Sinners by the Incarnation and Death of Jeſus Chriſt, was moſt grateful and pleaſing to the very Heart of Chriſt.*

It is ſaid, *Prov.* 8. 31. When he was ſolacing himſelf in the ſweeteſt enjoyment of his Father, whilſt he lay in that bleſſed Boſom of Delights, yet the very proſpect of this work gave him pleaſure, *Then were his delights with the Sons of men.* And when he was come into the World, and had endur'd many Abuſes and Injuries, and was even now come to the moſt difficult part of the work; yet, *how am I ſtraightned* or pained (ſaith he) *till it be accompliſhed*, Luke 12. 50.

Two things call our Thoughts to ſtay upon them in this point.

*Firſt*, The Decency of it, why it ought to be ſo.

*Secondly*, The Reaſons of it, whence it came to be ſo.

*Firſt*, Why it ought to be a pleaſant and grateful thing to Chriſt, to take a Body of Fleſh, and lay it down by Death again for the Redemption of Sinners.

1. It became Chriſt to go about this Work with cheerfulneſs and delight, that thereby he might give his Death the nature and formality of a Sacrifice.

In all Sacrifices you ſhall find that God had ſtill a regard, a ſpecial reſpect, to the Will of the Offerer. See *Exod.* 35. 5, 21. and *Levit.* 1. 3. the voluntarineſs and cheerfulneſs with which it is given is of great regard with God.

2. It ought to be ſo, in regard of the Unity of Chriſt's Will with the Fathers. The Work of our Redemption is call'd, *the pleaſure of the Lord*, Iſa. 53. 10. and what was the Father's pleaſure, could not be diſpleaſing to him who is one with the Father. It's impoſſible their Wills can claſh, whoſe Nature is one.

3. This was neceſſary to magnifie and commend the Love of Jeſus Chriſt to us, for whom he gave himſelf. That he came into the World to die for us, is a Mercy of the firſt magnitude; but that he came in love to our Souls, and underwent all his Sufferings with ſuch willingneſs for our ſakes, this heightens it above all apprehenſion.

O, this is the moſt taking, the moſt raviſhing, the moſt aſtoniſhing Conſideration of all: *He loved me, and gave himſelf for me,* Galat. 2. 20. *He loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own Blood,* Rev. 1. 5. Here Love is in its higheſt exaltation.

4 It was neceſſary to be ſo, for the regulating of all our Obedience to God according to this Pattern, that ſeeing and ſetting this great Example of Obedience before us, we might never grudge nor grumble at any Duty or Suffering that God ſhould call us to, *You know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; how that, though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor,* ſaith the Apoſtle, when he would preſs the *Corinthians* to their Duty, 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. And when he would effectually urge the *Philippians* to their Duty, this is the Argument, *Let this mind be in you, which alſo was in Chriſt Jeſus,* Phil. 2. 5. So that it became and behov'd Chriſt thus to undertake this great Service.

*Secondly,* Next let us conſider and examine whence it came to be ſo pleaſant and acceptable to Jeſus Chriſt to come into the World and die for poor Sinners.

And we ſhall find, that although the Sufferings of Chriſt were exceeding ſharp, and the Cup of God's Wrath unſpeakably bitter, yet that which made it pleaſant and deſirable to Jeſus Chriſt, was the proſpect he had of the ſweet reſults and iſſues of his Sufferings, *Iſa.* 53. 10, 11. *He ſhall ſee of the travail of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied,* (*i. e.*) he ſhall have great content and pleaſure from the iſſues and fruits of his Sufferings; as *Pſal.* 128. 2. *Thou ſhalt eat the labour of thy hands,* (*i. e.*) the fruit of thy Labours. So here, *He ſhall ſee the travail of his ſoul,* (*i. e.*) the fruit and effects of his travail; and to ſee this, ſhall be to him the reward and recompence of all his Sufferings. Now, among the ſweet Reſults of the Sufferings of Chriſt, there are eſpecially theſe three, which he foreſaw with ſingular content and delectation.

*Firſt,* That in his Sufferings there would be made a glorious diſplay and manifeſtation of the Divine Attributes; yea, ſuch a glorious diſplay of them, as never was made before to *Angels* or to *Men,* nor ever ſhall be any more in this World. For though,

1. The *Wiſdom* of God had made it ſelf viſible to men in the creation of the World, yet there it ſhone but in a faint and languiſhing Beam, compar'd with this. Here Divine Wiſdom put it ſelf as it were into a viſible form, and repreſented it ſelf to the life. See 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. and *Eph.* 3. 10. Behold in the Death of Chriſt the Wiſdom of God in its higheſt exaltation and glory: O the manifold Wiſdom of God! O the depth of his unſearchable Wiſdom! which I touched in ſome particulars before.

Behold here the Wiſdom of God, raiſing more Glory to himſelf by occaſion of the breach of the Law, than could ever have riſen to him from the moſt punctual *obſervation* of its Commands, or the moſt rigorous *execution* of its Threatnings, from the occaſion of the Fall (which was our undoing) raiſing us to a far better eſtate, and with a much better ſecurity to enjoy it, than that from which we fell. Yea, behold and wonder, God by the Death of Chriſt recovering his Elect from all the danger and miſchief of Sin, and yet making the way and manner of their recovery the faireſt Glaſs to repreſent the Horror and Evil of Sin to them that ever was ſhewn them in this World. Oh, the Triumph of Divine Wiſdom!

2. Though the *Love* of God had appear'd before in our Creation, Protection, and Proviſion, yet nothing to what it doth in our Redemption by the Death of Chriſt. Lo, here is the Love of God in its ſtrength and glory, 1 *John* 4. 10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins. Herein is love,* (*i. e.*) here is the higheſt expreſſion of God's Love to the Creature; not only that ever was, but that ever can be made; for in Love only God acteth to the uttermoſt: Whatever his Power hath done, it can do no more; but for his Love, it can go no higher, he hath no greater thing to give than his *Chriſt.* 'Tis true, in giving us a Being, and that in the nobleſt rank and order of Creatures on Earth, herein was Love. In feeding us all our life long by his aſſiduous tender Providence, herein is Love. In protecting us under his Wings from innumerable dangers and miſchiefs, herein is Love, much Love; and yet ſet all this by his *Redeeming Love* in Chriſt, and it ſeems nothing. When we have ſaid all, *herein is the love of God, that he ſent his Son,* &c. this was free Love to undeſerving, to ill-deſerving Sinners: Preventing Love; not that we lov'd him, but that he lov'd us. Juſt as an Image in the Glaſs, (ſaith *Ficinus*) that is imprinted there by the FACE looking into it; the IMAGE does not look back upon the Face, except the Face look forward upon the Image; and in that the Image does ſeem to ſee the Face, it's nothing elſe but that the Face does ſee the Image. O, the unexpreſſible Glory of the Love of God in Chriſt!

3. Though God had given ſeveral ſad marks of his Juſtice before, both upon the Angels that fell, clapping upon them the Chains of Darkneſs, in the overthrow of *Sodom* and the neighbouring Cities, turning them to Aſhes, as you may read in *Jud.* Verſ. 6, 7. yet never was the exactneſs and ſeverity of Juſtice ſo manifeſted before, nor ever ſhall be any more, as it was at the death of Chriſt. Chriſt did not only ſatisfie it fully, but he alſo honour'd it highly, making that Attribute which was once a *bar,* now to be a *bottom* of our Peace, *Rom.* 3. 25. Never did ſuch a Perſon as Chriſt ſtand at the Bar of Juſtice before: The Blood of God was pour'd out to appeaſe and ſatisfie it. When Chriſt ſuffer'd, he did both give and take Satisfaction; he gave it to the Juſtice of God in dying; he took it in ſeeing Juſtice ſo honour'd in his Death.

*Secondly,* Another delightful proſpect *Chriſt* had of the fruit of his Sufferings, was the recovery and ſalvation of all the Elect by his Death; and tho' his Sufferings were exceeding bitter, yet ſuch fruit of them as this was exceeding ſweet: Upon this account he aſſum'd his Name *Jeſus,* *Matth.* 1. 21. yea, and his humane Nature alſo, *Gal.* 4. 4, 5. Souls are of great value in his Eyes; one Soul is of more worth in his account than all the World, *Mark* 8. 36. What a Pleaſure then muſt it be to him, to ſave ſo many Souls from the everlaſting wrath of the great and terrible God! Add to this, *Thirdly*, The Glory which would redound to him from his redeemed ones to all Eternity; for it will be the everlaſting pleaſant employment of the Saints in Heaven to be aſcribing Glory, Praiſe, and Honour to the Redeemer: *For him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Prieſts to God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever*, Rev. 1. 5, 6. The improvement of all this will be in a word or two.

### *Uſe* 1. *for Conviction.*

This Truth then, in the firſt place, may convince, ſhame, and humble the very beſt of Chriſtians, who find ſo little delight in the moſt eaſie, ſweet, and ſpiritual Duties of Obedience, when *Chriſt* undertook and went through the moſt difficult Task for them with ſuch cheerfulneſs and readineſs, *Lo, I come, thy law is in my heart, I delight to do thy will*; and yet the Work he ſo applied himſelf to, was a Work full of difficulty, attended with reproach and ſhame, as well as anguiſh and pain.

Did *Chriſt* find pleaſure in abaſement and torment, in ſuffering and dying for me, and can I find no pleaſure in praying, hearing, meditating and enjoying the ſweet Duties of Communion with him? Did he come ſo cheerfully to die for me, and do I go ſo dead-heartedly to Prayers and Sacraments to enjoy Fellowſhip with him? Was it a Pleaſure to him to ſhed his Blood, and is it none to me to apply it, and reap the benefits of it? Oh, Lord, what an Heart have I! How unſuitable is this frame of Heart to the Nature of God, whoſe eſſential Excellencies make him the ſupream Delight, the ſweet Repoſe, Solace, and Reſt of Souls! *Pſal.* 16. 11.

How unſuitable to the Principles of Regeneration and Holineſs, purpoſely planted in the Soul, to make ſpiritual performances a Pleaſure to it!

How unſuitable to the future expected ſtate of Glory, which brings the ſanctified Soul to a ſweet complacential Reſt and Satisfaction in God! In a word, how unſuitable is this temper of Spirit to the Heart of Jeſus Chriſt! O, methinks I hear Chriſt thus expoſtulating with me this day:

Is this thy Zeal and thy Delight in the Duties of Obedience? Is it rather the awe of Conſcience than the pleaſure of Communion that brings thee to this Duty? Doth thy hard Heart need ſo many Arguments to perſwade it, even to the ſweeteſt, eaſieſt, and moſt pleaſant Duties in Religion? Well, I did not love thee at that rate; my Heart readily eccho'd to the Father's Call, to die for thee, to drink the Dregs of the Cup of Trembling for thee: *I come, I come, I delight to do thy will, thy law is in the midſt of my bowels.*

### 2 *Uſe, of Exhortation.*

If it be ſo, how great a Motive have the People of God before them, to make them apply themſelves with all cheerfulneſs and readineſs of mind to all the Duties of active and paſſive Obedience? O, let there be no more grumblings, lazy excuſes, ſhiftings of duty, or dead-hearted and liſtleſs performances of them, after ſuch an Example as this. Be ready to do the Will of God; yea, be you alſo ready to ſuffer it. Let the ſame mind be in you which alſo was in *Chriſt Jeſus*. The more pleaſure and delight you find in doing or ſuffering the Will of God, the more of Chriſt's Spirit is in you, and the more of his Image is upon you. Are not all holy Duties expreſſed in Scripture by the Saints walking with God? *Gen.* 17. 1. And is not this an Angelical Life? Can it be a burden to the Ear to hear ſweet raviſhing Strains of Melody; or to the Eye, to behold variety of pleaſant and lively Colours; or to the Palate, to reliſh the delicious ſweetneſs of Meats and Drinks?

Oh, Reader, were thy Heart more ſpiritual, more deeply ſanctified, and Heavenly, it would be no more pain to thee to pray, hear, or meditate on the things of God, than it is to a Bird to carry and uſe his own Wings; or to a Man, to eat the moſt pleaſant Food when he is an hungry. *I have rejoyced* (ſaith *David*) *in the way of thy Commandments, as much as in all riches*, Pſalm 119. 14.

And as to Sufferings for Chriſt, they ſhould not be grievous to Chriſtians, that know how cheerfully Chriſt came from the Boſom of the Father to die for them. What have we to leave or loſe, in compariſon with him? What are our Sufferings to Chriſt's? Alas, there is no compare; there was more bitterneſs in one drop of his Sufferings, than in a Sea of ours.

To conclude, Your delight and readineſs in the Paths of Obedience, is the very meaſure of your Sanctification.

# The Ninth MEDITATION, UPON

## Zechariah 12. part of Verſe 10. *And they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only Son, and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt-born.*

THIS Promiſe is confeſſed to have a ſpecial reſpect to the *Jews* Converſion to Chriſt: It was in part accompliſh'd in the Apoſtles days, *Acts* 2. 37. yet that was but a Specimen or Handſel of what ſhall be, when the Body of that Nation ſhall be call'd.

But yet it cannot be denied, that all *Chriſtians* find the ſame piercing Sorrows and wounding Senſe of Sin, when God awakens them by Convictions, and brings them to ſee the Evil of Sin, and the Grace of Chriſt, that is here expreſt concerning them at their converſion.

The words preſent us with three very remarkable particulars in Evangelical Repentance, *viz.*

*Firſt*, The Spring and Principle of it.
*Secondly*, The Effects and Fruits of it.
*Thirdly*, The Depth and Meaſure of it.

*Firſt*, The Spring and Principle of Repentance, expreſs'd in theſe words, *They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced.* This looking upon Chriſt is an act of Faith, for ſo it is deſcrib'd in Scripture, *John* 6. 40. *Iſa.* 45: 22. and it reſpects *Chriſt* crucified as its proper Object; yea, and that by them, not only as their Progenitors involv'd them in that guilt, by entailing it on them, but as their own Sins were the meritorious cauſe of his Death and Sufferings; *They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced.*

*Secondly*, The Effects and Fruits of ſuch an Aſpect of Faith upon Chriſt is here alſo noted, *They ſhall mourn and be in bitterneſs*, (*i. e.*) it ſhall melt and thaw them into godly ſorrow, it ſhall break their hard and ſtony Hearts to pieces; The Eye of Faith ſhall affect their Hearts; for indeed Evangelical Sorrows are hearty and undiſſembled Tears, dropping out of the Eye of Faith.

*Thirdly*, and laſtly, The Depth and Meaſure of their Sorrow is here likewiſe noted. And it is compar'd with the greateſt and moſt piercing ſorrows Men are acquainted with in this World, even the ſorrow of a tender-hearted Father mourning over a dead Son, yea, an only Son, and his firſt-born, than which no earthly ſorrow is more penetrating and ſharp, *Jer.* 6. 26. Hence the note will be,

Doct. *That the Sufferings of Chriſt are exceeding powerful, to melt Believers Hearts into godly Sorrow.*

The Eye of Faith is a precious Eye, and according to its various aſpects upon Chriſt, it produceth various effects upon the Hearts of Men. Eying Chriſt as our compleat *Righteouſneſs*, ſo it pacifies and quiets the Heart; eying him as our *Pattern*, ſo it directs and regulates our Actions; eying him as a Sacrifice offer'd up to Divine Juſtice for our Sins, ſo it powerfully thaws the Heart, and melts the Affections.

By *meltings*, I do not only underſtand Tears, as if they only were expreſſive of all ſpiritual ſorrow, for it is poſſible the waters of ſorrow may run deep in the Heart, when the Eye cannot yield a drop.

There be two things in Repentance, *Trouble* and *Tears*. The firſt is *Eſſential*, the laſt *Contingent*. The firſt flows from the influence of Faith upon the Soul, the laſt much depends upon the Temper and Conſtitution of the Body. It is a mercy when our Tears can flow from an Heart fill'd with ſorrow for Sin, and love to Chriſt; yet it often falls out that there is an heavy Heart where the Eyes are dry. But that there is efficacy in Faith to melt the Heart, by looking upon the Sufferings of Chriſt for Sin, is undoubted; and how it becomes ſo powerful an Inſtrument to this end, I will ſhew you in the following Particulars.

*Firſt*, Faith eyes the Dignity of the Perſon of Chriſt who was pierced for us; how excellent and glorious a Perſon he is. In the Captivity it was for a Lamentation that *Princes were hanged up by the hands, and the faces of Elders were not reverenced*, Lam. 5. 2. We read alſo the Lamentation of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 3. 38. as he follow'd *Abner's* Herſe: *A Prince and a great man is fallen in Iſrael to day.*

But what was *Abner*, and what were the Princes of *Iſrael* to the Son of God? Lo, here by Faith the Believer ſees the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, the only begotten of the Father, equal to God in Nature and Dignity, he whom all the *Angels* worſhip, hanging dead upon the curſed Tree. Faith ſees Royal Blood, the Blood of God poured out by the Sword of Juſtice for ſatisfaction and reconciliation; and this cannot but deeply affect the believing Soul.

*Secondly*, Faith repreſents the ſeverity of Divine Juſtice to *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the extremity of his Sufferings; and this ſight is a melting ſight.

The *Apoſtle* tells us, *Gal.* 3. 13. he was made Κατάρα, *a Curſe* and Execration for us: It relates to the kind and manner of his Death upon the Croſs, which was the death of a Slave, *ſervile ſupplicium*; a Free-man was privileg'd from that puniſhment. It looks upon and well conſiders the ſad plight and condition *Chriſt* was in, in the days of his Humiliation for us. It's ſaid of him, *Matth.* 26. 38. he was Περίλυπος, *undequaque triſtis*, ſurrounded with Griefs exactly anſwerable to his Name, *Iſa.* 53. 3. *a man of ſorrow.* Let him look which way he would, outward or inward, upward or downward, to Friends or Enemies, he could behold nothing but Sorrow, and what might encreaſe his Miſery. Another *Evangeliſt* ſaith, he was *ſore amazed*, Mark 14. 33. Ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι. It notes ſuch a conſternation as makes the Hair of the Head ſtand upright, *horripilatio*. A third tells us his *Soul was troubled*, John 12. 27. ἡ ψυχή μου τετάρακται, *Unde Tartarus*, a word from whence Hell is deriv'd, and denoting the Anguiſh and Troubles of them that are in that place of Torments.

And the fourth tells us he was in an *Agony*, *Luke* 23. 44. all expreſſing in ſeveral emphatical Notions and Metaphors, the extremity of Chriſt's Anguiſh and Torment. This cannot but greatly affect and break the Believer's Heart.

*Thirdly*, But then that which moſt affects the Heart, is Chriſt's undergoing all this, not only in *love* to us, but in our *room* and *ſtead*. He ſuffer'd not for any evil he had done, for there was no Guile found in his mouth, *Iſa.* 53. 4, 5. 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. It was for me, a vile, wretched, worthleſs Sinner. It was my Pride, my Earthlineſs, the hardneſs of my Heart, the corruption of my Nature, the innumerable evils of my Life, that brought him down to the Duſt of Death: *He was made ſin for us, who knew no ſin*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 21.

Who can believingly eye Chriſt, as ſuffering ſuch Pains, ſuch Wrath, ſuch a Curſe, in the room of ſuch a Sinner, ſuch a Rebel, ſo undeſerving, and ſo ill-deſerving a Creature, and not mourn as for an only Son, and be in bitterneſs as for a firſt-born?

*Fourthly*, Faith melts the Heart by conſidering the effects and fruits of the Sufferings of Chriſt, what great things he hath purchas'd by his Stripes and Blood for poor Sinners; a full and final *Pardon* of Sin, a well ſettled *Peace* with God, a ſure *Title* and *Right* to the Eternal Inheritance; and all this for thee, a Law-condemn'd, a Self condemn'd Sinner. Lord, what am I, that ſuch Mercies as theſe ſhould be purchas'd by ſuch a Price for me? for me, when Thouſands and Ten thouſands of ſweeter Diſpoſitions muſt burn in Hell for ever! Oh, what manner of Love is this!

*Fifthly*, Faith melts the Heart by exerting a threefold act upon Chriſt crucified.

1*ſt*, A *realizing Act*, repreſenting all this in the greateſt certainty and evidence that can be. Theſe are no deviſ'd *Fables*, but the ſure and infallible Reports of the Goſpel.

2*dly*, An *applying Act*; he lov'd me, and gave himſelf for me, *Gal.* 2. 20. He lov'd us, and waſh'd us from our Sins in his own Blood, *Rev.* 1. 5.

3*dly*, and laſtly, By an *inferring* or *reaſoning Act*. If Chriſt died for me, then I ſhall never die: if his Blood were paid down for me, then my Sins, which are many, are forgiven me: if he was condemn'd in my room, I am acquitted, and ſhall be ſav'd from Wrath to come, through him. O how weighty do theſe Thoughts prove to believing Souls!

### 1 *Uſe, for Information.*

*Then ſure there is but little Faith, becauſe there is ſo much deadneſs and unaffectedneſs among Profeſſors.* A believing ſight of Chriſt will work upon a gracious Heart, as a dead Son, a beloved and only Son, uſes to do upon a tender Father's Heart.

Reader, was it ever thy ſad Lot to look upon ſuch an heart-rending Object? Didſt thou ever feel the pangs and commotions in thy Bowels that ſome have felt upon ſuch a ſight? Why ſo will thy Heart work towards Chriſt, if ever thou believingly look'ſt on him whom thou haſt pierced.

Infer. 2. *Then the acting and exerciſing of Faith is the beſt Expedient to get a tender Heart, and raiſe the dead Affections.*

We are generally full of Complaints how hard, how dead and ſtupid our Hearts are; we are often putting ſuch caſes as theſe, How ſhall I get a broken Heart for Sin? how ſhall I raiſe my dead Heart in Duty? Why this is the way, no Expedient in all the World like this; Look upon him whom thou haſt pierced; 'tis the melting Argument.

### 2 *Uſe, of Examination.*

But that which I eſpecially aim at in this point, is for the trial and examination of thy Heart, Reader, in the point of true *Evangelical Repentance*, which is thy proper buſineſs at this time; and I will go no further than the Text for Rules to examine and try it by.

*Rule* 1. All Evangelical Repentance hath a ſupernatural Spring, *I will pour out the ſpirit of grace, and they ſhall mourn.* Till the Spirit be poured out upon us, it is as eaſie to preſs Water out of a *Rock*, as to make our *Hearts* relent and mourn. There are indeed natural meltings, the effects of an ingenuous Temper, but theſe differ in kind and nature from godly Sorrow.

*Rule* 2. Godly Sorrows are real, ſincere, and undiſſembled; They ſhall mourn, *as for an only Son.* Parents need not any natural helps to draw Tears on ſuch accounts; O! their very hearts are pierced, they could even die with them; ſighs, groans, and tears are not hang'd out as falſe ſighs of what is not to be found in their hearts.

*Rule* 3. Evangelical Sorrow is very deep; ſo much the mourning for an only Son, a firſt-born, muſt import. Theſe Waters, how ſtill ſoever they be, run deep, very deep, in the bottom channel of the Soul. See *Acts* 2. 27. *They were cut to the heart.*

*Rule* 4. Faith is the Inſtrument imploy'd in breaking the heart; *They ſhall look and mourn.* This is the Burning-glaſs that contracts the Beams, and fires the Affections.

*Rule* 5. Laſtly, the wrong Sin hath done to God, and the Sufferings it hath brought Chriſt under, are the piercing and heart-wounding Conſiderations, *They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn.* The piercing of *Chriſt* by our Sin, is that muſt pierce thy Soul with Sorrow.

# The Tenth MEDITATION,

## UPON

## John 6. verſe 55. *For my fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*

IN the Context our Lord Jeſus Chriſt makes a moſt ſpiritual and excellent Diſcourſe to the Jews, about the Nature and Neceſſity of Faith in him, taking the occaſion thereof from the Bread, which a little before he had ſo miraculouſly multiplied, and fed them with, raiſing up their Minds to more ſublime and ſpiritual Things, and letting them know that Bread, how ſweet ſoever it was, was but a Shadow of himſelf, infinitely more ſweet and neceſſary.

Theſe Words are a Propoſition, in which are theſe three Things obſervable.

*Firſt*, The *Subject*, my Fleſh and my Blood.
*Secondly*, The *Predicate*, it is Meat and Drink.
*Thirdly*, *The manner of Predication*, it's *Meat indeed*, and *Drink indeed*.

*Firſt*, The *Subject*, my *Fleſh*, and my *Blood*, (*i.e.*) my Humanity; this is Meat and Drink, true *Spiritual Food*. If it be demanded, Why he had not ſaid, I am Meat and Drink indeed; but rather chuſes to ſay, My Fleſh and Blood is ſo? The Reaſon is evident, ſaith learned *Camero*, becauſe if you take away Fleſh and Blood from Chriſt, he cannot be Food or Life to us: For in order to his being ſo, he muſt ſatisfie God for us, and obtain the Remiſſion of our Sins; but without ſhedding of Blood, there is no Remiſſion. Now foraſmuch as by the offering up of his Body, and ſhedding of his Blood, he hath obtained Pardon and Life for us; therefore his Fleſh and Blood, is call'd our Meat and our Drink, that by which our Souls live. Which brings us to the ſecond thing.

*Secondly*, The *Predicate*, it is Meat and Drink, (*i. e.*) it is to our Souls of the ſame uſe and neceſſity, that Meat and Drink is to our Natural Life, which cannot be ſuſtained or continued without them.

The Life of our Souls as neceſſarily depends upon the *Fleſh* and *Blood* of Chriſt, as our Natural Life doth upon Meat and Drink. Yet beware of a miſtake here; the *Fleſh* and *Blood*, or the Humanity of Chriſt, is not the *Fountain* of our Spiritual Life, but the *Channel* rather through which it flows to us from his *Divinity*. By reaſon of his Incarnation and Death, Righteouſneſs and Life comes to us.

*Thirdly*, The manner of *Predication* is very *emphatical*, it is Meat indeed, and Drink indeed; which notes two Things.

*Firſt*, *Reality*, in oppoſition to all legal Shadows and Types.

*Secondly*, *Tranſcendent Excellency*, far ſurpaſſing all other *Food*, even *Manna* it ſelf, which for its excellency is ſtiled *Angels Food*. My *Fleſh* is Meat indeed, (*i. e.*) true, ſubſtantial, and real *Food* to Souls, and choice excellent and incomparable *Food*. Hence obſerve,

Doct. *That what Meat and Drink is to our Bodies, that, and much more than that, the Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt is to believing Souls.*

Two Things require Explication in this Point. *Firſt*, Wherein the reſemblance or agreement lies betwixt the *Fleſh* and *Blood* of Chriſt, and Meat and Drink. *Secondly*, Wherein the former tranſcends and excels the latter.

1. *Query*. Wherein lies the reſemblance and agreement between the *Fleſh* and *Blood* of Chriſt, and material Meat and Drink?

*Sol.* The agreement is manifeſt in the following Particulars.

*Firſt*, Meat and Drink is neceſſary to ſupport Natural Life, we cannot live without it. Upon this account Bread is call'd the *Staff and Stay*, (*i.e.*) the Support of the Natural Spirits, which do as much lean and depend upon it, as a feeble Man doth upon his Staff, *Iſai.* 3. 1. But yet how neceſſary ſoever it be, the *Fleſh* and *Blood* of Chriſt is more indiſpenſible neceſſary for the Life of our Souls, *John* 6. 53. *Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.* Our Souls have more abſolute need of Peace and Pardon by Chriſt, than our Bodies have of Meat and Drink. Better our Bodies were ſtarved and famiſhed, than our Souls damned and loſt for ever.

*Secondly*, Meat and Drink are ever moſt ſweet and deſirable to thoſe that are hungry and thirſty. It is Hunger and Thirſt, that gives value and eſtimation to Meat and Drink, *Prov.* 27. 7. *To the hungry Soul every bitter thing is ſweet*; and ſo it is in our eſteem of Chriſt, *Job* 7. 37. *If any Man thirſt, let him come to me and drink.* When God by Illumination and Conviction makes Men deeply ſenſible of their miſerable loſt, and periſhing Condition, then ten thouſand Worlds for a Chriſt. All is but Dung and Droſs, in compariſon of the excellency of Chriſt Jeſus.

*Thirdly*, Meat and Drink muſt undergo an *alteration*, and loſe its own *Form*, before it actually nouriſhes the Body. The Corn is ground to pieces in the Mill, before it be made Bread to nouriſh us. And Chriſt muſt be ground betwixt the upper and nether Milſtone of the Wrath of God, and Malice of Men, to be made Bread for our Souls. The Prophet ſaith, *Iſa.* 52. 14. *His Viſage is marred more than any Man's.* He did not look like himſelf, the Beauty and Glory of Heaven, but the Reproach of Men, and Deſpiſed of the People. Oh what an alteration, did his Incarnation and Sufferings make upon him! *Phil.* 2. 6, 7. *Quantum mutatus ab illo?*

*Fourthly*, Natural Food muſt be received into our Bodies, and have a *Natural Union* with them; and Chriſt muſt be received into our Souls, and have a *Spiritual Union* with them by *Faith*, or elſe we can have no nouriſhment or benefit by him. An empty Profeſſion, a meer talkative Religion nouriſhes the inner Man, juſt as much as the ſight of Meat, and our commending of it, doth our outward Man. It's Chriſt's dwelling in our Hearts by Faith, *Eph.* 3. 17. our receiving of him, *John* 1. 12. our eating his Fleſh, and drinking his Blood, *John* 6. 53. (*i. e.*) the effectual application of Chriſt to our Souls by Faith, that makes us Partakers of his Benefits.

*Fifthly*, Meat and Drink muſt be taken every Day, or elſe Natural Life will languiſh; and Spiritual Life will never be comfortably maintain'd in us, without daily Communion with Jeſus Chriſt: If a gracious Soul neglect, or be interrupted in its Courſe of Duties, and ſtated Times of Prayer, it will be quickly diſcernable by the Chriſtian himſelf, in the deadneſs of his own Heart; and by others alſo, in the barrenneſs of his Diſcourſes. And in theſe things ſtands the analogy and agreement of the Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt, with Meat and Drink.

2. *Query*. The next thing is to open the tranſcendent Excellency of Chriſt's *Fleſh* and *Blood*, above all other *Food* in the World; and this appears in four Particulars.

*Firſt*, This *Fleſh* and *Blood* was aſſumed into the neareſt Union with the ſecond Perſon in the bleſſed Trinity, and ſo is not only dignified above all other created Beings, but becomes the *firſt Receptacle* of all Grace intended to be communicated through it to the Children of Men, *John* 1. 14.

*Secondly*, This *Fleſh* and *Blood* of Chriſt was offered up to God, as the great Sacrifice for our Sins, and Purchaſe of our Peace, *Col.* 1. 20. *Eph.* 5. 2. and ſo it is of ineſtimable Price and Value to Believers. The Human Nature was the Altar on which it was offered up, and by which it was dignified and ſanctified, and made an Offering of a Sweet-ſmelling Savour to God, *Eph.* 5. 2.

*Thirdly*, This *Fleſh* and *Blood* of Chriſt, is the great *Medium* of Conveyance of all Bleſſings and Mercies to the Souls and Bodies of Believers. It lies as a vaſt Pipe at the Fountain-head of Bleſſings, receiving and conveying them from God to Men, *Col.* 1. 14, 19.

So then, it being united to the Second Perſon, and ſo become the *Fleſh* and *Blood* of God, it being the Sacrifice offered up to God for Atonement and Remiſſion of Sins, and the *Medium* of conveying all Grace and Mercy from God; the *Fountain* to the Souls and Bodies of Believers; How ſweet a reliſh muſt it have upon the Palate of *Faith?* Here *Faith* may taſte the Sweetneſs of a Pardon, a full, free, and final Pardon of Sin, than which nothing in this World can be ſweeter to a Sin-burdened Conſcience.

Here it taſtes the incomparable Sweetneſs of Peace with God, a Peace which paſſeth underſtanding; the Breach Sin made, is by this Sacrifice made up for ever, *Col.* 1. 20.

Here it taſtes the unexpreſſable Sweetneſs of Acceptation with God, and an Intereſt in his *Favour*, a Mercy which a poor convinced Soul would give Ten Thouſand Worlds for, were it to be purchaſed. Yea, here it reliſheth all the ſweet Promiſes in the Covenant of Grace, as Confirmed and Ratified by this Sacrifice, *Hebrews* 9. 5. So that well might he ſay, My *Fleſh* is Meat indeed, and my *Blood* is Drink indeed; the moſt excellent New Teſtament *Food* for Believers.

### I. *Uſe of Information.*

*Firſt*, See here the Love of a Saviour, that heavenly Pelican, who feeds us with his own *Fleſh* and *Blood*. You read *Lam.* 4. 10. of pitiful Women, who eat the *Fleſh* of their own Children; but where have you read of Men or Women that gave their own *Fleſh* and *Blood* for Meat and Drink to their Children? Think on this, you that are ſo loth to deny your *Fleſh* for Chriſt; he ſuffered his *Fleſh* to be rent, and his *Blood* ſet abroach for you: What Love like the Love of Chriſt?

*Secondly*, Learn hence a ground of Content in the loweſt and pooreſt Condition allotted to any Believer in this World. It may be ſome of you live low in the World, you have hard Fare, and are abridg'd of many of thoſe ſweet Comforts in the Creature, which the Enemies of God abound in; but ſtill remember, you have no cauſe to envy their Dainties, and be diſſatisfied with your own Lot and Portion, when not many Nobles, or Mighty in the World, feed as your Souls do feed. O what a Feaſt have you! What Dainties do your Souls taſte by Faith, whilſt others do but feed upon Aſhes and Husks! What is the *Fleſh of Lambs and Calves out of the Stall*, to the *Fleſh* of Chriſt? *Amos* 6. 4, 5, 6. What is Wine in Bowls, and the chief Ointment, to the Blood of Chriſt, and the Anointings of his Spirit? O be ſatisfied with your outward Lot, however God hath caſt it, whilſt he hath dealt ſo bountifully with your Souls.

*Thirdly*, Learn hence the neceſſity of *Faith*, in order to the Livelihood and Subſiſtance of our Souls. What is a Feaſt to him that cannot taſte it? And what is Chriſt to him that cannot believe? that cannot by *Faith* eat his *Fleſh* and drink his *Blood?*

'Tis not the Preparation made for Souls in Chriſt, but the Application of him by *Faith*, that gives us the ſweetneſs and benefit of him. *Faith* is the Souls Mouth or Palate; the Unbeliever taſtes no Sweetneſs in Chriſt, he can reliſh more Sweetneſs in Money, Meat, Drink, carnal Mirth, or any ſenſual Enjoyment than in Chriſt.

*Fourthly*, How excellent are Goſpel-Ordinances? What ſweetneſs is there to be found in them by true Believers? For there Chriſt is prepar'd, and as it were ſerv'd in for them to feed upon. It is your Miniſter's Work to cook and prepare for you all the Week long, and to furniſh for you a *Feaſt of Fat Things*. Lo, here's a Table ſpread and furniſhed this Day, with the coſtlieſt Dainties that Heaven affords. O prize theſe Mercies, ſit not here with flat or wanton Appetites, leſt God call to your Enemies, and bid them take away.

### II. *Uſe of Exhortation.*

Is the Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt's, Meat and Drink indeed? Then let me exhort you, Brethren.

*Firſt*, To come to this Table with ſharp and hungry Appetites. Have you ever taſted that the Lord is gracious ? And do you not hunger and thirſt to taſte it again ? Surely where the *Carcaſs is, thither will the Eagles be gather'd*, Matth. 24. 28. There is a two fold Appetite, a dainty, and an hungry Appetite; beware of a nice and dainty Appetite, that can reliſh nothing in the moſt ſolid and ſpiritual Duties, except the Diſh be garniſh'd with Flowers of Rhetorick, or the Matter ſerv'd in with Art and Elegancy. This hath been the great Sin of the Profeſſors of this Generation. O Chriſtians, no more of that I pray you. Were you really an hungred and a-thirſt for Chriſt, you would come to his Ordinances, as famiſhing Men to a Feaſt.

*Secondly*, To feed heartily upon Chriſt in every Ordinance, and in every Sacrament eſpecially. O that your Souls might hear and anſwer that Invitation this Day ! *Cant.* 5. 1. *Eat, O Friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O Beloved.*

For Motives I will only hint theſe Three following.

Firſt, *Chriſt is the Matter of the Feaſt.* God hath prepar'd him for your Souls. Is any thing in Heaven or Earth ſo ſweet as Chriſt ſacrificed is ? Do not the Angels and Saints in Heaven feaſt upon him ? Surely one Drop of Chriſt's Blood hath more Sweetneſs and Excellency in it, than the whole Ocean of all Creature Comforts.

Secondly, *Don't your Graces need it ?* Have you not a languiſhing Love, a ſtaggering Faith, dull and ſluggiſh Deſires ? Look into your hearts, and ſee what need there is of ſtrengthning the things that are in you, which are ready to die. O feed upon Chriſt, that your Graces may be revived and ſtrengthned.

Thirdly, *Do you know how many Days you are to go in the ſtrength of this Meal ?* How long it may be e're you ſit again at the Lord's Table ? Surely even theſe, as well as your inferior temporal Comforts ſtand upon Terms of greateſt Uncertainty. Ah Chriſtians ! Conſider well the Times you live in, the Enemy that ſtands ready to take away the Cloth, and remove your Spiritual Food from you. It's ſaid of *Peter Martyr*, that being in *Oxford*, when Queen *Mary* came, and hearing the firſt Maſs-bell ring, he was ſtruck to the heart, and ſaid, *Hæc una notula omnem meam doctrinam evertit.* This one tinkling Bell overthrows all the Labours of my Miniſtry at once. God grant we may hear none of that Muſick in *England* any more ; but it's like to be according to your eſtimation and improvement of *Chriſt's* precious Ordinances.

Thirdly, *Commend the experienced Sweetneſs of Chriſt to others.* Don't conceal his lovelineſs and excellency. Thus the fair and enamoured Spouſe charges or adjures others, *Cant.* 5. 9. Be not content to feaſt upon Chriſt alone, whilſt other Souls are ſtarving, and perhaps the Souls of your dear natural Relations. Say to them as *David*, Pſal. 34. 8. *O taſte and ſee how good the Lord is.*

Fourthly and Laſtly, *See that your Appetite to Chriſt be right, and truly ſpiritual.* Such an hunger and thirſt, upon which Bleſſedneſs is entailed by Promiſe ; and you may conclude it ſo, when,

*Firſt*, It is a ſharp and ſtrong Appetite, *Pſal.* 42. 1. Let your thoughts run upon Chriſt night and day, [redacted]

*Secondly*, When 'tis a univerſal Appetite, after every thing in Chriſt, his Holineſs as well as his Righteouſneſs ; his Commands as well as his Promiſes, for he is *altogether lovely*, Cant. 5. 16.

*Thirdly*, When 'tis a continued Appetite ; I mean not, that the Pulſe of your Deſires ſhould keep an even ſtroke at all times, but that there be real and ſincere workings of heart after him always, *Pſal.* 119. 23.

*Fourthly*, When 'tis an induſtrious Appetite, awakening the Soul to the uſe of all means and practice of all Duties in order to ſatisfaction, *Pſal.* 27. 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, and that will I ſeek after.*

*Fifthly* and *Laſtly*, It's then aright, when 'tis an inſatiable Appetite, never to be allay'd with any thing beſide Chriſt, *Pſal.* 73. 29. No, nor with Chriſt himſelf, 'till thou comeſt to the full enjoyment of him in Heaven. The Believer knows, how ſweet ſoever his Communion, he ſhall have with Chriſt is in this World, yet that Communion he ſhall have with Chriſt in Heaven, far excels it ; there it will be more intimate and immediate, 1 *Cor.* 19. 12. more full and perfect, even to ſatisfaction, *Pſal.* 17. 15. more conſtant and continued, not ſuffering ſuch Interruptions as it doth here, *Rev.* 21. 25. more pure and unmixed. Here our Corruptions work with our Graces, *Rom.* 7. 21. but there Grace ſhall work alone. In a word, more durable and perpetual : We ſhall be ever with the Lord, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 7. Long therefore to drink that new Wine in the Father's Kingdom : The Spirit and the Bride ſay, Come ; and let him that heareth ſay, Come ; even ſo come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.

# The Eleventh MEDITATION,

## UPON

Canticles 8. 6. *Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart, as a Seal upon thine Arm; for Love is ſtrong as Death, Jealouſie is cruel as the Grave; the Coals thereof are Coals of Fire, which hath a moſt vehement Flame.*

THis Book is a ſacred Allegory, the Sence thereof is deep and ſpiritual. Our unacquaintedneſs with ſuch Schemes and Figures of Speech, together with the want of Spiritual Light and Experience, makes it difficult to be underſtood; but the Allegory being once unfolded by reaſon of its affinity with the Fancy, Truth is more eaſily and affectingly tranſmitted both to the mind and heart.

St. *Auguſtine* aſſigns this Reaſon why we are ſo much delighted with Metaphors and Allegories, becauſe they are ſo much proportioned to our Senſes, with which our Reaſon hath contracted an intimacy and familiarity: And therefore God to accommodate his Truth to our Capacity, doth as it were embody it in earthly Expreſſions, according to that of the ancient Cabaliſts, *Lumen ſupremum nunquam deſcendit ſine indumento:* Heavenly Truth never deſcendeth to us without its Veil and Covering.

The Words before us are the Requeſt of the Spouſe to Jeſus Chriſt, and conſiſt of two Parts, *viz.*

1. Her Suit, which is earneſt.
2. Her Argument, which is weighty.

1. Her earneſt Suit, or Requeſt, to Jeſus Chriſt, *Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart, as a Seal upon thine Arm.* The *Heart* of Chriſt notes his moſt dear, inward, tender Affection; his *Arm* notes his protecting and preſerving Care and Power: The laſt naturally follows the firſt; what Men dearly affect, they tenderly and carefully protect. And by *ſetting her as a Seal upon his Heart* and *Arm*, ſhe means a ſure and a well-confirmed Intereſt, both in his Love and Power; this ſhe would have firmly ſealed and ratified; and that this is her meaning, will plainly appear from

The Argument with which ſhe enforces her Requeſt: *For Love is ſtrong as Death, Jealouſie is cruel as the Grave,* &c.

By *Jealouſie*, we muſt underſtand her fears and ſuſpicions of coming ſhort of Chriſt and his Love? *q. d.* What if after all I ſhould be deceived? What if Jeſus Chriſt do not love me with a ſpecial Love? O theſe fears and ſuſpicions are intolerable torments to her, ſhe cannot bear them; they are cruel as the Grave, inſufferable as Coals of Fire, which have a moſt vehement flame, *q. d.* Lord, if thou leave me in the midſt of theſe Jealouſies of thy Love, I ſhall be but a torment to my ſelf: I ſhall live as one upon the Rack, or in the Flames. Hence the Note is.

Doct. *That there is nothing in this World, which true Chriſtians more earneſtly deſire, than to be well aſſured and ſatisfied of the Love of Jeſus Chriſt to their Souls.*

In the Meditations of this Point, two things muſt be enquired into.

1. Why this Aſſurance is ſo deſirable.
2. How it may be obtained.

1. Why the aſſurance of the Love of Chriſt is ſo deſirable in the Eyes of true Chriſtians. And among others, there are two things that eſpecially make it ſo, *viz.*

1. The ſweetneſs of its enjoyment.
2. The difficulty of its attainment.

The ſweetneſs of its enjoyment, which is unexpreſſable and inconceivable; for it is a Mercy above all eſtimation. It is,

1. The Riches of Faith.
2. The Reſt and Eaſe of the Heart.
3. The Pleaſure of Life.
4. A Cordial at Death.
5. A ſweet Support in all Troubles.

1. It is the very *Riches of Faith*, the moſt pleaſant *Fruit* which grows upon the top Branches of *Faith*. The Scripture tells us of an Aſſurance of Underſtanding, Hope, and Faith: All theſe Graces are precious in themſelves, but the aſſurance of each of them is the moſt ſweet and pleaſant part. Knowledge above Knowledge, is the full aſſurance of Knowledge. Hope above Hope is the full aſſurance of Hope. And Faith above Faith, is the full aſſurance of Faith. The leaſt and loweſt Act of ſaving Faith is precious, and above all value; What then muſt be the higheſt and moſt excellent Acts of Faith be? Certainly, there is a ſweetneſs in the aſſurance of Faith, that few Men have the Privilege to taſte; and they that do, can find no Words able to expreſs it to another's Underſtanding. The weakeſt Chriſtian is exalted above other Men, but the aſſured Chriſtian hath a preference before all other Chriſtians.

2. It is *Hearts Eaſe*, the very Sabbath and ſweet Repoſe of the Soul. Thouſands of poor Chriſtians would part with all they poſſeſs in this World, to enjoy it, but it flies from them. The Life that moſt of them live, is a Life betwixt hopes and fears; their Intereſt in Chriſt is very doubtful to them. Sometimes they are encouraged from ſenſible Workings of Grace, then all is

daſhed again, by the contrary ſtirrings and workings of their own Corruptions. Now the Sun ſhines out clear, by and by the Heavens are overcaſt and clouded again; but the aſſured Chriſtian is at reſt from thoſe tormenting fears and jealouſies which my Text ſpeaks of, that are as cruel as the Grave, and as inſufferable as Coals of Fire in a Man's Boſom; he can take Chriſt into the Arms of Faith, and ſay, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.* Return to thy reſt, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

3. It is the *Pleaſure of Life*; yea, the moſt rational, pure, and tranſporting pleaſure. What is life without pleaſure? And what pleaſure is there in the World comparable to this pleaſure? For let the ſealed and aſſured *Believer* conſider and compare, and he muſt needs find a joy and pleaſure beyond the joy of the whole Earth. If he conſider well what he is aſſur'd of, it is no common Mercy, but Chriſt himſelf, and his Love; a Mercy incomprehenſible by Men or Angels, *Epheſ.* 3. 19. Put Chriſt into the ſenſible poſſeſſion of a Believer, and joy is no more under his command for that time; he can no more refuſe to rejoyce [redacted], and eſpecially when his Thoughts are exercis'd in comparing ſtates and conditions, either his own with other mens, or his own now with what it was, and what it ſhall be. To think with thy ſelf thus, I am aſſur'd of Chriſt and his Love, my intereſt in him is ſealed, but this is a Mercy few enjoy beſides me. There be millions of Souls of equal value with mine by nature, that ſhall never enjoy ſuch a Mercy as this. Yea, the time was when I my ſelf was far from it, in my unregenerate ſtate. Lord, how is it I had not then been ſeal'd to Damnation? O, 'tis well with me for the preſent, that I can call Chriſt my own; and yet it will be better and better. My condition will mend every day. I am now in *Chriſt*, and it is but a little while before I ſhall be with Chriſt, and arrive at the full ſatisfaction of my very Heart. O, what pleaſure doth every glance backward or forward give to the ſealed Soul!

4. It is a *Cordial in Death*, and there is none like it. This will make the Soul triumph over the Grave, take Death cheerfully by the cold hand, welcome its grim Meſſengers, and long to be gone, and be with Chriſt. Dark and doubting Chriſtians may indeed ſhrink back from it, and be afraid of the exchange, but the aſſured Soul longs to be gone, and needs Patience to live, as other men do to die. When one was ask'd if he were willing to die, his Anſwer was, *Illius eſt nolle mori, qui nolit ire ad Chriſtum, Let him be loth to die, that is loth to go to Chriſt.* The Sugar of Aſſurance ſweetens the bitter Cup of Death, and makes it delectable to a Believer's reliſh.

5. In a word, it is a *ſweet ſupport* in all the Troubles and Afflictions on this ſide the Grave: Let the aſſured Soul be caſt into what condition the Lord pleaſes, be it upon a Bed of Sickneſs, yet this gives his Soul ſuch ſupport and comfort, that he ſhall not ſay, *I am ſick*; Sin being forgiven, the Soul is well when the Body is in pain, *Iſaiah* 33. 24. Let him be caſt into a Priſon, here's that will turn a Priſon into a Paradiſe, *Acts* 5. 41. Let him be pinch'd with outward want, this will ſupply all, *As having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things,* 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. Thus you ſee how deſirable it is for its own excellency.

2. And as it is deſirable for the ſweetneſs of its own enjoyment, ſo alſo from the *difficulty of its attainment*; all *Excellencies* are lock'd up under many difficulties, but none like this: It is indeed eaſie to preſume an Intereſt in Chriſt, and cheat a man's own Soul with a Dream and Fancy of our own Creation; but ſure it's hard to get a ſealed clear Title to Chriſt and his Benefits; and there be, among others, three things that make it difficult.

(1.) The Corruptions that remain, and daily work in the beſt Hearts; theſe are evermore puzzling and ſcaring the poor Soul with Fears and Doubts about its condition. Grace teacheth men due ſeverity to themſelves, and fear of their own deceitfulneſs makes them think no Hearts are like their Hearts, eſpecially whilſt they compare other mens outſide with their own inſide, as generally they do. O, how do our own Corruptions every moment raiſe Miſts and Clouds, that it is a wonder we ever ſhould have one clear Beam of Aſſurance ſhining into ſuch Hearts, as our Hearts are.

(2.) The multitudes of miſtakes and cheats that are frequently committed and found in this matter, makes upright Hearts the more ſuſpicious and doubtful of their own conditions. O, when they read *Matth.* 7. 22. that many will ſay to Chriſt in that day, *Lord, we have propheſied in thy name*, &c. it ſcares them, leſt they alſo be deceiv'd.

(3.) The grand importance of the matter makes poor Souls fearful of concluding certainly about it. O, when a man conſiders that the whole weight of his eternal happineſs or miſery depends upon the reſolution of theſe Queſtions, *Am I in Chriſt?* or *am I not?* it will make him tremble to determine. In a word, Aſſurance is not in our power, or at our command. There be many holy, humble, diligent, and longing Souls to whom 'tis denied; it is arbitrarily diſpens'd by the pleaſure of the Spirit, to whom he will, and ſuch Favours are rare even among true Believers, the more therefore is it to be valued and deſir'd by *all*, as the Spouſe doth in this place. And ſo much to the firſt thing, *Upon what account the Aſſurance of Chriſt's Love is ſo deſirable in the Eyes of Chriſtians.*

2. In the laſt place let us conſider how this Mercy, which is ſo deſirable, may be obtain'd; and this is our proper Work and Buſineſs at this time.

You are now come to a *Sealing Ordinance*, inſtituted on purpoſe for this Noble End and Uſe. O that we could pray and plead for it as the Spouſe here doth, *Set me as a Seal upon thine heart, a ſeal upon thine arm, for love is ſtrong as death, jealouſie is cruel as the grave*, &c. Now in order to the attainment of this moſt *deſirable Mercy*, take a few neceſſary hints of your preſent Work and Duty in the following Directions.

Direction

### *Direction* I.

Would you be well ſecur'd of Chriſt's Love to you, and that you are ſet as a Seal upon his heart? Then exerciſe and manifeſt more love to Chriſt, and let him be much upon your hearts. If it be clear to you, that you have true Love to Jeſus Chriſt, you need not at all to doubt, but you are in his Heart and in his Love; *I love them that love me*, Prov. 1. 17. And ſurely you have now before you the greateſt Motive in the World to inflame your Love to Jeſus Chriſt. Behold him as he is here repreſented to you, wounded for your Iniquities, yea, ſacrific'd to the Wrath of God for your Peace, Pardon, and Salvation. O, what manner of Love is this? Behold how he loved thee! If Chriſt's Love draw forth thine, it will ſo far clear thy Intereſt in his Love, as it ſhall engage thy heart in love to him.

### *Direction* II.

But ſeeing the activity of your Love will be according to the activity of your Faith, therefore in the next place I adviſe you to make it the main work and buſineſs of this hour to exerciſe your Faith upon Jeſus Chriſt: ſet your ſelves this day to believe; the more ſtrong the direct acts of your Faith ſhall be, the more clear and comfortable its reflex acts are like to be.

There are three diſtinct Offices or Imployments for your Faith at this Table, *viz.*

1. To realize.
2. To apply.
3. To infer from the Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt.

1. Realize the Sufferings of Chriſt for you, and behold them here repreſented in a true Glaſs to the Eye of Faith: See you that Bread broken, and that Wine pour'd out? As ſure as this is ſo, Jeſus Chriſt endur'd the Croſs, ſuffer'd the Wrath of the great and terrible God in his Soul, and in his Body upon the curſed Tree, for and in the room of poor condemn'd Sinners. Your Faith for the one hath as much, yea, more certainty, than your Senſe hath for the other. This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that *Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *And without controverſie, great is the myſtery of godlineſs, God was manifeſt in the fleſh*, &c. 1 *Tim.* 3. 16.

2. Apply the Sufferings of Chriſt this day to thine own Soul: Believe all this to be done and ſuffer'd in thy room, and for thy ſake: he offer'd not this Sacrifice for his own Sins, but ours, *Iſa.* 53. 9. *Heb.* 7. 27. He was incarnate for you, *Iſaiah* 9. 6. *For us a child is born, to us a Son is given.* His Death was for you, and in your ſtead, *Gal.* 3. 13. *He was made a curſe for us*; and when he roſe from the dead, *he roſe for our juſtification*, Rom. 4. 25. and now he is in Glory at the right hand of God, he is there for us, *Heb.* 7. 25. *He ever lives to make interceſſion for us*: It was the pride, paſſion, earthlineſs, and unbelief of thy heart which Jeſus Chriſt groan'd, bled, and died to procure a Pardon for.

3. Infer from the Sufferings of Chriſt thoſe concluſions of Faith that tend to Aſſurance. As thus: Did Chriſt die for me when I was an Enemy? Then ſurely, being reconcil'd, I ſhall be ſav'd by his Life, *Rom.* 5. 10. Again, Is Chriſt dead for me? Then I ſhall never die eternally: Nothing ſhall ſeparate me from the Love of God, it is *Chriſt that died*, Rom. 8. 34.

### *Direction* III.

Mourn over all thoſe Sins that cauſe the Lord to hide his Face from your Souls: have you grieved the Spirit by your Sin? O, be griev'd for it this day at your very hearts, cover the Table of the Lord with Tears; *Look upon him whom you have pierced, and mourn, as for an only Son.* Tho' there be no Merit, yet there is much Mercy in a broken heart for Sin; and there is no ſuch Advantage to get your hearts broken as this is which is now before you. When the ſhowre of Repentance is fallen, the *Heavens* over thee may be clear, and the *Sun* ſhine out in its brightneſs upon thy Soul.

### *Direction* IV.

In a word, pour out thy Soul to God in hearty deſires for a ſeal'd and clear Intereſt in his Love this day; tell him it is a Mercy thou valueſt above Life; *Thy favour is better than life*, Pſalm 63. 3. Tell him, thou art not able to live with the Jealouſies and Suſpicions of his Love; thou art but a Torment to thy ſelf, whilſt thy Intereſt in his Love abides under a cloud. Beſeech him to pity thy poor afflicted Soul, which hath lain down and riſen ſo long with theſe Fears and Tremblings, and been a ſtranger to Comfort for ſo many days. Tell him how weak thy hands have been, and ſtill are, in Duties of Obedience, for want of this ſtrength and encouragement. Engage thy Soul to him this day to be more active, cheerful, and fruitful in his ſervice, if it will pleaſe him now to free thee from thoſe fears and doubts that have clogg'd thee in all thy former Duties. O, cry unto him in the words, and with the deep ſenſe of the Spouſe in this Text, *Set me as a Seal upon thy heart, which hath a moſt vehement heat, as a Seal upon thine arm; for love is ſtrong as death, jealouſie is cruel as the grave, the coals thereof are coals of fire*, &c.

# The Twelfth MEDITATION,

## UPON

## Epheſians 3. 19. —— *And to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge.*

THE knowledge of Chriſt, and of his love, is deſervedly in this place ſet down among the *deſiderata Chriſtianorum*, the moſt deſirable enjoyments of Believers in this World. This Love of Chriſt had center'd the Apoſtle's heart; he was ſwallow'd up in the meditation and admiration of it, and would have all hearts inflamed and affected with it, as his was.

Some think the Apoſtle ſpeaks extatically in this place, and knows not how to make the parts of his Diſcourſe conſiſtent with each other, when he puts them upon Endeavours to know that Love of Chriſt which himſelf confeſſes to paſs knowledge.

But though his Heart was raviſh'd with the Love of Chriſt, yet there is no contradiction or inconſiſtency in his Diſcourſe. He doth earneſtly deſire for the *Epheſians*, that they may *know the love of Chriſt*, *i. e.* that they might experimentally know his love, *which paſſeth knowledge*; that is, as ſome expound it, all other kinds of knowledge; yea, and all knowledge of Chriſt which is not practical and experimental. Or thus: Labour to get the cleareſt and fulleſt apprehenſive knowledge of Chriſt and his Love, that is attainable in this World, though you cannot arrive to a perfect comprehenſive knowledge of either. *Mens humana hoc & capit, & non capit; atque in eo capit, quod rapitur in admirationem*, as others reconcile it. The Note from it is,

Doct. *That the love of Chriſt ſurpaſſes and tranſcends the knowledge of the moſt illuminated Believers.*

The Love of Chriſt is too deep for any created Underſtanding to fathom; 'tis unſearchable Love, and it is ſo in divers reſpects.

1. It is unſearchable in reſpect of its *antiquity*. No Underſtanding of Man can trace it back to its firſt Spring; it flows from one Eternity to another: We receive the fruits and effects of it now; but, O how ancient is that Root that bears them! He loved us before this World was made, and will continue ſo to do when it ſhall be reduced into aſhes. It is ſaid, *Prov.* 8. 30, 31. *When he gave the Sea his decree, when he appointed the foundations of the Earth, then was I by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoycing always before him, rejoycing in the habitable parts of his Earth, and my delights were with the Sons of men.*

2. The *freeneſs* of the love of Chriſt paſſes knowledge. No man knows, nor can any words expreſs how free the love of Chriſt to his People : It is ſaid, *Iſa.* 55. 8. *My thoughts are not your thoughts.* The meaning is, My Grace, Mercy, and Love to you is one thing, as it is in my thoughts, and quite another thing when it comes into your thoughts. In my thoughts it is like it ſelf, free, rich, and unchangable; but in your thoughts it is limited and narrowed, pinch'd in within your ſtreight and narrow conceptions; that it is not like it ſelf, but alter'd according to the model and platform of Creatures, according to which you draw it in your minds. Alas, we do but alter and ſpoil his Love, when we think there is any thing in us, or done by us, that can be a motive, inducement, or recompence to it: His Love is ſo free, that it pitch'd it ſelf upon us, before we had any lovelineſs in us at all: *When we were in our Blood, he ſaid unto us, Live; and that was the time of love*, it did not ſtay till we had our Ornaments upon us, but embraced us in our Blood, in our moſt loathſome ſtate; and of ſeaſons, that is, the ſeaſon of love, the choſen time of love, *Ezek.* 16. 7, 8. Chriſt loved us not upon the account of any foreſeen excellency in us, or upon any expectation of recompence from us: Nay, he lov'd us not only without, but againſt our deſerts. Nothing in Nature is found ſo free as the Love of Chriſt is; our Thoughts therefore of this Love going beyond all Examples and Inſtances that are found among men, quickly loſe themſelves in an immenſe Ocean of Free Grace, where they can find neither bank nor bottom.

The *bounty* and *liberality* of the love of Chriſt to his People paſſeth knowledge. Who can number or value the Fruits of his Love? They are more than the Sands upon the Sea-ſhore. It would weary the Arm of an Angel to write down the thouſandth part of the effects of his Love, which come to the ſhare of any particular Chriſtian in this World. Who can tell how many Sins it pardons? *The free gift is of many offences unto juſtification*, Rom. 5. 16. How many dangers it prevents, or how many wants it ſupplies! This we know, that of his fulneſs we all receive grace for grace, *John* 1. 6. But how full of Grace Chriſt is, and how many Mercies have and ſhall flow to us out of that Fountain of Love, this is unknown to men, to the beſt, wiſeſt, and moſt obſervant men. O, if the Records of the Mercies of our Lives were or could be gather'd and kept, what vaſt Volumes would they ſwell to! 'Tis true indeed, you have the total Sum given you in 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *All are yours*, but it is ſuch a Number as no man can number.

The *Conſtancy* of Chriſt's love to his People *paſſeth knowledge*: No length of time, no diſtance of place, no change of condition, either with him or us, can poſſibly make any alteration of his Affections towards us; *He is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever*, Heb. 13. 8. It is noted alſo by the Evangeliſt, *John* 13. 1. *That having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end.* 'Tis true, his condition is alter'd, he is no more in this World converſing with his People, as he did once in the days of his Fleſh; he is now at the right hand of God in the higheſt Glory, but yet his Heart is the ſame that ever it was, for love and tenderneſs to his People. Our Conditions alſo are often alter'd in this World, but his Love ſuffers no alteration. Yea, which is much more admirable, we do many things daily that grieve him and offend him, yet he takes not away his loving kindneſs from us, nor ſuffers his Faithfulneſs to fail. We pour out ſo much cold Water of unkindneſs and provocation, as is enough to cool and quench any Love in the World, except his Love; but notwithſtanding all, he continues unchangable in love to us. This *Peter* found, notwithſtanding that great Offence of his: No ſooner was the Lord riſen from the dead, but he greets him in the ſtyle of his former love and ancient reſpect, *Go tell the Diſciples, and tell* Peter.

So then, the love of Chriſt is a love tranſcending all Creature-love and Humane Underſtanding. We read in *Rom.* 5. 7, 8. that *peradventure for a good man, ſome would even dare to die*; but we never find where any beſide Jeſus Chriſt would lay down his Life for Enemies. It is recorded as an unparallel'd Inſtance of Love in *Damon* and *Pithias*, the two *Sicilian Philoſophers*, that each had courage enough to die for his Friend; one of them being condemn'd to die by the *Tyrant*, and deſiring to give the laſt farewel to his Family, his Friend went into Priſon for him, as his Surety to die for him, if he return'd not at the appointed time; but he did not die; yea, he had ſuch a confidence in his Friend, that he would not ſuffer him by default to die for him; and if he had, yet he had died for his Friend. But ſuch was the love of Chriſt, that it did not only put him under a danger of Death, but put him actually unto death, yea, the worſt of Deaths, and that for his Enemies. O, what manner of Love is this! We read of the love that *Jacob* had for *Rachel*, and how he endur'd both the cold of Winter and heat of Summer for her ſake: But what is *this* to the love of Jeſus, who for us endured the heat of God's Wrath? Beſide, he was beautiful, but we unlovely. *David* wiſh'd for *Abſalom* his Son, *Would God I had died for thee.* But it was but a wiſh, and had it come to the proof, *David* would have ſhrinkt from death, for all the affection he bare his beautiful Son. But Chriſt actually gave his life for us, and did not only wiſh he had done it. O love tranſcending the love of Creatures, yea, and ſurmounting all Creature-knowledge! The Uſes follow.

### 1. *Uſe.*

If the love of Chriſt paſs knowledge, O! then admire it; yea, live and die in the wonder and admiration of the love of Chriſt. As it is a ſign of great weakneſs to admire ſmall and common things, ſo it ſpeaks great ſtupidity not to be affected with great and unuſual things. O Chriſtian, if thou be one that converſeſt with the thoughts of this love, thou canſt not but admire it; and the more thou ſtudieſt, the more ſtill wilt thou be aſtoniſh'd at it. And among the many Wonders that will appear in the love of Chriſt, theſe two will moſt of all affect thee, *viz.*

1. That ever it pitch'd at firſt on thee.
2. That it is not by ſo many Sins quench'd towards thee.

(1.) 'Tis admirable that ever the love of *Chriſt* pitch'd at firſt upon thee; for are there not millions in the World of ſweeter tempers, and better conſtitutions than thy ſelf, whom it hath paſt by, and yet imbraced thee? *Lord,* (ſaid the Diſciples) *how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf unto us, and not unto the world?* John 14. 22. Surely he did not ſet his love upon thee, nor chuſe thee, becauſe thou waſt better than others, but becauſe he lov'd thee.

(2.) It is admirable that his love to thee is not extinguiſh'd by ſo many Sins as thou haſt committed againſt him. Lay thy hand, Chriſtian, this day upon thy heart, and bethink thy ſelf how many have been the provocations, wrongs, and diſhonours thou haſt been guilty of againſt thy God, and that ſince he call'd thee by his Grace, and ſet his love upon thee: What, and yet love thee ſtill! yea, notwithſtanding all, he is ſtill thy God, and loves thee with an unchangable love. O, with how many Notwithſtandings is his love continued to thy Soul? All this is juſt matter of admiration and wonder for ever.

3. Is the love of Chriſt paſt knowledge? an unſearchable love? Then learn whence and why it is that the Souls of Believers never are, nor can be, tir'd in beholding and enjoying Jeſus Chriſt. We uſe to ſay, one thing is tireſome; and it is very true, if it be an earthly thing, it will be ſo, how ſweet or excellent ſoever it ſeems at firſt; and the reaſon is, becauſe the beſt Creature-enjoyment is but a ſhallow thing, and a few thoughts will ſound it to the bottom; and there being no ſupply of new matter to feed the hungry Soul upon, it is quickly ſated and cloy'd with the repetition of the ſame thing over and over; but it is far otherwiſe in Chriſt; for tho' he be but one, yet in that one thing all things are virtually and eminently contain'd, ſo that every day he ſeems a new Chriſt for ſweetneſs, and yet is the ſame Chriſt ſtill. And in Heaven the Redeem'd ſhall view him with as much wonder, and love him with as much ardour after millions of years, as they did at their firſt ſight of him. O, there is no bottom in the love of Chriſt, it *paſſeth knowledge.*

4. In a word, beſtow your *beſt* and *chiefeſt love* upon *Chriſt*, whoſe love to you paſſeth all knowledge: Let no Creature be loved equally with *Chriſt*, but as his love to you paſſeth all Creature-love, ſo let yours to him be a matchleſs love.

Believer, Chriſt loves thee with an unſearchable love, he loves thee more than the deareſt Friend that is, as thine own Soul loves thee. He loves thee more than thou loveſt thy Child, or the Wife of thy Boſom; more than thy Soul loves thy Body, with which it is ſo intimately united; and wilt thou content thy ſelf with ſuch poor, narrow, remiſs affections to Jeſus Chriſt? O, look upon him this day in his red Garments, behold him in the ſtrength of his Love, breaking through the Curſe of the Law, the Wrath of God, the Agonies of Death, to bring home the fruits of his eternal Love to thy Soul; and whilſt thou art beholding and muſing upon it, let thy Heart melt thy Eyes drop, and thy very Soul cry out, Behold how he lov'd me! Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt.

# A FAMILIAR CONFERENCE, BETWEEN A Miniſter and a Doubting Chriſtian, CONCERNING THE Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

*Chriſtian.*

SIR, If it may be no interruption to your Studies, I would be glad to be reſolved of ſeveral Doubts that ariſe in my Mind, about receving the Bleſſed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

*Miniſter.*

‘I ſhall be very glad to contribute any thing for removing thoſe Scruples, which may diſturb you upon that account; therefore, pray go on.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, I have heard many Sermons, and read ſeveral Diſcourſes, which do much urge, and declare the neceſſity of communicating in his bleſſed Ordinance, and yet I durſt never preſume to joyn therein.

*Miniſter.*

‘Have you then lived hitherto in the neglect of this important Duty.

*Chriſtian.*

To ſpeak freely, Sir, I never yet did communicate therein all my Life; becauſe I have much queſtioned whether I were worthy to receive that bleſſed and holy Seal, to the Glory of God, and my own Edification and Comfort; ſince I never truly underſtood the Inſtitution, Nature, Adminiſtration, and Ends of it, nor the Qualifications of thoſe who are to be Partakers thereof, according to the appointment of Jeſus Chriſt.

*Miniſter.*

‘Well then, I hope, if theſe things be plainly opened to you, it may much conduce to ſatisfie your Scruples.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, I ſhall receive your Inſtructions with thankfulneſs, and if my heart deceive me not, ſhall rejoyce in the Light and Knowledge that I may gain thereby.

*Miniſter.*

‘Let us then, firſt enquire into the Qualifications of a ſincere Chriſtian in general. And ſecondly, of the Qualifications of ſuch Chriſtians, as are meet to partake of the Lord's Supper, for they are diſtinct, and ſometimes ſeparate.

*Chriſtian.*

I hope in doing this, you will much help me to judge of my preſent State and Condition Godward. And now in the firſt place, pray inform me, how I may know if I am a ſincere Chriſtian.

*Miniſter.*

‘All true Believers, among other Graces, have ſuch a knowledge of God in Chriſt, as works by Love, and ſtirs up in them an earneſt ſtudy of the Will of God, and a ſincere endeavour to live in the Faith, Knowledge, and Practice of it.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, I cannot boaſt of my Knowledge, yet by the Grace of God ſhewed to me, thoſe Conceptions which I have of God in Chriſt, have, I hope, ſo far prevailed upon me, that to live in the Knowledge, Love, and Enjoyment of him, and to have my All devoted to his Will and Praiſe, is all the Heaven that I deſire in this World, and a great part of that which I hope for in the World to come.

*Miniſter.*

‘Theſe are good Signs of a real and renewed Change in your Soul, and ſo doubtleſs have wrought good Diſpoſitions in you, of which you have had Evidence in your Heart, and have made it appear in your Life and Actions.

*Chriſtian.*

I would be loth to flatter my ſelf, but yet I hope that I find ſome delight in the Word of God, both read and preached; and do ſeriouſly meditate thereon, that I may *grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* And tho' I am ſometimes tempted with vile and vain Thoughts, yet I endeavour to ſtifle them, and my Heart riſes againſt them. I thank God I ſtrive to reſiſt the firſt motions to ſin, and avoid all occaſions of evil, and am never more uneaſie then when I happen into the Company of profane and ill People; having an hatred to Lying, obſcene and filthy Diſcourſes, Swearing, Curſing, and all diſhonourable Reflections upon God and Godlineſs. I make Conſcience of taking up a Slander againſt my Neighbour; and to be juſt, and to do good to all, according to my ability, and to walk in all the Commandments of the Lord blameleſs.

*Miniſter.*

‘If theſe be the Fruits and Effects of your Faith, it is not a dead Faith; yet we muſt not reſt upon our own Works, or Righteouſneſs, for Juſtification, Merit, or Satisfaction, becauſe it will be derogatory to the Merits and Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and dangerous to our own Souls.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, I know right well, that there is no Juſtification, but by the Blood of Jeſus, neither dare I truſt to my own Righteouſneſs, but to his only, for the Pardon and Remiſſion of my Sins. And if by Grace I am enabled to bring forth any Fruit meet for a Goſpel Faith, Repentance, and Love, theſe I bleſs God for, as a part of my Duty and Happineſs, and deſire to look on them as Proofs of Faith (if they are worthy to be ſuch), and no otherwiſe.

*Miniſter.*

‘This is well. But do you find your Soul always in a good frame and temper without haltings, ſlips, or excurſions.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, I dare not ſay I do; for I muſt with Sorrow acknowledge, that at ſome times my Thoughts are polluted, my Words are unſavoury without edification, my Actions not adorning the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and God my Saviour; but ſuch as I may fear may prove a grief and ſnare to others. My ſpiritual reliſh of God's Word is very inſipid, and its Authority not ſo ſenſibly powerful, ſo that I am unready to any thing that is good, even like a dead Man, as if my Religion had no Life nor Soul in it.

*Miniſter.*

‘Well, but when you thus fall into Sin, or fail in your Duty, what do you think of your ſelf and ways? How are you affected therewith.

*Chriſtian.*

When I am in this deplorable Condition, my Soul is much diſturbed, my Joy and Peace of Conſcience are gone; but when I am a little rouſed out of this ſinful Lethargy, my Heart is then melted with Sorrow for my Folly and Miſcarriages, and I addreſs my ſelf to God with the greateſt fear and ſhame, humbly imploring him to renew a right Spirit within me.

*Miniſter.*

‘Well *Friend*, if your Conſcience confirms what your Tongue has utter'd, you have expreſs'd enough to evidence the Sincerity of your Obedience to God, and that you are a ſound Believer, and a ſincere Convert. And I hope you have *Faith* alſo in Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, without a due reſpect to whom, our *Faith* and good Affections, will not deſerve the name of being truly Evangelical and ſaving.

*Chriſtian.*

Through Grace, I deſire to acknowledge and embrace the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, upon the Terms on which he is offered in the Goſpel, to believe all his Doctrines as my Teacher and Guide, to truſt and depend upon him as the High Prieſt of our Profeſſion, who makes atonement by his Sacrifice and Interceſſion. And I deſire to ſubmit to his Government, as Lord and King of his Church.

*Miniſter.*

‘Theſe are very conſiderable Attainments, and include the Subſtance of ſaving *Faith*. But are you ſenſible how you arrived to this good diſpoſition and frame of Mind? Do you imagine it was natural to you, or the Reſult of the Improvement of your natural Reaſon, Powers, or *Faculties*?

*Chriſtian.*

Oh Sir, I dare by no means aſcribe that to Nature, which is only the Effect of Divine Grace. If I have any meaſure of Sanctification, it is only by the Gift and Grace of God; for I have had too much Experience, that by Nature I am alive to Vanity and Sin, but dead and lifeleſs to God, and to all real Goodneſs, that I am darkneſs; Folly poſſeſſeth my Soul; I am at enmity with God; and altogether unable to will, or to do what is pleaſing in his Eyes; having a great contrariety in my Heart to the way of Salvation propoſed in the Goſpel of Chriſt.

*Miniſter.*

‘And have you taken up ſtrong Reſolutions, that by the help of God, and the aſſiſtance of his bleſſed Spirit, you will endeavour to perſevere in the *Faith* and *Practice* which you have now declared, to your Lives end.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, there is nothing that I more dread than Apoſtatizing, or relaxing in my Duty and Profeſſion, and that I ſhould have a backſliding Heart from the Lord; and I earneſtly watch and pray againſt every Symptom and Degree thereof.

*Miniſter.*

‘Do you think that by your own ſtrength and ability, you have power to perſevere and continue in the Faith and Obedience of the Goſpel, againſt the many Temptations and Corruptions that aſſault us, and the lamentable Miſcarriages of thoſe who ſeem'd Pillars in the Houſe of God.

*Chriſtian.*

I have no Confidence in my own Ability, Sir, I aſſure you; but do wholly rely on the Rock that is higher than I, even upon him who hath promiſed, That he will perfect a good Work begun to the Day of Chriſt. I reſt upon him who is the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, I beg his Holy Spirit to inſtruct, guide, aſſiſt, and comfort me. And I earneſtly deſire and purpoſe, (by the Grace of God) to expect thoſe Aids in a conſtant and univerſal Attendance upon God in his Ordinances, with an honeſt, humble, and believing Heart.

*Miniſter.*

‘Theſe are all plain Evidences of the ſaving Grace of God, which I beſeech the Lord may always continue and grow in your Heart; that ſo you may have a full aſſurance of his Love, who hath dealt ſo graciouſly with you.

*Chriſtian.*

The Lord grant, that in the Sence of his Love to my Soul, I may walk worthy of his Grace. And now, Sir, by what has been ſaid, do you think I may preſume to feed on Jeſus Chriſt at his Table, and receive that bleſſed Seal of my Redeemer's Love.

*Miniſter.*

‘You know I told you, that a Man may be a true Chriſtian, and yet may not be fit to partake of this Holy Ordinance: Becauſe he may believe unto Salvation, and yet be ſo ignorant of this Myſtery, as not to be able to make a due Application of it to his own Soul.

*Chriſtian.*

Ah, Sir, I would willingly be informed what is neceſſary to be done by a ſound Believer, in order to the partaking of this bleſſed Ordinance.

*Miniſter.*

‘Firſt, he muſt conſider, that the Elements and Matter of this Ordinance, are not common Bread and Wine after Conſecration, but ſet apart to Holy Uſe, and ſo to be received with an Holy Underſtanding and Fear. And therefore the *Corinthians* were blamed by the Apoſtle for their Ignorance and Irreverence, 1 *Cor.* 11. Again, That theſe Elements ſo bleſſed and ſet apart by Chriſt's Appointment, do repreſent a Crucified Redeemer, and we are to partake of them with Love, as a Memorial of his Death; and with Faith, as the Seal of the Promiſe, and the Means appointed by God, to convey the Benefits of Chriſt crucified to the Soul.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, Theſe Conſiderations raiſe up my Deſires to come to the Lord's Table, which I hope to be a Partaker of with the ſame Sentiments that you have now laid before me, and that I ſhall feaſt mine Eyes on that lovely Object, which is ſo full of Love, and that my Eye will ſo deeply affect my Heart toward my holy Redeemer, that I may meet with my bleſſed Lord in all the ways of his appointment.

*Miniſter.*

‘Again, you ought to ſet your Soul upon Self-examination, that ſo you may be ſenſible of your Wants and Defects; and come to Chriſt for a ſupply of the Graces of his Holy Spirit; that you may exerciſe Faith, Love, Repentance, and all other Graces, with ſuch warmth and vigor, that Jeſus Chriſt may delight in you, and you in him, and there may be a mutual and joyful renewing of your Covenant of Love and Obedience to your bleſſed Saviour.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, we cannot ſuppoſe that there ſhould be the Actings and Exerciſes of Grace, where the Habits are wanting, no more than their can be Motion without Life: But it is uſually ſaid, that the Holy Sacrament is a quickning, cheriſhing, comforting, and confirming Ordinance.

*Miniſter.*

‘No doubt but the worthy prepared Receivers of this bleſſed Banquet, have by a due participation, found their Love inflamed, their Faith ſtrengthned, their Obedience confirmed, their Humility increaſed, ſo that they have appeared vile in their own ſight, and have had an utter deteſtation of all Sin, and an earneſt expectation and deſire, after the glorious appearance of their bleſſed Lord and Redeemer.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, ſince the Benefits and Bleſſings are ſo great, it makes me the more earneſtly long to be a Communicant in theſe ſacred Myſteries.

*Miniſter.*

‘It is the Duty of all Chriſt's Miniſters, to give the Sacramental Bread of Life, and the Cup of Conſolation, to thoſe who hunger and thirſt after Jeſus Chriſt, and his Righteouſneſs and Kingdom. And now I have told you your Duty, I ſhall be willing to declare to you the Nature and the Circumſtances of this bleſſed Ordinance.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, I muſt confeſs I am not ſo well inſtructed herein; and if I may not be too troubleſome, would be very glad to underſtand what this Holy Ordinance is, and why it is called a Sacrament.

*Miniſter.*

‘It is a Seal of the Covenant of God in *Chriſt*, wherein by certain outward Signs inſtituted by our Saviour, *Chriſt* with all his Benefits are ſignified, conveyed, and ſealed to the worthy Receiver. The word Sacrament hath been anciently uſed, both to ſignifie Baptiſm and the Supper of the Lord, and was taken up by the ancient Fathers, from the Oath by which the *Roman* Soldiers were ſworn to their Duty, and were not admitted to be Soldiers, 'till they had ſolemnly taken that Oath or Sacrament. It is called by ſeveral other Names in Scripture, namely, breaking of Bread, *Acts* 2. 42. The Lord's Table, 1 *Cor.* 10. 21. The Communion, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16.

*Chriſtian.*

Pray, Sir, how many Sacraments were inſtituted under the New Teſtament, and by whoſe Authority were they appointed.

*Miniſter.*

‘There are only two, Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper; and they were ordained by the ſole and immediate Authority of Jeſus Chriſt; and thoſe other five which the Papiſts have added, and called by that Name; as Order, or Ordaining of Prieſts, Pennance, Marriage, Conformation, and Extream Unction, or Anointing at the Hour of Death, all theſe were neither immediately inſtituted by Chriſt, nor have the proper Ends of a Sacrament.

*Chriſtian.*

What are the Elements to be uſed in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

*Miniſter.*

‘Bread and Wine, and no other, *Luke* 22. 19, 20. And all Communicants are to receive both of them, notwithſtanding the bold and ſacrilegious Practice of the Papiſts, who give the People, the Bread, or Wafer only, none but the Prieſt receiving both the Bread and Wine. And this without any ſound Reaſon, or Scripture-warrant; and they may as well corrupt, totally aboliſh, or add to any of the Ordinances and Inſtitutions of Chriſt Jeſus, as preſume to do this.

*Chriſtian.*

What reſemblance or congruity is there between Bread and Wine, the Signs, and what is ſignified by them in the Lord's Supper.

*Miniſter.*

'Bread is ſo neceſſary, that it is often put for all kind of Food, and Neceſſaries; and the leaſt Morſel of it, is compleatly Bread. Thus Chriſt is Food and all Neceſſaries to the Soul, and every worthy Communicant receives whole and compleat Chriſt. And as Corn is not Bread 'till it be bruiſed or ground, ſo Jeſus Chriſt had not been Food for us, if he had not been bruiſed with Wounds, and Sorrow. And as Bread is the common Food of all People, ſo is is Jeſus Chriſt of all real Chriſtians. Again, as Bread being a ſolid Body, may properly denote the Body of Chriſt, ſo Wine being liquid may repreſent his Blood. And as Wine is preſſed from the Grape, ſo the Blood of Jeſus was forced out by his Agony, and the Wounds of the Croſs.

*Chriſtian.*

May not the Bread and Wine at our common Tables, ſignifie the ſame thing?

*Miniſter.*

'No, becauſe this is ſolemnly ſet apart, and conſecrated to Sacramental Uſe, by Prayer and Bleſſing, and by applying the Words our dear Redeemer uſed in the Inſtitution of this Ordinance.

*Chriſtian.*

Is not the Bread and Wine after Conſecration tranſubſtantiated, or transformed from the Subſtance of Bread and Wine, into the real Subſtance and Eſſence of the Body and Blood of our Saviour; ſince Chriſt's own Words are, *This is my Body*, &c. *This is my Blood*, &c.

*Miniſter.*

'No, by no means, this being a Popiſh Error, attended with many Abſurdities and idolatrous Practices. But it is the Body and Blood of Chriſt in the ſence that Chriſt ſpake it, but he did not ſay, This is no longer Bread in ſubſtance, but the very ſubſtance of my Body. And ſuch Phraſes are often uſed in Scripture, and yet not always to be taken in a ſtrict Sence, no more than *that Rock was Chriſt*, and, *I am the true Vine, the Door, the Shepherd*, &c. Moreover Chriſt intended it for a Sacrament, that is a Sign of what it repreſents; now it cannot be the real Body of Chriſt, and the Sign of it alſo. Again, our Senſes of Seeing, Smelling, and Taſting, aſſure us that it is Bread and Wine, and no way ſubſtantially changed after the Words of Conſecration. And if we muſt deny our Senſes in this, we may as well doubt whether theſe Words, *This is my Body*, &c. be recorded in Holy Scripture, tho' we ſee them there.

*Chriſtian.*

If the Bread and Wine be not the Body and Blood of Chriſt really and ſubſtantially, how then doth the true Believer in receiving, eating, and drinking them, receive, eat, and drink the Body and Blood of Chriſt.

*Miniſter.*

'By receiving thoſe Elements ſo conſecrated as Signs, Seals, and Conveyances of Chriſt and his Benefits to the Soul; and a true Chriſtian hath them conveyed to him thereby, as really as a Writing under Hand, Seal, and Witneſſes, can convey Lands, or other Benefits, which are not really in the Writings themſelves.

*Chriſtian.*

What are the Actions of the Miniſter in adminiſtring this Ordinance.

*Miniſter.*

'After bleſſing the Bread, he breaks it, and delivers it to the Communicants in the Words of Jeſus Chriſt, ſignifying thereby a crucified Jeſus, who was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions. He then pours out the Wine in the ſight of the Congregation, and delivers that to them alſo, after Bleſſing it in the Words of Chriſt. And hereby is repreſented to us, our dear Redeemer ſhedding his Blood for us, which is the Sacrifice of Atonement, whereby we obtain Remiſſion of Sins. In which Action the Miniſter ſtanding in Chriſt's ſtead as his Miniſter, (wherein Chriſt is preſent, and by his Spirit Authority) doth as really tender and beſtow Himſelf and Benefits, as if he had ſpoken the ſame Words in his own viſible Perſon.

*Chriſtian.*

But ſay ſome, ſince our Saviour reſtrained this Ordinance to the time of his coming, he being come in the Spirit, it is now at an end, and aboliſhed.

*Miniſter.*

'If theſe Enthuſiaſts mean the coming of the Spirit in its ſanctifying Operations, then it ſeems that it was appointed only for Unbelievers; and that the Diſciples, who communicated with Chriſt at the Inſtitution thereof, had not the Spirits but were Unbelievers, which is falſe and abſurd. If they mean the extraordinary are Gifts of the Spirit, or the pouring it forth in an extraordinary meaſure, the Practice of the Apoſtles and the Church of God, both at that time, and long after will abundantly contradict that Aſſertion, *Acts* 2. 42. 1 *Cor.* 10. 16.

*Chriſtian.*

What are the Benefits that Chriſt gives, and we receive in this Ordinance.

*Miniſter.*

'The exerciſe and increaſe of every Grace, the cleanſing our Souls from the guilt of Sin; healing the Wounds which Sin hath made in our Conſciences; a Confirmation of the Truth and Promiſes of God; an humble and holy delight in Chriſt, and our Fellow Chriſtians, and a more earneſt longing for, and expectation of the Bleſſedneſs of the Life to come. And is an Ordinance chiefly intended for Confirmation of our Faith, Love, and increaſe in Grace, ſo that no Perſon ought to come thereunto but in Faith.

*Chriſtian.*

What are the neceſſary Preparation for this ſolemn Ordinance.

*Miniſter.*

'1. That a Man have the Habit of Faith. 2. That he have an hearty diſpoſition and willingneſs to receive Chriſt as his Lord and Redeemer. 3. That he be in Charity with all Men. *John* 1. 7. *Matthew* 15. 26. We muſt ‘alſo exerciſe renew'd Acts of Repentance, and clear up our Intereſt in *Chriſt*, and have our Souls full of Faith and Love toward him.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, there is one Scripture that, I believe, diſcourages many from partaking of the Lord's Table; neither do I indeed well underſtand it; 1 *Cor.* 11. 27, 28, 29. *Whoſoever ſhall eat this Bread and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation* (or Judgment) *to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's Body.*

*Miniſter.*

‘I am indeed of the Opinion, that the want of right underſtanding this Scripture has been a Stumbling-block to many, and ſo I ſhall endeavour briefly to explain it. The Apoſtle here truly repreſents and very much aggravates the danger of unworthy receiving this holy Sacrament, but he does not deter the *Corinthians* from it, becauſe they had ſometimes come to it without due Reverence, but exhorts them to amend what had been amiſs, and to come better prepar'd and diſpos'd for the future; and therefore after that terrible Declaration, that *Whoſoever ſhall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord*, &c. he does not add, therefore let *Chriſtians* take heed of coming to the Lord's Table, but let them come prepar'd, and with due reverence, not as to a common Meal, but to a ſolemn Participation of the Body and Blood of Chriſt; *But let him examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.* For if this be a good reaſon to abſtain from this Ordinance, for fear of performing it in an undue manner, then a wicked man may as well lay aſide all other holy Duties, as Prayer, hearing and reading the Word of God, for fear of the unworthy uſe of them; ſince, *The Prayer of the wicked* (that is, one that reſolves to continue ſo) *is an abomination to the Lord*; and Chriſt ſays, *Take heed how you hear.* And the *Apoſtle* ſays, that thoſe who will not believe the Goſpel, *it is the ſavour of Death to them*; that is, it is deadly and damnable to ſuch Perſons; now there is as much reaſon for men to give over praying or attending on the Word of God, as not to receive the Sacrament, ſince he that prays unworthily, that is, without ſpiritual benefit and advantage, is guilty of great contempt of God and Jeſus Chriſt, and aggravates his own Damnation, as well as he who by partaking of the Lord's Supper unworthily, eats and drinks his own Judgment. And when the Apoſtle adds, *But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.* It ſeems clear by the occaſion and circumſtances of his Diſcourſe, that he does not intend we ſhould examine our State of Grace, whether we are true Believers or no, and ſincerely reſolved to continue ſo, but he ſpeaks of the actual fitneſs and worthineſs of the *Corinthians* at that time, when they came to receive the Lord's Supper. And therefore, *verſ.* 20. he ſharply reproves their irreverent and unſuitable carriage at the Lord's Table, they coming thereunto diſorderly one before another. It was the cuſtom of *Chriſtians* then to meet at the *Feaſt of Charity*, in which they did communicate with great ſobriety and temperance; and when that was ended they celebrated the Lord's Supper. Now among the *Corinthians* this Order was broken; the Rich met, and excluded the Poor from this common Feaſt; and after an irregular Feaſt, (one after another eating his own Supper as he came) they went to the Sacrament in great diſorder; one was hungry, having eaten nothing at all; others had drank and eat intemperately, and the Poor were deſpiſ'd and neglected: This the Apoſtle condemns as a great prophanation of that ſolemn Inſtitution, for behaving themſelves with as little reverence as if it were a common Supper or Feaſt; and this he calls, *not diſcerning the Lord's Body*, making no difference between the Sacrament and a common Meal, which contemptuous carriage he calls *eating and drinking unworthily*, for which he pronounceth them *guilty of the Body and Blood of Chriſt*, by which, he tells them, they did incur the Judgment of God, which he calls *eating and drinking their own Judgment*, for ſo the word ſignifies in the *Greek*, and not eternal Condemnation; it is meant of ſome temporal Judgment and Chaſtiſement, in order to the preventing of eternal Damnation; which is evident from what follows, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himſelf.* And then he ſays, *For this cauſe many are weak and ſick among you, and many ſleep.* That is, for this irreverence of theirs God ſent among them ſeveral Diſeaſes, of which many had died. And then he adds, *For if we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged.* That is, if we would cenſure and examine our ſelves, ſo as to be more careful for the future, we ſhould eſcape the Judgment of God in theſe temporal Puniſhments. *But when we are judged we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world.* That is, when by neglecting thus to judge our ſelves, we provoke God to judge us, he inflicts theſe Temporal Judgments upon us to prevent our eternal Damnation.

*Chriſtian.*

Sir, I am much oblig'd to you for the ſatisfaction you have given me in theſe weighty points, referring to the Lord's Supper; and now, though in a deep ſenſe of my great unworthineſs, yet with humble confidence in my dear Redeemer, who graciouſly invites *all that are heavy laden* to come unto him, I do intend, by the bleſſing of God, to addreſs my ſelf to the Lord's Table the next Lord's Day, humbly beſeeching the aſſiſtance of your Prayers, that I may not come without the Wedding-garment, but may be ſo qualified as to obtain thoſe glorious Privileges and Bleſſings which are there repreſented and ſealed to every worthy Communicant.

# A HYMN,

## UPON

## ROMANS 5. Verſ. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

*Verſ.* 6.

When we were deſtitute of ſtrength
Our ſelves to help or ſave,
Chriſt for Ungodlineſs at length
His Life a Ranſom gave.

7.

For one that's righteous, we would grudge
To lay our Life to ſtake;
And for a good man it were much
Such an exchange to make.

8.

But God his matchleſs Love commends,
In that Chriſt Jeſus dies
For us, when we were not his Friends,
But wretched Enemies.

9.

Much more being juſtified and free
Through his own Blood from Sin,
From Wrath to come we ſav'd ſhall be,
Even by the Life of him:

10.

For if, when Enemies, for us
Chriſt's Death did end the ſtrife,
Much more, when reconciled thus,
He'll ſave us by his Life.

11.

Yea, more than ſo, we triumph now
In God with one accord,
Having receiv'd Atonement through
Chriſt Jeſus our own Lord.

Wherefore to him, who is the firſt
Begotten of the Dead,
Who over Earthly Princes muſt
Be ſupream Lord and Head.
Even unto him who lov'd us ſo
To waſh us in his Blood,
And make us Kings and Prieſts unto
His Father and his God:
To him Dominion therefore
By us be given, when
This preſent World ſhall be no more;
To which we ſay, *Amen.*

# THE REASONABLENESS OF Perſonal Reformation, AND The Neceſſity of Converſion;

## THE True METHODS of Making all Men Happy in this World, and in the World to come.

*Seaſonably Diſcourſed, and Earneſtly Preſſed upon this Licentious Age.*

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To all ſuch as are moſt Immediately and Particularly Concerned in the following Treatiſe, of what Rank or Quality ſoever they be.

GENTLEMEN,

T*WO of the greateſt, faithfulleſt, and moſt intimate Friends in the World, Reaſon and Conſcience, command me here in their Names, courteouſly to ſalute and invite you in.*

*They earneſtly deſire three or four Hours ſerious and private Conference with you about ſome very important Perſonal Concerns of yours, which cannot admit of denial, or long delay. And if you make any trifling Excuſes, they have commanded and inſtructed me here to anſwer them.*

*In caſe of abſolute and obſtinate Refuſal to hear them, they order me to tell you: If you will not talk with them now, they'll talk with you ſhortly, whether you will or no. If you ſay, you are not now at leiſure, having other Buſineſs to do; they both deſire you to conſider,* Firſt, *You can have no Buſineſs in the World of equal Importance with theirs.* Secondly, *That whatever other lawful Affairs you are purſuing, their Buſineſs with you will no way obſtruct, but greatly promote it. And* Laſtly, *That a greater Perſon than any of you, loſt his Life, by Pocketing up a Letter at Night, ſaying,* To Morrow is a new Day: *And it proved to him indeed,* Dies noviſſima, *his laſt Day, he loſing by that Neglect, the only* Opportunity *of living longer.*

*If you demand how your Reaſon came to be bound up in this little Book, and ſay, That which is Reaſon to this Author, may be Folly and Nonſence to you; I am bid to tell you, You are obliged firſt to read and compare, elſe your own Reaſon will preſently call it your own Folly and Nonſence ſo to pronounce.* Sound *Reaſon is uniform, and like it ſelf all the World over. It's true, Laws and Dictates equally oblige one, as another, in like Caſes and Circumſtances.*

*If you ſay, there have been ſome Jars and Diſguſts betwixt you, and your Reaſons and Conſciences; you and they have fallen out ſo oft, that you have no great Fancy to come near them in private, for you expect nothing but harſh and chiding Language from them; and therefore are fain by continual Diverſions, and quick Succeſſions of Buſineſs, to maintain your Peace, by keeping at as great a diſtance from them as you can.*

*'Tis their deſire you ſhould here know,* Firſt, *That their Debates with you will be as calm and friendly, as they are ſeaſonable and neceſſary.* Secondly, *That they both profeſs (and you may believe them) they neither do, nor can deſign any thing but your good.* Thirdly, *That that Perſon is certainly in a very bad Caſe, that cannot endure to converſe with himſelf.* Fourthly, *That you herein deny a Civility to your own Reaſons and Conſciences, which you daily pay to Strangers and Inferiors. And in a word, that they deſire a Reconciliation with you, upon as fair and honourable Terms as can well be deſired. And that this being done, they will both ſtick faithfully by you in all the Troubles and Dangers of your Lives, and follow you as your inſeperable Friends, into any thing but Sin.*

*If you ſay, This is but a Wheedle to draw you into a Book, that will make you melancholy, and perhaps mad.*

*'Tis their Senſe and Judgment, that of all Men living, you have leaſt Reaſon to pretend the one or the other in this Caſe: For they are very confident you are now in the moſt melancholy Circumſtances Men can ordinarily be in on this ſide Hell. And for Madneſs, they deſire to know, what you your ſelves would call that Man, that is running with ſuch Poſt-haſte to Hell (as will not admit of two or three Hours ſtop upon the Road), to prove himſelf to be no Mad-man, but in his right Mind and Wits?*

*Moreover, they command me to inform you; It is their deſire, that ſeeing their Debates with you will neither be tireſome nor impertinent, you will pleaſe to hear them out what they have to ſay to you; and then if you ſhall find cauſe to complain, that your Pleas and Excuſes are not fairly drawn, or that you have new Matter to furniſh a better Apology, they are both content you ſhall have your Liberty to amend, or add what you pleaſe; and if they be not able to refute them, they'll give you no further Trouble or Interruption in your Courſe.*

*This Gentlemen, is what I have in charge to ſay to you in the* Porch; *and now, if you pleaſe, the Door is open, you may be as private as you will: They'll attend you to your Bed-Chamber, or Cloſet; and I heartily wiſh an Happy Iſſue to this Friendly Debate.*

J. F.

## CHAP. I.

### The Introduction, and State of the Caſe.

§ 1. REaſon exalts Man above all earthly Beings: 'Tis his Dignity and Priviledge, that God hath furniſhed him with Abilities of Mind to recollect, animadvert, compare, infer, ponder, and judge his own Actions. Hereby he becomes not only capable of Moral Government by Humane Laws, which no Creature beſide him is; but alſo of Spiritual Government by Divine Laws, and the bleſſed Fruitions of God in Glory, which no other Species of Creatures (Angels only excepted) have a ſubjective Capacity for.

Right Reaſon, by the Law of Nature (as an home-born Judge) arbitrates and determines all things within its proper Province, which Province is extended far and wide. All Actions Natural, Moral, and Civil, are weighed at this Beam and Standard: None are exempted but Matters of ſupernatural Revelation; and yet even theſe are not wholly and in every reſpect exempt from Right Reaſon: For though there be ſome Myſteries in Religion above the Sphere and Flight of Reaſon, yet nothing can be found in Religion that is unreaſonable.

And tho' theſe Myſteries be not of Natural Inveſtigation, but of Supernatural Revelation; yet Reaſon is convinced, nothing can be more reaſonable, than that it take its place at the Feet of Faith, which is but to ſuffer it ſelf to become *Pupil* to an Omniſcient and Infallible Inſtructor. The reſolution of our Reaſon into Faith, and of Faith into God's Veracity, are Acts highly becoming Reaſonable Beings, in ſuch Caſes as theſe.

It may not pry too nicely into unrevealed Myſteries, demand the Reaſons, or examine the Cauſes of them (as bold and daring *Socinians* do), but it feels its ſelf obliged to receive all thoſe things both as poſſible and true, which God hath revealed, counting his Revelation alone to be Reaſon ſufficient. For the *Veracity* of God takes out of Reaſons Mouth all Objections againſt the *Truth* of them; and his Almighty *Power* ſilences all its Scruples againſt the *Poſſibility* of them.

But in all Matters properly under the Juriſdiction of Reaſon, every Man is obliged to account with himſelf, as well as others, for the reaſonableneſs of his own Actions; and that Act which will not endure the Teſt of ſound Reaſon, it judges not fit for the entertainment of a Man. If Reaſon cannot juſtifie it, 'tis beneath the Rank and Dignity of a Man to do it.

§ 2. The Light of Reaſon was at firſt the bright Lamp or Candle of the Lord, 'till Sin, like a Thief, melted it down to a Snuff; whereby (comparatively ſpeaking) it is become a poor glimmering Light in the beſt of Men, and almoſt quite extinguiſhed in ſome Men. Fallen Man is become leſs than himſelf, and will never act like himſelf, 'till he be fully reſtored to himſelf.

Sanctification indeed ſnuffs and trims the Lamp of Reaſon; but there being few ſanctified Perſons among Men, a double Miſery conſequently befalls a very great part of Mankind; whoſe Converſation ſpeaks them not only deſtitute of Religion, which bereaves them of the Bleſſedneſs of the World to come; but Men almoſt entirely deſpoiled of the Benefits and Bleſſings of their own Reaſon, which makes them unhappy and miſerable in this World: Beaſts, rather than Men, as the Sacred Scripture ſtiles them: Unreaſonable Men, Men fallen out with their own Faculties, who after many a ſharp Battel with their Reaſon, are now dragging it like a conquered Captive, at the Chariot-wheels of their victorious and triumphant Luſts.

§ 3. 'Tis ſcarce imaginable, that ever Sin ſhould prevail ſo far as it doth, to the very Unmanning of Men, did they not firſt delude and bribe their own Reaſon by cloſe and cunning Applications to their bewitched Affections; whereby, tho' they cannot make it a *Party*, yet they make it ſtand by as a ſilent Spectator, or *Neuter*, whilſt they act the Beaſt; yea, the Devil, rather than the Man.

We little know how far unſanctified Reaſon may this way be prevail'd upon to quit its Throne, and reſign its Scepter into the Hands of Luſt and Appetite; yea, to engage in the defence of their moſt abſurd Laws and Dictates. It only ſerves in ſome Men to invent Excuſes, Pleas, and ſpecious Pretences, to juſtifie or extenuate their Beaſt-like Actions; the baſeſt Servitude it can be condemned to.

If this will not do, ſenſual Luſts have another way to obtain their Satisfaction in deſpite of Reaſon and Conſcience, even by ſtopping their Ears to the Voices of both, and puſhing on with a Brutiſh *Impetus*, they ſuffer neither to enjoy the Opportunity of a calm Debate of theſe Matters with them.

§ 4. But let Men do what they will, 'tis next to an impoſſibility they ſhould ſo far ſubdue and deſtroy thoſe inbred Principles of Reaſon and Conſcience, but that they will at one time or other, give them ſome Checks and Oppoſitions in their profane Courſes, eſpecially when they ſhall get the advantage of ſome eminent Diſtreſs, or ſpecial Danger; which diſpoſes them to lend an Ear to their Voices; and there be few Men in the World, but are ſometimes providentially caſt into ſuch Caſes and Conditions.

So that Appeals to the Reaſon of the moſt profligate Wretches, are not altogether vain and uſeleſs: For if the Caſe cannot be tried and decided at the Bar of Reaſon and Conſcience one time, it may with more advantage at another; and haply, Appeals to Reaſon may produce Reformation in ſome Men, ſooner than Appeals to the Scriptures, or Principles of Faith; eſpecially when the World is ſo notoriouſly drenched in Practical Atheiſm, that ſerious Religion becomes the common Subject of Drollery amongſt multitudes of Men.

Yet it were hard and uncharitable to imagine any Man ſunk ſo deep into the Mire of Beſtiality and Profaneneſs, as not ſtill to retain ſome Value and Veneration for his own Reaſon, and as much as he abuſes it, yet to refuſe the whole World in exchange for it; and to account it a greater Miſery to be utterly deprived of it, than to have the Hoofs of an Horſe given him in exchange for his Hands and Feet.

§ 5. The Scriptures therefore do in many Caſes appeal to the Reaſon of Sinners, and deſign their Reformation by ſuch Appeals: For it being a moſt ſhameful thing for a Man to be convicted at the Bar of his own Reaſon, of acting like a Beaſt rather than a Man, every Man is preſumed to be afraid and aſhamed of ſuch an Indictment. Such Miſcreants are the Shame and Reproach of Humanity it ſelf. They are branded for Bruits throughout the ſober World. Their Company declined and ſhunn'd by all wiſe and good Men. He that hath no Reaſon to juſtifie his Actions, may yet be ſuppoſed to be Owner of ſome Stock of Natural Shame, which cannot but afford a Bluſh upon ſuch a plain Conviction. This therefore was the Courſe which the Prophet *Iſaiah* took by Divine Direction, to reform the idolatrous *Iſraelites*, *Iſa.* 46. 8. he ſtates the Caſe at the Bar of their own Reaſon, and calls for a Verdict upon it. The Caſe was this: *Whether Idols having not Power enough to ſhew themſelves Gods, thoſe that worſhip them muſt not want Wiſdom enough to ſhew themſelves Men? Remember this, and ſhew your ſelves Men, and bring it again to mind, O ye Tranſgreſſors!* q. d. For ſhame let not Men act like *Bruits, which have no Animadverſion.*

§ 6. When things therefore are brought to ſuch an Exigence, that Ruin or Reformation is the only Choice Men have to make, and all Religious Impreſſions ſo obliterated and worn out, that Men pay no Reverence to them; an Appeal to the Reaſon of Men, ſeems then to be an hopeful Method of prevailing with them, to ſuffer a Reformation rather than a Ruin. Not that I imagine the Topicks of Reaſon able to afford more powerful Arguments than thoſe of Religion do; but that they who by their Ignorance, and ſtrong Prejudices againſt Religion, have made themſelves more uncapable of Conviction that way, may haply feel the force of Reaſon prevailing ſo far, at leaſt, as to put their outragious Luſts under ſome Reſtraint.

As for the Scriptures, and ſerious Religion begotten by them in the Souls of Men, they are perfect Strangers to all, but the Names of theſe things: And even their very Names are grown almoſt ridiculous with them too. But Reaſon may convince and ſhame them. What force the Reaſon of Man hath, even without ſaving Grace, to produce Civility, Sobriety, and other Moral Vertues, is abundantly evident in the very Heathens, who by the only Light of Reaſon diſcovered ſo much Odiouſneſs in Vice and Immorality, and ſuch amiable Beauty in Juſtice, Temperance, and the other Moral Vertues, that their Praiſes for them are ſounded throughout the World.

Now whatever unthinking Men dream, to me it is evident, that when Kingdoms and Commonwealths are overflowed with unreſtrained Vices and Immoralities; when Curſing and Swearing becomes the common Language; Drunkenneſs and Adultery the common Practices of the Inhabitants; God will either ſweep away the Filth of thoſe Nations, by the Beſom of a general Reformation, or he will ſweep away their Inhabitants out of them with the Beſom of Deſtruction. For if we have not excuſſed the Notion and Belief of a God, and that he animadverts the Wickedneſs of Men (which the very Heathens by the Light of Nature, ſaw and acknowledged) we may thereby eaſily be led to this Concluſion, that ſuch Overflowings of Abomination do, and muſt certainly preſage our Deſolation, except ſpeedy and general Reformation do prevent it.

§ 7. Now the Perſons whoſe Reformation I particularly deſign by this Method, being Men that exerciſe more Reaſon than Religion, might (methinks) be prevailed with to take up at laſt, and reform their unreaſonable, as well as ungodly Courſes, could they be once prevailed with to debate theſe Matters with cool, conſiderative Minds, becoming Men governed by Reaſon, not wholly ſwayed like Bruit-Beaſts, by Luſt and Appetite.

And is it not highly reaſonable, that Men ſhould weigh their own Actions at the ſame Beam and Standard where they weigh other Mens Actions, and renounce all that with ſhame and deteſtation, which they themſelves muſt cenſure as utterly beneath, and unworthy of a Man? Wherefore hath God planted a Principle of Reaſon and Conſcience within us? Is it rational to think it was planted there for no other end or uſe, but to ſcan and cenſure other Mens Words and Actions by, but not our own? Or to be wholly uſeful to other Mens Intereſts, without any benefit to our ſelves? Ask thine own Reaſon, ſilly Man, why God placed it in thy Soul, and for what uſe it was intended, and it will tell thee, it was particularly deſigned and appointed to regulate and order thine own Life and Actions; and next, for the benefit and good of the Community. It will tell thee, there is not a ſingle Act thou doſt of any weight or moment, but thou oughteſt to conſult with it, and have its Paſs or Licenſe before thou do it. But when thou entreſt into a Series and Courſe of Actions, thy Conſultations with it ought to be very frequent and ſolemn, becauſe theſe things are of great Importance to thee.

Thy Reaſon will tell thee, Sinner, that it is a vile Affront to it, to be thruſt by thee from the Council-Table, unworthily diſmiſſed from its Office, and diſcharged from any further Attendance upon thy Life, and the Concerns thereof, and Bruitiſh Luſt and Appetite conſulted in its room; and that it needed not at all to have been implanted into thy Soul, if the ſame Principles that govern the Beaſts of the Field, muſt alſo be thy governing Principles. It ſtands ready to offer its Service to thee, to ſave thee from, or to receive thee out of thoſe Miſchiefs thou haſt, or mayeſt run thy ſelf into; if thou wilt but hear and obey its Advice. It tells thee, it is thy Privy-Counſellor by God's Appointment; and if thou wilt not find leiſure among the Heats and Hurries of thy Luſts, to conſult it, and hearken to its Counſels now; if thou wilt forſake the Conduct of thine own Reaſon and Conſcience, which have a Right and Authority to Govern thy Words and Actions, and follow thy blind and head-ſtrong Luſts and Paſſions, thou ſhalt hear other Language from them, when thy Luſts have precipitated thee into thine own Ruin and Deſtruction, as they ſpeedily and inevitably muſt and will do, according to the Courſe they now ſteer for thee.

§ 8. And there is yet more ground to hope, that Reaſon may prevail with Men living under the Goſpel, to return to Sobriety and Temperance, when we conſider their Reaſon is aſſiſted by ſome Illuminations from the Chriſtian Religion. They live in a Land of Bibles and Miniſters, where they cannot avoid the Light ; an Advantage far beyond whatever the Heathens enjoyed, who yet by their ſingle unaſſiſted Reaſon arrived to an Eminency in Moral Vertues.

Our Reaſons and Conſciences do not only convince us (as theirs alſo did them) that there is a God, and a future Life of Retribution, wherein every Man ſhall be judged according to his Works ; but alſo, that the Scriptures are the very Word of God, and Rule of Faith and Manners. And if there be any among the debauched Crew, that queſtion or deny it, we may be confident none of them are able, by plain and ſound Reaſon, to overthrow thoſe mighty Arguments pleaded for the Confirmation of that Truth. At leaſt they find in themſelves a ſtrong ſuſpicion and fear, that they may prove to be true ; which jealouſie and ſuſpicion working together with their own Reaſon and Conſciences, are no contemptible helps towards their recovery.

For if what Reaſon, Conſcience, and Scripture with one Mouth pronounce, be true and certain, (as undoubtedly it will be found to be) then it muſt be plain and obvious to them alſo, that their Brutiſh Luſts have put them into the direct and ready way, both to ruin *themſelves*, and alſo greatly to hazard the *Community to which they belong*.

§ 9. As for themſelves, if they will make a Judgment upon their own Condition in the Light of Reaſon, Conſcience, or Scripture (and they very well know they take their Meaſures in perfect Darkneſs, if they take them not by this Direction), then continuing the ſame Courſe they now do, they are a loſt Generation.

All their lawful and faithful Guides tell them with one Mouth, they are certainly in the Broad Way to Damnation. And that how irkſom and terrible ſoever the Thoughts and Apprehenſions of Hell are to them, yet thither they muſt certainly come, if they purſue this Courſe. Their Reaſon plainly tells them, he that chuſeth the Means, and engageth in the Way leading to Hell, muſt, and ought to make account, that Hell is the place he is preparing for.

Conſcience is as plain and poſitive with them, that they muſt either return or periſh. The Scripture confirms the Teſtimonies of both, by telling them plainly, That *the end of theſe things is death*, *Rom.* 6. 21.

'Tis down-right Folly and Madneſs, by the Vote of the whole Rational and Sober World, for any Man to conclude, or hope he ſhall be happy in the World to come, whoſe Life is drawn through, and finiſhed in all manner of Obſcenity, Filthineſs, and Profaneneſs, in the preſent World.

For let the Caſe be brought into the Light of your own Reaſon, as dim as it is, and let it freely judge, when you are belching out your black and horrid Blaſphemies againſt God, imprecating Damnation from him upon your own Souls, wallowing in Beaſtly Luſts, Vomiting and Roaring in Taverns and Alehouſes : Ask, I ſay, your own Reaſon, Conſcience, or the Scripture, whether all or either of them will allow you to ſay or think, *Now we are in the right way to eternal Bleſſedneſs? This is the very Courſe that will bring us to Happineſs in the World to come : This pleaſeth God better, and is a ſurer Path to Glory, than Repentance or Faith, Mortification, Prayer, or Reformation.* No, no ; as blind as your Reaſon is, and as ſeared as your Conſciences are, you will never bring them to comprobate or ſubſcribe ſuch abſurd and horrid Concluſion as theſe.

But on the contrary, they will tell you, That if you will have the Pleaſure, you muſt have the Pain and Torment of Sin. That 'tis Madneſs to ſay you are afraid to burn, but not afraid to ſin : That you are loath to be damned, and yet challenge the Almighty God to his Face to damn you ; as much a Folly as to drink a baneful Doſe of known Poiſon, and think to feel no painful Gripes afterwards.

As for the Scriptures, they appeal to the Reaſon of Men in this Caſe, as a moſt known and allowed thing, ſcarce imaginable to lie hid from any Man, 1 Cor. 6. 9. *Know ye not, that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.*

It would make the Bowels of a compaſſionate Chriſtian to rowl and yearn within him, to behold multitudes of Souls of invaluable worth, running greedily on to their eternal Ruin, wilfully ſtopping their Ears all the way, to the Voices of their own Reaſon and Conſcience, as well as to the Voice of God in his Word, not once making a Pauſe, 'till they fall into that Gulf of eternal and intolerable Miſery, into which with great precipitation they are caſting themſelves.

§ 10. And then for the Community to which they belong, how dangerous, yea, how deſtructive ſuch Perſons are to it, cannot poſſibly be hid from any wiſe and ſerious Obſerver : For if one Sinner deſtroys much good, if one *Achan* trouble the whole Camp of *Iſrael*, how much more will whole Swarms and Droves of Drunkards, Blaſphemers, and Adulterers, as now fill every place, pull down the Judgments of God, upon thoſe States and Kingdoms wherein they breathe? If our Fears and Dangers were greater than they are, yet Reformation might ſave us : *Jer.* 5. 1. *Run ye to and fro through the Streets of Jeruſalem, and ſee now and know, and ſeek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a Man*, (*i. e.* a Publick Man, a Man in Authority), *if there be any that executeth Judgment, that ſeeketh the Truth, and I will pardon it.* And if our Hopes and Confidences were much higher than they are, yet unreſtrained Sin would undo us. Kingdoms and Commonwealths are not ſo much endangered by the Powers and Policies of their Enemies without them, as they are by the Unreformedneſs of profligate Wretches within, and amongſt them. Reformation quickly recovers the ancient Glory of Kingdoms, and makes them the Terror of their Enemies.

For tho' there will be ſtill too much Sin privately committed under the beſt Laws, and moſt vigorous and impartial Execution of them; yet abundance of ſin would thereby be prevented, and the Sins that are committed would not become National, but Perſonal only, and theſe would not ſo much concern and hazard the Publick Weal and Tranquility of the State.

Moreover, States and Kingdoms are in no ſmall hazard by the Publick Debauchery, and Common Profaneneſs of their Subjects; foraſmuch as in this very Sink and Puddle of their Luſts, the Manly Wiſdom, Sprightly Courage, and True Gallantry, of their Subjects, are quenched and drowned, their Spirits ſoftned and effeminated. 'Tis hard to imagine thoſe Men will engage far in the Cauſe of Reformation, when Reformation it ſelf is the only thing they hate and fear.

Nor need we wonder to find Men intimidated, and low ſpirited, in Times and Places of imminent Danger, who not only carry about them ſo much Guilt (which is the Fountain of Fear), but are wholly addicted to Senſual Pleaſures, which they are loth to hazard upon Publick Accounts and Conſiderations, theſe being the only Heaven they have, or hope for: *Whoredom and Wine, and new Wine, take away the Heart*, Hoſ. 4. 11. 'Tis in the very Nature of theſe Sins to make Men ſottiſh, and in the very Nature of Guilt to make them puſillanimous.

*Seneca* obſerves (and his Obſervation is true), *That the Conſcience of a wicked Man is a terrible Scourge and Torment to him, perpetually laſhing him with ſollicitous Thoughts and Fears, ſo that he diſtruſts all Securities, and knows not where to be ſafe.* Hence it comes to paſs, that many Men of good Extraction, liberal Education, and excellent Natural Endowments, become ſo uſeleſs, yea, ſo pernicious as they are; who, could they be recovered but to Temperance and Sobriety, would become both excellently uſeful and ornamental to the Nation where they had their Birth, and to the Safety and Honour whereof they owe their Service.

*Seneca*, Epiſt 97.

§ 11. This moſt deſirable Recovery and Reformation of profane debauched Perſons, is not ſimply and abſolutely impoſſible: And if Magiſtrates and Miniſters were every-where exemplary themſelves, for Sobriety and Piety, zealous and impartial in the Diſcharge of their reſpective Duties, a general Reformation would not be difficult. But when thoſe, whoſe Office it is to ſuppreſs Wickedneſs, ſhall aſſociate themſelves with lewd and profligate Perſons, and vye with them in their profane Courſes, or diſcourage more Conſciencious Perſons in the Diſcharge of their Duties: This makes Reformation morally impoſſible.

If Profaneneſs were once found the General Odium of the People, and a Bar to all Preferments, it might be hoped things would quickly alter for the better. 'Twas an ancient Cuſtom among the Heathens (as Learned and Excellent Mr. *Hale* of *Eaton*, out of *Chryſoſtom* obſerves), that if a Man offered himſelf to contend in the *Olympick Games*, he was not permitted ſo to do, 'till Proclamation had been firſt made, Whether any Man knew him to be either a Servant, or a Man of infamous Life? And if any ſuch Imputation were proved againſt him, it was ſufficient to keep him back, let his Skill be what it would.

What care was here taken, that their Vanities ſhould not be diſcredited! And will neither Reaſon nor Religion convince us, that not only equal, but far greater care ought to be taken to diſcourage Profaneneſs among Chriſtians, than the blind Heathens ever took to preſerve the Reputation of their vain Exerciſes? Let all ſubordinate Miniſters of State, and Officers in the Church, conſider how great a part of this bleſſed Reformation is demanded to their Hands.

§ 12. Were Kingdoms and Common-wealths once purged from that Spirit of Profaneneſs and Debauchery, which thus defiles and overflows them, and the People generally reduced but to Civility, Sobriety, and Temperance, Experience would quickly ſhew them the comfortable Effects and happy Fruits thereof.

For tho' this be much ſhort of what Chriſtianity exacts from all its Profeſſors, and inſufficient to obtain the Happineſs of the World to come; yet it is greatly conducent to the Civil Happineſs and Flouriſhing of the Kingdoms of this World; and therefore richly worth the Studies and Endeavours of all Men to promote and obtain it.

There is no Kingdom or Common-wealth in the Chriſtian World, which would not by this means breed and ſend forth multitudes more than they do, with excellent Abilities and Qualifications fitting them to ſit at the Helm of Government, and ſteer a more proſperous Courſe than they do at preſent. A wiſe and ſteddy Direction of the arduous and important Affairs of Kingdoms, can only be expected from thoſe that are able to govern themſelves, and their own Affairs, with Sobriety and Diſcretion.

If the Laws of Nations take care for the Preſervation and Growth of Timber fit for the Building of Houſes and Ships, and every one ſees the uſefulneſs and neceſſity of ſuch Acts; much more ought they to take care for ſuch an Education of Men, as may render them ſerviceable Members to the State, both in Camp and Council.

Magiſtrates are (in a Sence) the Foundation of Kingdoms, the ſtrong Shoulders that bear the Burthen of Government; and Reaſon will tell, that ſo great a Weight and Streſs, as the Affairs and Concerns of Kingdoms, ought not to be laid on their Shoulders, whoſe Legs through Debauchery are too weak to bear their own reeling and ſtaggering Bodies.

Sea-men, and Soldiers, are the Walls of Kingdoms, and under God their Prudence and Courage are the Peoples Defence and Safeguard. *Plutarch* tells us, there were two Vertues in *Hannibal* which made him proſperous and ſucceſsful: There was in him, *Plurimum audaciæ ad capienda pericula, & plurimum conſilii inter ipſa pericula.* He was bold in attempting, and prudent in managing the moſt difficult Services; the former had ſignified little without the latter. Courage may throw Men into the midſt of Difficulties, but Counſel and Wiſdom helps them to emerge thoſe Difficulties; and I'm ſure that cannot be rationally expected from Men, that daily dethrone their own Reaſon by Debauchery.

But when Men not only ſober, juſt, and temperate, but religiouſly good, are employed in Publick Truſts and Services, we cannot but think the Security and Proſperity of ſuch a State are abundantly provided for. And our Confidence hereof is not only ſounded upon the Maxims of Human Reaſon, but of Scripture, Wiſdom, and Authority alſo.

What a renowned, proſperous, and ſucceſsful Captain of the Armies of *Iſrael* was good *Joſhua*! No Man was able to ſtand before him all the Days of his Life, *Joſh.* 1. 5. But what bred thoſe brave, gallant, and undaunted Spirits in the Breaſt of this Heroe, and crowned his noble Deſigns with ſuch admirable Succeſs? If we look into *ver.* 8. we ſhall find, it was Religion that gave both the Edge and Point to his natural Courage. *This Book of the Law ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou ſhalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayeſt obſerve to do all that is written therein: for then thou ſhalt make thy way proſperous, and then thou ſhalt have good ſucceſs.*

*Hezekiah* this way became a None-ſuch among the Kings of *Judah*; for he clave to the Lord, and the Lord was with him, and he proſpered whitherſoever he went forth, 2 *Kings* 18. 5, 6, 7. And dying *David*, from an whole Life of Experience, recommended this as the only Method of Proſperity unto *Solomon* his Son, *Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, that thou mayeſt proſper in all that thou doſt, and whitherſoever thou turneſt thy ſelf*, 1 Kings 2. 3, 4.

How great a Luſtre therefore doth this Truth caſt about it, that the Reſtraint and Reformation of Vice, and the due Encouragement of Vertue and Piety, becomes the very Civil Intereſt of Kingdoms and Nations, by the Joint Votes and Suffrages both of Human and Divine Wiſdom? Let any Kingdom or State make Tryal of this Method, and from that very time they ſhall date their Proſperity. This will make them become the Terrors of their Enemies round about them; Peace and Proſperity ſhall flouriſh in the midſt of them, which is the true Level and Deſign of this moſt neceſſary and ſeaſonable Attempt.

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## CHAP. II.

### *Producing one Dictate, or Rule of Right Reaſon, reſpecting Morality, allowed by Mankind; and paſſing current through the World without one Negative Voice, except only from thoſe Men, whoſe Reaſons are utterly captivated by their Luſts.*

§ 1. SUch is the Degeneracy and deep Corruption of ſome Mens Natures, by ill Education, baſe Company, and long Cuſtom in Sin; that abandoning and caſting away the Bonds and Reſtraints of right Reaſon, as well as Religion, they give the full Scope and Liberty to their Luſts and Paſſions, reckoning their chief Happineſs to conſiſt in the Gratification and Satisfaction of their Senſitive Appetites. They affect a ſoft, delicate, Senſe-pleaſing Life, reckoning it the only real Heaven to be deſired and ſought by them; and any other Heaven beſide that, to be meerly notional and fantaſtick. This is the Element they deſire to live and ſport in, fitly deſcribed, *Tit.* 3. 3. by *ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures.* Hence it comes to paſs, that their Bodies ſerve only to be *Strainers* for Meats and Drinks, and Channels for filthy Luſts to ſtream through. In this Stream their Maſculine Agility melts away, and all Publick Hopes and Expectations from them are totally defeated and diſappointed. Appetite is the *Maſter*, and Reaſon the *Slave.*

Theſe Men (if it be fit to call them Men) have bid defiance to their own Reaſon, and denounced a War againſt their own Faculties, as if Reaſon had Licenſed and Priviledged (which it never did, nor can do) their worſe than bruitiſh Luſts, to act to the uttermoſt of their Abilities, without any Maſter of Reſtraint over them.

§ 2. But notwithſtanding the preſent Captivity of Reaſon under uſurping and domineering Luſts, ſo long as it hath a permanent and fixed Root and Principle in their Nature, 'tis poſſible it may recover its Throne and Empire over them again, as many an impriſoned King hath done, and probably would do it in a very ſhort ſpace, if thoſe Prejudices they have conceived againſt its Government, were but once fairly confuted and removed; which certainly is not hard to do.

They are of Opinion, that the Laws of Reaſon are too ſevere, ſtrict, and rigorous: That they too much abridge them of their Pleaſures and Delights, and that the Government of Senſuality being more eaſie, favourable and indulgent, is for that Reaſon much more eligible and deſirable.

Whereas right Reaſon deſigns not the abandoning of all Pleaſures, but only the exchange of them, and that exchange every way to our great advantage. The only hurt or loſs (if this muſt be accounted ſo) any Man can ſuſtain by the exchange of Pleaſures made by Reaſon and Religion, is this, that they deſign for you the rational, ordinate and congruous Delights, both of a Man, and of a Chriſtian, in lieu of the lower, baſer, and filthy Pleaſures of a Beaſt, or a Devil.

They propoſe to you Rules about Pleaſures, far more ſafe and grateful, without any culpable Severity, or Auſterity, in them. Reaſon would only regulate and *legitimate* your Delights, and Religion *ſanctifie* them, that you might much more purely and ſweetly enjoy them, without either *Shame* ariſing from their *turpitude*, or *fear* from their *guilt.* The Rules of both are large and indulgent enough, and keeping within their Lines and Limits, Men ſhall find ſuch Generous, Manly, and Agreeable Delights, as are no where to be enjoyed without them.

§ 3.

§ 3. To make this evident, I ſhall poſtulate and preſume but one thing, and that a thing ſo immediately true and ſelf-evident, that in the firſt naked propoſal of it, it naturally and eaſily lets it ſelf into every Mans Underſtanding, and no ſooner asks, but gains the Approbation of right Reaſon. And that ſelf-evident Principle which I take for granted, no Man of ſound Intellectuals will quarrel or diſpute, is this:

*That Good which compriſeth and involveth the true Honour, Profit, and Pleaſure of the whole Man, which is more congruous to Humane Nature, and preſervative of it, is to be preferred in our Eſtimation and Choice, to that which only yields a lower degree of Pleaſure, without Profit or Honour to the baſeſt part of Man; and that low and tranſient Pleaſure it doth yield, attended and followed with many preſent and future Miſeries, deſtructive to the whole Man.*

The ſeveral parts of this complex Propoſition, caſt ſuch a Light and Glory round about them, that I cannot imagine, but as ſoon as it ſhall be propounded to the Judgment and Cenſure of ſound Reaſon, it muſt immediately gain both its Approbation and Applauſe.

But becauſe Reaſon in many Men is ſo beclouded, and diſturbed by Luſts and Paſſions, that it can neither receive things orderly, nor judge of them truly and impartially: I conceive it needful to demand the Cenſure and Judgment of their Reaſon upon the Particulars compriſed in this general complex Propoſition, that ſo weighing and examining them one by one, we may try whether ſound Reaſon hath any valuable Exception againſt any Part or Member thereof.

§ 4. And *Firſt*, I take it for granted, that no Man's Reaſon will deny or demur to this Propoſition, That *Good is to be choſen, and Evil to be avoided.* For the will is naturally carried to that which is good, as to its proper Object, and ſhuns that which is evil. And that is naturally good, which is convenient and agreeable to Nature; and that naturally Evil which is diſconvenient and hurtful to Nature. So that the choice of Good rather than Evil, is the natural choice of the Will; and this choice of the Will is founded upon the Law of Self-preſervation, without which the Creation would quickly diſband, and no particular Being could be long preſerved.

And not only the Will of Rational Creatures chuſeth the Good, and refuſeth the Evil; but every ſenſitive Creature is endowed with a natural Faculty to diſcern the one from the other in order to the preſervation of their Beings. You find it in the ſmalleſt and moſt deſpicable Animals, and therefore cannot deny it unto Man, the nobleſt and moſt excellent Being on Earth, except only in his Non age, before he hath lived to the Years of Diſcretion. Children indeed in their Infancy have no knowledge to diſcern between Good and Evil, *Deut.* 1. 39. But Men not diſcerning Good from Evil, or chuſing Evil rather than Good, are many degrees beneath Babes.

*Secondly*, Nor will Reaſon heſitate at all upon this Particular, That *there are degrees of Goodneſs found among Pleaſures and Delights*; ſome are better than others. Every Life is not alike pleaſant and happy. To deny this, is to make the moſt deſpicable Worm, or Fly, equally happy with the moſt excellent Creature upon Earth. And beſide, for the Conviction of ſuch debauched Perſons, as I am here arguing with, it will follow clearly from the denial of that Truth, that they really gain nothing to themſelves, by all their extravagant and licentious Courſes; there being altogether as much Pleaſure and Felicity, in a temperate, chaſt, and ſober Life, as there is in that beaſtly Life they live. And their very departure from the way of Sobriety, to embrace the ways of Debauchery, moſt clearly evinceth to the World, that they do not think all Pleaſures equal; but that they do confidently expect to find more Pleaſure and Satisfaction in the way that they chuſe, than they did in the way of Sobriety, which they have left and abandoned.

*Thirdly*, I cannot be ſo uncharitable to think, but the Relicks of Reaſon in the moſt profligate Perſon, will readily admit and grant, That *whereever the Good of Pleaſure, Profit, and Honour, meet together, and joyntly conſpire to make the Life of a Man more comfortable, and more durable upon Earth, that is much rather to be choſen, than a meer tranſient touch of ſenſitive Pleaſure, accompanied with preſent regret, and followed with the Ruin of Eſtate, Name, Honour, Soul, and Body.* He that thinks otherwiſe, is more fit for a *Bedlam*, than a rational and ſober Confutation. Theſe things therefore I take for granted, they being innate and ſelf-evident Notions and Principles in all Men.

§ 5. The Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God are clearly diſcernable, in leaving ſuch Principles of Reaſon, and common Notices of Conſcience in Men after the Fall, as prompt them naturally unto Juſtice, Chaſtity, Temperance, and Sobriety, and do ſtruggle within them to reſtrain them from, or recover them out of their Immoralities, from which many Advantages do reſult.

For hereby God is acknowledged all the World over, Men every-where ſhewing by theſe things the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, *Rom.* 2. 15.

Hereby Kingdoms and Common-wealths are preſerved, this being the common Bridle which reſtrains the outragious Luſts of Millions of Men, which elſe would turn the World into Confuſion, tho' here and there ſome have ſlipt Bridle, and run into all Exceſs of Riot. We juſtly admire the Providence of God in butting, bounding, and reſtraining the boiſterous Ocean by Mountains, Rocks, and Sands; and as much is he to be admired in curbing the inſatiable Luſts of Men, by theſe innate Principles of Reaſon and Conſcience.

Hereby the way to Sin is in ſome meaſure barr'd and ſhut up, and the further progreſs of Sinners, already entred into it, ſtop'd and denied: For Actions done with regret, cannot be ſuppoſed to be done ſo frequently and furiouſly, as if they were done without any regret; or that the way to Sin were ſmoothed to them with a full Conſent and Approbation of their whole ſelf. For moſt Sinners find in themſelves what *Medea* did,

> ——*Video meliora proboque,*
> *Deteriora ſequor*——

They both ſee and approve that which is better, tho' they follow that which is worſe.

In a word, theſe Relicks of Reaſon and Conſcience in Men, are fit Handles to catch hold on, for the turning them about from Satan unto God. When *Paul* reaſoned with *Fœlix*, about Temperance, Righteouſneſs, and Judgment to come, his Words laid hold upon theſe Handles, and gave him ſuch a ſhake, that the Text ſaith, *Fœlix trembled.* And oh! that this Diſcourſe might take hold of the Reaſon and Conſcience of every profane Reader, and produce ſome more excellent and laſting Effect upon his Soul.

§ 6. Theſe Notices and Dictates of Reaſon and Conſcience in Men, being ſo neceſſary, and many ways beneficial to themſelves, as well as to the whole Community; it muſt therefore be an horrid Villany to war againſt them, and by Violence to ſuppreſs and enſlave them to our own Luſt.

This is as if a Company of deſperate Ruffians ſhould aſſault Innocent and Noble Travellers upon the lawful Road, bind and gag their Guides, whilſt they rob and proſtitute them. Thus deal bruitiſh Luſts, headed by the Devil, with the Affections of Men, travelling along the lawful Road of Duty, under the Conduct of Reaſon and Conſcience. For this Villany it was, that the Apoſtle tells us, The Wrath of God was revealed from Heaven againſt the Heathens, who held the truth in Unrighteouſneſs, *Rom.* 1. 18. They had the Light of Natural Reaſon and Conſcience in them, the inbred Notions of Good and Evil, which raiſed their Hopes or Fears, according to the Nature and Quality of their Actions.

*Conſcia mens ut cuique ſua eſt, ita concipit intra*
*Pectora pro facto ſpemque metumque ſuo.* Ovid.

But their head-ſtrong boiſterous Luſts rudely and violently brake in upon Reaſon and Conſcience, impriſoned and bound them as *Zedekiah* did the faithful Prophet *Jeremiah* for the diſcharge of his Duty to him. For this the Wrath of God was revealed from Heaven againſt them. And indeed we cannot wonder it ſhould be incenſed againſt them, as it will againſt all that act like them: For into ſuch a Sin as this, many direful Aggravations fall in together, to make it a monſtrous and prodigious Sin.

Here we find an high and cauſeleſs Abuſe of the Nobleſt Natural Faculties and Powers of a Man's own Soul. What harm have thy Reaſon and Conſcience done thee, by ſtimulating and perſwading to Temperance, Chaſtity, and Sobriety, or by ſtruggling and ſtriving with thee to prevent both thy preſent and future Ruin? Do they lay their faithful and loving Hands of Reſtraint upon thee, when they ſee thee running headlong into Deſtruction? And do they deſerve for this, and no worſe than this, to be thus trampled under Foot and abuſed? Ask thy ſelf, Man, Whether thou thinkeſt thy very Dog deſerves to be hanged for Opening at Midnight, and taking that Thief by the Throat, who came to cut thine? And dareſt thou uſe thoſe Noble Powers within thee, worſe than thou wouldſt uſe a Dog? Humanity would bluſh at ſuch an Action.

Theſe vile Abuſes of thy Reaſon and Conſcience carry alſo in them an horrid Contempt of God, whoſe Patent, Officers, and Delegates, thy Reaſon and Conſcience are. Thoſe certainly ſin with an high Hand againſt the Lord, who make nothing to controul, kick, and lay in Irons his Commiſſion-Officers, appointed for no other end, by their preſent and future Felicity. Nay,

Such Men as theſe are found in a plain Confederacy with the Devil, and that in a moſt unnatural and horrid Plot againſt their own Souls and Bodies. Their Light and their Luſts are ſtruggling together. Sin and Conſcience are combating one with another; the one to deſtroy, the other to ſave the Man. Dareſt thou joyn with thy Luſts againſt thy Light, and think not to be brought in as a Party, and Confederate with the Devil? The ſtopping of the Mouth of thy Conſcience, fully proves both thy Conſent and Concealment. And if proved Conſent and Concealment, make thee not a Party and Acceſſary, it will be very ſtrange.

*Plutarch* in his Book *de Amicitiâ*, relates a Story of a *Perſian*, who ſcuffling in the dark with a Magician, againſt whom he had a Grudge, and not being able to conquer him himſelf, called upon his Friend, who ſtood by him with a naked Sword ready to ſtrike, but durſt not, for fear of killing his Friend: The *Perſian* cries out, *Strike, ſtrike, however thy Stroke fall; thruſt at an adventure; I care not, ſo thou kill the Magician, tho' thou kill him through my own Body.*

Much ſo ſtands the Caſe here, with a little Variation. Thou art furiouſly ſet upon the Enjoyment of thy Luſts, nothing will quiet thee but their Satisfaction. Thy Reaſon and Conſcience will oppoſe it, and ſtruggle hard with thee, to with-hold thee from them. But thou careſt not in the Rage of thine inſatiable Appetite, tho' thy Reaſon and Conſcience both fall in the Combate, rather than thy Luſts ſhould not be ſatisfied. Oh, what Bruits! yea, what Monſters can Sin turn Men into!

§ 7. If Men have not quite extinguiſhed both Reaſon and Conſcience by Debauchery, and diveſted themſelves of Humanity, one would think no Motion or Addreſs can poſſibly be made to them more fair, rational, and inoffenſive than this, that they would be pleaſed but to conſult themſelves, and hearken to the native and unconſtrained Voice of their own Reaſon and Conſcience, before they engage themſelves in Matters of great Concernment, upon which both their preſent and eternal Welfare do depend; or if they are already engaged, yet at leaſt to lend an Ear to what they have to offer for their recovery, before it be too late.

You are not here urged and preſſed to hearken to the Voices of your Enemies that hate you, or to the Counſel and Advice of meer Strangers, who know not your Affairs; but to hearken to your ſelves, to be your own Arbitrators and Judges, to draw up the Award with your own Hand. 'Tis a ſtrange and an hard Caſe indeed, and ſcarce to be ſuppoſed, that Men ſhould fall out with themſelves at ſuch a rate, that they had rather hear the Voice of their mortal Enemy the Devil, and liſten to his Advice and Counſel, than to the Voice of their own Reaſon and Conſcience.

We all account it Madneſs in *Balaam*, to beat his innocent Aſs, and threaten to kill her for ſhunning the Sword of the Angel that oppoſed his paſſage in a ſinful and dangerous Expedition. But how many uſe both their Reaſon and Conſcience worſe than Aſſes, becauſe they dare not go forward, and deſperately carry them into the very midſt of Dangers and Miſeries, which they plainly foreſee and warn them of?

What Injuries have thy Reaſon or Conſcience done thee, Man? What Affronts have they given thee? That thou wilt not ſuffer them to ſpeak or offer one word, tho' never ſo pertinent, ſeaſonable, and neceſſary? There is a Civility due from us to meer Strangers, yea, to Strangers of an inferiour Rank and Quality. The leaſt we can do, is to give them a patient hearing, and not interrupt them whilſt they ſpeak nothing but what is rational, pertinent, and neceſſary, eſpecially if it be to their own good and advantage. 'Tis ſtrange Men ſhould not think themſelves as much obliged to pay Civility and Reſpect to their own Reaſons and Conſciences, as they daily pay to meer Strangers and Inferiours. Give them but a patient hearing, and they will both tell thee:

*We are thine appointed Guardians, and have our Commiſſion from God to adviſe, direct, and counſel thee. We are thy faithful and inward Friends; yea, we are thine own ſelf, and the beſt and nobleſt part of thy ſelf too. At our hands God will require thy Blood, ſhouldſt thou periſh by our Silence or Treachery. We cannot be both Silent and Innocent, are both in ſuch hazard. Don't abuſe us, and ſtop our Mouths for crying out, Stop, ſtop, when we ſee thee departing from the Paths of Honeſty, Honour, and Safety, and taking the direct Road to that Gulf of Miſery, in which few, if any Footſteps are found of ſuch as return again, that are far engaged therein.*

*Suffer us but fairly and friendly to expoſtulate the matter with thee. What Deſign can we have againſt thy true Intereſt, whilſt thine, and ours, cannot poſſibly be oppoſite or disjunct, but one and the ſame Intereſt.*

Well then, that which thy Reaſon and Conſcience offers, being ſo weighty, fair, and juſt, and what thine own Intereſt plainly lies in, I will not be ſo uncharitable, as to ſuppoſe thou wilt either refuſe to hear, or reject what they have to ſay in the following Caſes and Debates.

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## CHAP. III.

### *Wherein the true Cenſure and Judgment of Right Reaſon and Conſcience, are given upon profane* Swearing *and* Blaſpheming *the Name of* GOD: *As alſo their Replies to ſeveral Pleas offered in Defence or Excuſe thereof.*

§ 1. GOD beſtowed on Man the Noble Faculty of Speech (a peculiar Favour and Priviledge) for two Ends and Uſes. (1.) That by the uſe of his Tongue he may glorifie his Maker, and ſound forth the Praiſes of his Redeemer. (2.) That we might thereby be able to communicate our Minds one to another, in all our neceſſary and convenient Intereſts and Concernments, whether Civil or Religious. This Member, the Tongue, tho' ſmall in quantity, is found to be mighty in efficacy; and whilſt it is kept under the Rule and Government of Grace, the Words that drop from it, are as Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver. Gracious Words are Bread to feed, and Water to refreſh the Souls of others. A ſanctified Tongue is as a Tree of Life. Converſion, Edification, and Conſolation, are the delicious Fruits of the Lips.

But the Tongues of ſome Men break looſe from under all the Laws and Rules both of Reaſon and Religion, and ſerve only to vent the Froth and Filth which abounds in the Heart, as in a Fountain of Pollution: For *out of the abundance of the Heart, the Mouth ſpeaketh.* The Tongue moves lightly, but falls heavily; it ſtrikes ſoft, but wounds deep. It would not ſpare Men of the higheſt Rank and Eminence, did not the fear of Capital Puniſhments teach them ſo much Wit to keep their Tongues in Priſon, that they may keep their Bodies out of Priſon. And tho' for this Reaſon they are afraid of making too bold with the Names of Men; yet having no fear of God at all, they fall upon his great and dreadful Name, toſſing it to and fro without any Reſpect or Reverence.

*Auguſtus* prohibited the common uſe of his Name, leſt it ſhould grow too cheap and vile, by the common and needleſs uſing of it. The Name of *Mercurius Triſmegiſtus* was very ſparingly uſed, becauſe of the great Reverence the People had for him. The very Heathens were afraid to pronounce the Name of their great God, *Demogorgon*, as fearing the Earth would tremble when his Name was mentioned. How doth the Reverence of Heathens to their falſe Gods, expoſe and aggravate the Impudence of profeſſed Chriſtians in their vile Indignities and Abuſes of the Great and Terrible Name of the True God! Yea, they not only take up his Name vainly and raſhly into their Lips, but audaciouſly inſert it by a profane Oath into their common Talk, as that which gives the Grace, Lepor, and Ornament to their Diſcourſes. Some have not been aſhamed to ſay, What pity is it that Swearing ſhould be a Sin, which gives ſo great a Grace and Ornament to Language?

§ 2. Swearing by the Name of God in a righteous Cauſe, when called thereto by due Authority, is not only a Lawful, but a Religious Act, founded upon, and directed to the Honour of God's Omniſcience, whereunto there is a ſolemn Appeal made, in every aſſertory, and promiſſory Oath, and a Religious Acknowledgment made him of his infallible Knowledge of the Truth or Falſhood of our Hearts, and all the Secrets of them, be they never ſo involved and inward things.

The lawful Uſe and End of Swearing, is to put an End to all Strife, and to maintain both Equity and Charity among Men, the two Bonds and Ligaments of Humane Society. Now it being the Sovereign Right and Property of God alone, infallibly to ſearch and try the Hearts and Reins of Men, he thereby becomes the infallible Witneſs to the Truth or Falſhood of what they ſpeak; ſo that in every ſuch lawful Oath, there is not only a ſolemn Appeal, and in that Appeal an Aſcription of Glory to his Sovereign Omniſcience; but therein (implicitly at leaſt), they put themſelves under his Wrath and Curſe, in caſe they Swear falſly; which makes this Action moſt ſacred and ſolemn.

The deep Corruption of Humane Nature by the Fall, makes theſe Appeals to God under a Curſe neceſſary. For it is ſuppoſed, tho' Men be falſe and deceitful, yet there is ſome Reverence of a Deity, and fear of his Wrath and Curſe, left unextinguiſhed in their fallen Nature. So that Men will rather ſpeak the Truth, (tho' to their own ſhame and loſs) than by invocating ſo glorious a Name in vain, put both Soul and Body under his Wrath and Curſe. By which it appears what an awful and ſolemn thing an Oath is; and that every good Man not only takes a lawful Oath with holy fear and trembling, becauſe of the Solemnity of the Action; but rather ought to chuſe Death, than to Swear profanely, becauſe of the horrid Malignity of the Action.

§ 3. The Contumely and Malignity found in profane Oaths, appears in that terrible threatning, *The Lord will not hold him guiltleſs, that taketh his Name in vain:* A Threatning altogether as juſt and righteous, as it is ſevere and terrible. This Sin admits of degrees of Guilt. 'Tis highly ſinful to Swear by the Name of God lightly and vainly in our common Diſcourſes, tho' the Oath be clipp'd, and half ſuppreſs'd, or diſguiſed in the Pronunciation of it, which argues ſome remains of fear and ſhame in the Sinner.

'Tis yet worſe (and indeed not a jot below Blaſphemy) to ſwear by any other Name, than the Name of God. For in ſo doing, they attribute to a Creature the Sovereign and Incommunicable Property of God, ſet that Creature in the very Throne of God, and inveſt it with the Regalities of his Omniſcience, to know our Hearts, and Almighty Power to avenge the Wrong upon us done to himſelf, as well as to Men by falſe Swearing.

But to break in rudely and blaſphemouſly upon the Sacred and Tremendous Name of God, with bold and full-mouth'd Oaths, ſtriking through his Sacred Name, with direct Contumelious Blaſphemies; this argues an Heart from which all Fear of God, is utterly expelled and baniſhed.

Yet ſome there are grown up to that prodigious heighth of Impiety, that they dare aſſault the very Heavens, and diſcharge whole Vollies of Blaſphemies againſt that Glorious Majeſty which dwells there. They are not afraid to bid defiance to him, and challenge the God that made them, to do his worſt. They deck and adorn (as they account it) their common Diſcourſes with bloody Oaths, and horrid Imprecations, not reckoning them Genteel and Modiſh without them. It conſiſts not with the Greatneſs of their Spirits, to be wicked at the common rate. They are willing to let the World know, that they are none of thoſe puny, ſilly Fellows, that are afraid of inviſible Powers, or ſo much Cowards as to clip a full-mouth'd Oath, by ſuppreſſing, or whiſpering the Emphatical ſounding Syllable; but think an horrid Blaſphemy makes the moſt ſweet and graceful Cadency, in their Helliſh Rhetorick.

They glory that they have fully conquered all thoſe troubleſome Notions of Good and Evil, Vertue and Vice, Heaven and Hell, to that degree, that they can now affront the Divine Majeſty to his very Face, and not fear the worſt he threatens in his Word againſt their Wickedneſs.

If there be a God (which they ſcarce believe) they are reſolved audaciouſly to provoke him to give them a convincing Evidence of his Being. And if he be (as they are told he is) rich in Patience and Forbearance, they are reſolved to try how far his Patience will extend, and what Load of Wickedneſs it is capable to bear.

If their Damnation be not yet ſure enough, they will do their utmoſt to make it ſure, by breaking down the only Bridge whereby they can eſcape Damnation; I mean, by trampling under their Feet the precious Blood and Wounds of the Son of God, and imprecating the Damnation of Hell upon their own Souls, as if it ſlumbred too long, and were too ſlow-pac'd in its Motions towards them. I am of Opinion, there are few Chriſtians to be found on Earth, crying ſo often, *Lord, pardon, Lord, ſave me*; as ſome Wretches among us cry, (*Horreſco referens!*) *God dam me, the Devil take me.*

Herein they ſeem to envy the Happineſs of the Devils, and damned Wretches in Hell, and endeavour (as one ſpeaks) to ſnatch Damnation out of Gods hands before the time, as if they could not be ſoon enough among their roaring and howling Companions in the midſt of the everlaſting Burnings. But, why ſuch haſte to be perfectly miſerable? The very Devils themſelves deprecate Torments before their time, tho' you imprecate them. Your Miſery makes haſte enough towards you; you need not quicken it, or thus run to meet it.

I am perſwaded, that if the Bars of the bottomleſs Pit were broken up, and Devils ſhould aſcend in Humane Shapes, none among them would be found haſtning upon themſelves the fulneſs and compleatneſs of their Miſery as you do. 'Tis a Truth, tho' a ſtrange one, That it is much eaſier to find, than imagine Men upon Earth profeſſing Chriſtian Religion, yet in ſome reſpect ſunk below the Wickedneſs of the Diabolical Nature, by making Damnation both the Subject of their Drollery, and the Object of their very Wiſhes and Deſires. Some greater Maſters of our Language, may more lively and emphatically expreſs the horrid Nature of this Sin; but excuſe me, Reader, if I believe no Words or Thoughts can meaſure the heighth or depth of this monſtrous Abomination.

§ 4. Such contumelious Language as this (eſpecially when grown modiſh or common) cannot but be a moſt high and dreadful Provocation of God, and ſuch an one as will certainly bring down his deſolating Vengeance, not only upon the Heads of Blaſphemers themſelves, but upon the States and Kingdoms that connive at, or tolerate them. We read, *Zech.* 5. 2, 3, 4. of a flying Roll full of Curſes, the length thereof twenty Cubits, and the breadth thereof ten Cubits, which ſhall enter into the Houſe of the Swearer, remain in the midſt of his Houſe, and conſume it with the Timber and Stones thereof. Blaſphemy and profane Swearing, are like Barrels of Gunpowder laid under the Foundation of many Great and Noble Families, many of which are already blown up, and laid in Ruins by this Sin, and many more ready to follow, as ſoon as the Juſtice of God ſhall give Fire to it.

And (comparatively ſpeaking) it were happy if the Miſchief ended here; but alas! it cauſes God to commence a Quarrel with the whole Land, *Hoſ.* 4. 2, 3. *And becauſe of Oaths the Land mourneth.* You find in *Iſa.* 38. what it was that brought that unparalell'd Deſolation upon that famous and flouriſhing City *Jeruſalem*, and the whole Land of *Judah*: *For Jeruſalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen, becauſe their Tongues and their Doings are againſt the Lord, to provoke the Eyes of his Glory.*

But alas! Scripture-threatnings ſignifie ſcarce ſo much with theſe Men, as the Predictions of the Weather in an *Almanack*; and which is ſtrange to conſider, the very execution of Scripture-threatnings before their Eyes, will not terrifie them from this inhumane Wickedneſs: Even theſe alſo are laughed to ſcorn, or eaſily forgotten.

Oh! that God would ſet it home with Power upon the Spirits of all that are in Power, to take ſome ſpeedy and effectual courſe to remove this accurſed thing, this Iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judge; one (and a chief one too) of thoſe direful Provocations of Heaven, to which we owe a ſpecial part of our National Infelicity at this Day. We all acknowledge, that all Proſperity and Succeſs depends upon God: If ſo, Reaſon will ſubſume, that it muſt be therefore the Intereſt of Kingdoms and Commonwealths to prevent and reſtrain thoſe Impieties, which ſo audaciouſly provoke and incenſe his Wrath. As much is this their Duty and Intereſt, as it is the Intereſt of a *Courtier* to avoid Offences of his Royal Maſter, the King, upon whoſe Favour his Honour and Preferment depends. Or as it is the Duty of the *Owner*, to keep in that Ox which is uſed to goring; or cover that Pit into which ſome have, and others of his Family are like to fall; or carefully and ſpeedily to remove that Gunpowder which his Enemies have placed under the Foundation of his Houſe to blow it up. Both Reaſon and Experience will inform the Rulers of this World, That profeſſed Rebels to the God of Heaven, are never like to make uſeful Subjects in the Kingdoms of Men.

§ 5. 'Till Publick Juſtice lay hold upon ſuch Offenders, let us try what cloſe Reaſoning may effect for their Reformation. 'Tis hard to imagine, that Men of Sence ſhould ſo generally, and ſo far engage themſelves in this Courſe of profane Swearing, and have nothing at all to ſay for themſelves.

If they have no Reaſon at all to offer in juſtification, or excuſe of what they do, they act the Bruits, not the Men, and are ſelf-condemned already.

'Tis a queſtion with me, Whether the Soul of Man on this ſide Hell, can ſink ſo far into the Nature of a Devil, as to ſin becauſe he will ſin, or to engage himſelf in a Courſe of Sin, without any reſpect at all to ſome carnal Intereſt, either of Profit, Pleaſure, or Honour.

The *Thief* hath a viſible Temptation of Gain to allure him, or pinching Neceſſity to induce him. The *Lyar* is drawn in to commit that ſecond Sin, to cover the ſhame and turpitude of a former. The *Adulterer* promiſeth himſelf Pleaſure in the ſatisfaction of his Luſts. And tho' Men generally ſtand amazed to think what that Temptation ſhould be which prevails upon the Swearer, yet doubtleſs ſomething there is he hath to plead in excuſe and extenuation of his Fault. Whatſoever it be, let it be produced and weighed in the Ballance of right Reaſon; *valeat quantum valere poteſt*, let it have its due value and conſideration. And could I imagine any thing more likely to be their Inducements, than what I ſhall here mention, I would not conceal them. There are only four things that can fall within the compaſs of my Imagination pleadable by them, when ſeriouſly charged with the Evil of the Fact.

1. Some of them will haply tell us, that they would not ſwear as they do, if they could gain Credit to what they ſay without it; but the Incredulity of others, provokes them to add ſo many Oaths to their ſingle Affirmations.

2. Others of them will tell us, they only ſwear in their Paſſion, when provoked by Injuries received from others; and if Men did not wrong them, they would not wrong God as they do.

3. Some will plead, that Swearing is become modiſh, the Badge and Character of a Gentleman, that it gives them Reputation among Men of their own Rank and Quality, and that they ſhall be looked upon as ſneaking Fools, unfit for the Company of Gentlemen, if they could not Diſcourſe with them in this Dialect.

4. And ſome will confeſs the Practice is evil, but that they have gotten ſuch an ill Habit, and the Sin is become ſo cuſtomary with them, that many times they know not whether they ſwear or no.

I cannot imagine, nor (I think) they themſelves, what elſe is pleadable in excuſe or extenuation of this horrid Sin: Let theſe that are produced have a fair Trial at the Bar of Reaſon, and carry your ſelves towards this Sin for ever hereafter, according to that righteous Verdict your ſelves ſhall not be forced to paſs upon it.

§ 6. To begin with the firſt Plea: You ſay, you would not ſwear as you do, could you gain Credit to your Words without it. Weigh this Queſtion in the upright Ballance of thine own Reaſon, whether any wiſe or ſober Man in the World, will find himſelf ever the more obliged to believe what you ſay, by the addition of blaſphemous Oaths and Imprecations, to your plain and ſimple Affirmations and Negations. I cannot think that you your ſelves would give the more Credit to any Man that ſhould profeſs his ſincerity to you, by finding him, in that his very Profeſſion, falſe and treacherous to his God. Say, Reaſon, doſt not thou take this for a ſure Truth, That he who makes no Conſcience of being true to God, will never make much Conſcience of being falſe to Men? For what is that which gives any Man's Words Reputation among wiſe and ſober Men, but the ſuppoſition of his Integrity and Conſcientious Fear of his Deceit and Guile? Take away that, and with it you take away the Credibility of all his Reports and Affirmations.

If I look upon the Perſon that ſpeaks, as a Man of Integrity and Conſcientious Tenderneſs, I have a ſufficient ordinary Security of the truth of what he ſaith. But if I look upon him as a Man of a proſtitute and ſeared Conſcience, that dares venture upon any Sin; a Man in whom there is no Awe of God, to produce Veracity in his Words; then my Reaſon preſently concludes, that where there is no *Truth*, there ought to be no *Truſt*: For *Truth* is the very Ground-work and Foundation of *Truſt*. Now what Truth can we ſuppoſe to be left in that Man, that ſticks not upon any trivial occaſion to break aſunder all the Obligations of a Creature to his Creator; together with all the Bonds of Kindneſs his great and beſt Benefactor hath bound him withal, and without any the leaſt Injury he can pretend his God hath done him, to fly in his very Face with the moſt contumelious Language? Can we ſuppoſe any Truth to be in, or any Truſt to be due to ſuch a Man as this?

Good Men and bad are thus contradiſtinguiſhed, *Eccl.* 9. 2. *Him that ſweareth, and he that feareth an Oath.* A Conſcientious Man is ſo afraid of an Oath, that he would rather chuſe to die than ſwear ſome kind of Oaths: And tho' he be ſatisfied of the Lawfulneſs of an Oath in general, and of the Matter of that Oath he ſweareth in particular; yet an holy Awe and Fear of God fills his Heart, when he ſwears lawfully and neceſſarily, leſt he ſhould fail in the manner of it, by not giving that due Reverence to the Name of God, which ſo Sacred and Solemn an Action requires.

But from profane Swearing and Blaſpheming the Name of God, every Man's Reaſon may juſtly and plainly infer this Concluſion; that the fear of God is not in that Man's Heart: And where there is no fear of God, what Truth can be ſuppoſed in him, or what Truſt can be due to his Words or Oaths? But the more he ſwears, ſtill the leſs reaſon all wiſe Men have to believe him. And I am ſure the Credulity of Fools adds little Reputation to him. This Plea therefore for profane Swearing, is altogether ſham'd, baffled, and caſhiered by the common Reaſon of Mankind.

§ 7. Call therefore to the Bar of Reaſon, the Second Plea, or Apology, for profane Swearing.

*You ſay you ſwear not, unleſs provoked by Injuries Men have done you.*

This is ſo weak a Plea for ſo great a Sin, that I wonder Men are not aſhamed to bring it into the Court of Reaſon. This is the true ſence and ſtrength of it. My Enemy hath abuſed me, therefore I'll avenge the Wrong my Enemy hath done me, upon my beſt Friend and Benefactor. I challenge you to give but the colour or the ſhadow of a ſound Reaſon, why upon any abuſe you have received from Men, you ſhould fall ſo injuriouſly upon the Name of God, who never abuſed or injured you, ſince he gave you a Being, but hath always done you good. Tell me, Man, (if thou have the Reaſon of a Man in thee) what Wrong hath God done thee? Wherein hath he injured thee, that thou thus wreakeſt thy Revenge upon him? If an Enemy have affronted you, Reaſon would tell you, you ought not to take Revenge for it, upon your Friend, and beſt Benefactor. Have you none but God to abuſe, when Men abuſe and injure you? Can your Reaſon comprobate and allow ſuch an Action as this? Satan inſtigates the Corruptions of Men to injure you, and you fly in the Face of God for it, whoſe Laws ſeverely prohibit ſuch Actions, and will avenge the Injuries done unto him. Speak no more therefore for ever in the way of excuſing the horrid ſinfulneſs of this Fact againſt God, upon the account of Injuries done thee by thy Fellow-Creature. The Caſe is plainly determined, and caſt over the Bar of Reaſon with contempt and abhorrence.

§ 8. Come we next to your third Excuſe or Plea: That *Swearing is become modiſh, and gives you a Reputation among Men of your own Rank and Quality; and that you ſhall be looked upon as ſneaking Fellows, unfit for the Society of Gentlemen, if you did not diſcourſe with them in their own Dialect.*

This Apology for Sin is of no late date: *Salvian* mentions it as far back as his own Time profane Perſons then * thus pleaded for themſelves, That they were compelled to be evil, leſt they ſhould be accounted vile.

Whether there be any weight in this Apology for Swearing, will quickly appear, now it is to be laid in the Ballance of true Reaſon.

1. And firſt of all, let us conſider what makes a true Gentleman, and whether profane Swearing have any place in his true Character and Deſcription. A Gentleman is one that ſprings from famous and renowned Anceſtors, and degenerates not from their Probity and Honour. †

This is the Man whom the *Latins* call *Generoſus*, and we a *Gentleman*. Becauſe we ſuppoſe a Man of ſuch an Extraction and Education, more gentle, affable, and condeſcending to Inferiours, and to keep a ſtricter Government over his Tongue and Paſſions, than rude Plebeans are wont to do. Upon this account the Poet rightly obſerves:

*Quo major eſt quiſquis, magis eſt placabilis ira,*
*Et Faciles motus mens generoſa capit.*

Men of Genteel Extraction and Education, are Perſons whoſe Paſſions are ſuppoſed to move more gently than other Mens: And if at any time they be moved diſorderly, yet are they more placable, and ſooner reduced, than thoſe of ſordid and baſer Spirits are.

'Tis Vertue which raiſes and ennobles Families at firſt; for *Omnis ſanguis concolor*, all Humane Blood is derived from, and equally tainted by *Adam*. Nobler and Baſer Blood is an after Difference, made by Vertue and Vice among Men. And as Vertue firſt ennobled and raiſed ſome Families above others, ſo it will ſtill continue the Line of Honour in their Poſterity: And as their Vertues ſhall increaſe, ſo will their Honour proportionably do.

The Caſe truly and plainly ſtanding thus, 'tis morally impoſſible to make Debauchery the proper Badge and Character of Gentility. For Men of Eminency above the Vulgar, are more obliged than they, to ſhun all baſe and ſordid Actions: And as their Honour increaſeth, ſo do

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* *Mali eſſe coguntur, ne viles habeantur.*

† *Generoſus, nobilis, ex præclaro genere ortus, qui à genere non deflectit.*

their Obligations to Temperance and Sobriety, increaſe and ſtrengthen upon them proportionably.

'Twas therefore a right and rational Obſervation of *Hierome, I ſee nothing deſirable in Nobility,* (ſaith he) *but this, that ſuch Men are bound by a certain kind of neceſſity, not to degenerate from, or ſtain the Glory and Honour of their Renowned Anceſtors.* And the Reaſon is ſtrong and evident: For Vertue being that which firſt differenced their Blood from others, they are obliged by all the value they have for the Honour of their Blood and Families, to ſhun thoſe Vices which ſtain that Honour and Dignity. And what Vice can diſhonour and debaſe them more, than profane Swearing? For if the Arms of many Noble Families have been reverſed for Treaſon againſt the King; 'tis irrational to imagine, that Treaſon againſt the King of Kings, ſhould add a new Mark of Honour: And what is Blaſphemy but Treaſon againſt God? 'Tis plain then from the true Riſe and Character of a Gentleman, profane Swearing neither firſt raiſed, nor can preſerve and continue, but rather blots and expoſes their Reputation and Honour.

2. Tho' I am moſt willing to pay a becoming deference to all Perſons of Noble and Genteel Extraction, yet in Faithfulneſs to their true Honour, I am here obliged to ſay, (and in ſaying it, I can offend no Man that hath a true Sence of Honour) that their natural Deſcent can never give them ſo much Honour, as the Vices I am here cenſuring will reflect Ignominy and Diſhonour upon them. To be a Slave of Satan, and your own Luſts, is ſuch a Mark of Infamy, as all the Honourable and Illuſtrious Titles in the World can never cover. It is better to riſe by Vertue to Honour, from contemptible Parents, than by Vice and Profaneneſs to grow contemptible from honourable Parents. 'Tis your honour to have many Servants at your Command, obſequiouſly attending a Nod of your Head, or a Beck of your Finger: But ask your own Reaſon, Gentlemen, whether it be not a greater Diſhonour for you to attend as obſequiouſly your ſelves, upon every Beck and Nod of Satan, and your own Luſts.

Were your *Natural Birth* once ennobled by the *New Birth,* you would be more than thrice honourable: Grace would make you more illuſtrious, than your natural Extraction doth or can do. Or if Morality (which is far inferiour to that Honour, and for which, Heathens themſelves have been renowned in the Pagan World) did but adorn and beautifie your Converſations, though it cannot entitle you to Heaven, or ſecure to you the Glory of the World to come, yet it would make you ſhine in the Eyes of Men in this World, and taking its advantage from your honourable Extraction, make you differ from Perſons of an inferior Rank, as Stars of a greater magnitude and luſtre. I hope, Gentlemen valuing themſelves upon their Honour, will not be offended at a ſharper Invective than this, againſt thoſe Vices that darken and eclipſe their Honour, both in the Eyes of God, as well as in the Judgment of all wiſe and good Men.

3. Suppoſe what you ſay to be true, that ſome profane Gentlemen ſhould ſcoff and deride you for your ſober Carriage, and decorous Language, (things which ought to be inſeperable from true Gentility) I would in this caſe appeal to your own Reaſon, why you ſhould not enjoy your own Pleaſure in as full latitude and liberty, as they do theirs? They delight in the Dialect of Devils; you in pure and inoffenſive Language. If they will drink the puddled Waters, and you refuſe them from the pure Criſtal Streams, you have to be ſure as much Reaſon (and a thouſand times more) to aſſert your Liberty to be vertuous, than they have (or can pretend to have) a Priviledge to be vicious.

And if they will be offended with you for this, their Offence is groundleſs in themſelves, and will be greatly advantagious to you. For you need not doubt but you may find better Company than theirs any where on this ſide Hell. I remember that rational and excellent Apology, which *Tertullian* made for the Chriſtians in his time againſt the Gentiles: ‘Wherein (ſaith he) do we offend ‘you, if we will not partake with you in your ‘Delights? If we ſuſtain any damage by ſuch ‘our refuſal, the Injury can be only our own. We ‘reject your Pleaſures, and you are not delighted ‘with ours.

You will ſhew your ſelves true and worthy Gentlemen in abandoning and rejecting (upon ſo noble an account as this) all further unneceſſary Society with ſuch *Gentiel-men*; for ſo they deſerve to be called, rather than *Gentlemen.* They boaſt indeed the Honour of their Blood, whilſt they trample the precious and invaluable Blood of Chriſt under their feet: They boaſt their Eminency above the Vulgar, whilſt mean time they labour vilely to debaſe him that ſet them there.

I am ſure there's not a Devil in Hell, but is by nature of a more honourable and illuſtrious Houſe, than the proudeſt of Blaſphemers. They are Angels by Nature, tho' Devils bry Practice. They have little reaſon to boaſt of their Original Excellency, which now aggravates their Miſery. Sin darkened their Luſtre, degraded them from their Natural Dignity; and ſo it will do theirs alſo, that imitate Devils in their Blaſphemy and Malignity againſt God.

4. It may as eaſily be proved as aſſerted, That to make Curſing, Swearing, and Blaſpheming, the Badges and Characteriſtical Marks of a true Gentleman, is the fouleſt Blot and Mark of Infamy, which the Malice of their Enemies can deviſe to put into their Eſcutcheons; and ſuch an Affront, as ought to be highly reſented by all true Gentlemen.

Should the moſt malicious Enemy you have in the World, ſee an Herald to deviſe a Mark of Infamy for your Coats of Arms, to make you ridiculous, and a By-word among the People, he could never diſhonour you at that rate, you, this way, diſhonour your ſelves.

For if Debauchery be both aſſerted and allowed to be the true Badge of Gentility, then your own Reaſon will infer, that all the ancient *Epithets* of *Gentility* ought thereupon to be altered. And would thoſe *Gentlemen,* think you, take it well, to have the *Titles* and *Epithets* of *Ingenuous, Worthy, Honourable,* and *Noble,* changed into *Curſing, Swearing, Damning, Blaſpheming Gentlemen?* You cannot but ſee the inconſiſtency of both: If therefore you will adopt and wear the latter, you muſt either caſhier and renounce the former, or try to make the former conſiſtent with the latter, which I'm ſure the moſt Ingenious among you will find an hard Task to do.

5. I humbly beg leave to propound one plain blunt Queſtion to you, Gentlemen. The matter of it is too rational to be rejected, and let that make Atonement for the blunt manner of its Propoſal. And the Queſtion is this:

Qu. *Whether your Reaſon and Conſcience be fully ſatisfied, that when you die (as you know you ſhortly muſt) you ſhall then appear before the Judgment-ſeat of God, in the Quality and Character of Gentlemen? Do you verily think you ſhall find the more Favour there, for the ſake of your Noble Deſcent, and Honourable Extraction, or that your Gentility ſhall make an Atonement for all your Impiety?*

I am perſwaded, *Gentlemen*, you do not, you cannot think ſo. You know you muſt appear before that God, with whom there is no reſpect of Perſons; a God that will certainly damn the impenitent Blaſphemer. The Man muſt aſſuredly go to Hell, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. And if the *Man* be damned, certainly the *Gentleman* is in a bad Caſe.

6. In a word, I am paſt all doubt, and ſo may you too, that this genteel Mode of Swearing, Drinking, and Whoring, which hath ſpread ſo far in this preſent infamous Age, into Proteſtant States and Kingdoms, is the very Spirit and Strength of a Popiſh Plot, ſubtilly projected, and induſtriouſly managed, for their effectual Reduction to Popery.

For nothing in the World can reconcile Men to Popery; yea, and even endear them to it, like Debauchery. Under Popery, *Gentlemen* may come up to the Rates of coſtly Pardons and Indulgences, for their greateſt Sins. They may give themſelves liberty to wallow in Profaneneſs all the Days of their Life. They may give their Luſts the utmoſt ſcope and liberty, and yet have a plenary Pardon when they die. So that they need not abridge themſelves of any ſinful Liberty, or boggle at the loudeſt Blaſphemy, whilſt they have that in their Pocket to ſtill and quiet ſomething that grumbles in their Boſom. Do you not ſee, *Gentlemen*, the natural Tendencies of theſe things? Does not Debauchery look like a Shooing-Horn to Popery.

Beſides, *Gentlemen*, the Devil and the Pope are Confederates in a farther Deſign upon you; and if their Deſign hit, they hope to win by Power, what they may miſs by Policy; and that by the very ſame Method of corrupting and debauching Perſons of eminent Rank and Quality, in Proteſtant Kingdoms and Common-wealths. For (as a * Learned Man in Queen *Elizabeth*'s Days rightly obſerved): Theſe are the Men eſpecially intereſted in the Publick Affairs of Kingdoms. Theſe repreſent the People in Parliaments. Theſe make their Laws, adminiſter the Government in Peace and War. To their Hands are committed the great Concerns of Nations. Theſe are they that fill the Seats of Publick Judicature.

If Gentlemen therefore by this means be generally corrupted and infected by Debauchery, their Influence and Example is likely to infect the greateſt part of the Body Politick, and either make the People eaſily pliable to the Charms and Courtſhips of Popery, for the Reaſon before mentioned, or ſo beſot their excellent Parts, and enervate their Maſculine Courage, that they ſhall fall an eaſie Prey, to their (otherwiſe) weak and deſpicable Enemies.

And certainly, Gentlemen, we have all cauſe to reckon this Plot very far advanced, when we ſhall ſee Debauchery every-where made the Badge of Gentility; and Chaſtity, Temperance, and Sobriety, become the Marks and Notes of Infamy. When Civility it ſelf ſhall be hiſs'd with deriſion out of ſome Gentlemens Company; and the more temperate and ſober any Man is, by ſo much the leſs fit to be a Gentleman's Companion.

By this time I hope you are convinced, that true Gentility is no Enemy to Sobriety, nor Debauchery the Character of Gentility; and will at laſt pardon, if not thank me, for endeavouring this way to ſecure the true Honour of ſome, whilſt I rationally argue down the Vices and Follies of others. This Plea for Debauchery, you ſee hath the ſame Fate the former had, and deſerves never to be mentioned more.

§ 9. There is but one Plea more, and that as ſilly and irrational as any of the former: And that is,

*The Cuſtom and Habit of Swearing, which you ſay is hard to be broken. This Sin is become ſo cuſtomary to you, that now you ſcarce note or obſerve it in your ſelves.*

That there may be Truth in the Matter of this Plea, I neither deny nor doubt; but that it is a rational and allowable Plea, will never be granted by your own Reaſon. The thing you ſay may be true; for we ſometimes find, that when you are taxed for Swearing, you will preſently ſwear that you did not ſwear; and curſe him to his Face, that accuſes you for Curſing.

But pray, Gentlemen, make your own Reaſon judge, whether Cuſtom be a valid and allowed Plea for profane Swearing and Curſing. Say, Reaſon, wilt thou allow that one of the higheſt Aggravations of Sin, is pleadable in thy Court for the excuſe or extenuation of it? Wilt thou give it under thy Hand, that the Man is the leſs guilty, becauſe the more wicked? Dareſt thou to warrant it, that God will take the leſs Notice of the Wrongs Men do him, becauſe they are uſed and accuſtomed ſo to wrong and abuſe him every Hour in the Day? If your Reaſon can allow and warrant this, I muſt ſay it is different, yea, and oppoſite to the common Reaſon of Mankind.

Say not, I make my own Reaſon the Rule and Standard of yours, or other Mens. For I argue here (as I have done all along before) upon the common Topicks and Maxims of Reaſon, generally allowed all the World over by Mankind. If a Practice be evil, the oftner it is repeated, the more ſtill it is aggravated.

To be plain and faithful with you, Gentlemen, if it be your Cuſtom to blaſpheme, 'tis God's Cuſtom to damn Blaſphemers. If you uſe to be drunk and unclean, God uſes to puniſh Drunkards and Adulterers (if impenitent and unreformed) with his everlaſting Wrath.

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* *Lauren. Humphredus* de Nobilitate, *p.* 64.

*Qui publicis rebus interſunt & præſunt, niſi viri ſummi ac nobiles? Quis in Senatu præit, in foro præſidet? Principes ſanè viri & nobiles. Quis jubet, vetat, agit, ſatagit? Quis verſat & volvit omnia? Quis leges fingit & refingit? Quis in pace Rempublicam, contra hoſtes bella adminiſtrat, præterquam viri nobiles?* &c.

And when you are cited (as ſhortly you muſt be) before the awful Tribunal of the great, the juſt, and the terrible God, ask but your ſelves, whether ſuch a Plea as this, be like to excuſe you in whole, or in part, and take off the heinouſneſs of theſe horrid Impieties? Will your profane Oaths, and direful Execrations and Imprecations, be excuſed in the leaſt degree, by telling him, Lord, I was ſo accuſtomed to blaſpheme thy Name, Curſing, Swearing, and Damning, were ſo familiar Language in my Lips from day to day, that I had quite loſt the ſenſe of the Action, as well as of the evil thereof; and therefore, Lord, pity, ſpare, and have mercy on me: O damn not my Soul to thine everlaſting Wrath. For tho' I have imprecated it upon my ſelf, yet frequent Cuſtom at length extinguiſhed all my Senſe and Conſcience of the Evil thereof, 'till at length I could play with a direful Imprecation as an harmleſs thing; nay, thought it an Ornament and Grace to my Speech, a gallant Expreſſion, alamode the Times and Places I lived in.

Is not this as good a Plea, and not a jot better than that of a Malefactor upon his Tryal for Life and Death, when Theft or Robbery have been evidently and ſubſtantially proved upon him, and the Judge demandeth, What he hath to ſay for himſelf, why Sentence of Death ſhould not paſs upon him? Mercy, my Lord, Mercy, cries he; for I have been ſo uſed and accuſtomed to filching and thieving from my Youth up, that for ſome Years before I was apprehended, every ones Goods and Cattel ſeemed to me to look like my own; ſo that I ſcarce knew when I ſtole, and when I did not.

And thus, Gentlemen, you have heard a fair Tryal of the Sin of profane Swearing, and Imprecations of Damnation, and you have heard the Verdict of your own Reaſon and Conſcience upon the Caſe. The Lord help you to break off and reform that Sin, for which there is not one Word of Apology, or Excuſe, now left in your Mouths.

Let me cloſe all I have to ſay upon this Head, with one plain Queſtion: Do you think you muſt die, or live here for ever, as you now do? If you are convinced (as all the Living are ſuppoſed to be) that you muſt die, do you deſire an eaſie and comfortable, or a painful and terrible Death? I preſume there is no Man living that is convinced he muſt die, but deſires naturally and rationally an ’Ευθανασίαν, as eaſie and comfortable a Diſſolution as may be. If ſo, I appeal to your Reaſon, whether profane Swearing and Blaſpheming the Name of God, be a proper rational way to obtain Peace and Comfort at Death? With what hope or encouragement can thoſe Tongues of yours cry at Death, Lord have Mercy upon me, which have profaned that Name, and imprecated Damnation from him, 'till you came into your laſt Extremities, which convinced you, you could live no longer.

'Tis a ſerious Queſtion, and well worth a cool and ſolemn Debate in your own Reaſons and Conſciences. Some of you are more immediately expoſed to the Dangers of Death than others, ready to be diſbanded by a Bullet. If you fall, you muſt either fall conſiderately, or inconſiderately. If inconſiderately, and without any Senſe or Conſcience of this horrid Guilt, you die impenitently, and conſequently deſperately and miſerably. If conſiderately, and with awakened Conſciences, I demand, Whether ſuch Guilt as this will not roar louder than the Peals and Vollies of thoſe great and ſmall Guns do, which breathe Deſtruction upon you, and round about you? I have done my Meſſage plainly and faithfully to the very Face of your Reaſon and Conſcience; and if for my Faithfulneſs and Zeal both for God's Honour and yours, I am rewarded with your Curſes; yet if you would forbear to blaſpheme and rend in pieces the Name of God, I ſhall not much regard the Obloquy and Reproach my Name ſhall undergo and ſuffer upon that account. But I expect from you better Fruit than this.

## CHAP. IV.

### *Wherein Reaſon and Conſcience are again conſulted, about the Practice of Drunkenneſs; and their Righteous and Impartial Cenſure given upon that Caſe.*

§ 1. Though our Souls and Bodies be of vaſtly different Natures and Originals, yet they do claſp and embrace each other with moſt dear and tender Affection. 'Tis marvellous to behold ſuch a Spiritual and Heavenly Creature as the Soul in all Men, fervently loving, and in moſt Men fondly doting upon a Lump of Clay, a Clod of Earth: It ſimpathizeth tenderly with it. If the meaneſt Member of the Body be in pain, the Soul is preſently concerned for it, and evidences it ſelf to be ſo, by commanding the Eyes both to watch and weep; the Tongue to complain and moan; the Hands to bind up its Wounds with all imaginable Tenderneſs, and carefully defend it from the leaſt injurious Touch. But if the whole be in danger, how do its Nobler Faculties of Underſtanding, Memory, and Invention, awaken and beſtir themſelves to the uttermoſt for its deliverance and ſafety.

Whilſt the Soul lives in Union with the Body, 'tis filled with aſſiduous (and too often with exorbitant and diſtracting) Cares, for its neceſſary Support and Comfort. And when it muſt be ſeparated from it by Death, what ſtrong Averſations to Death doth it ordinarily diſcover? The ſtrong Ties and Bonds betwixt it and the Body, cannot be looſed without much conflict and ſtruggling, evidenced by theſe Emphatical Groans it ſends forth; Groans which other Men underſtand not, nor can be ſuppoſed to underſtand, 'till they themſelves come to feel the Parting-Pull.

The Reaſon of all which, lies in the intimate relation which is betwixt theſe different Natures, which God hath married together in the Womb, from which time they have been Companions and Partners in all the Comforts and Troubles of Life. The Body is the Soul's Houſe in which it dwells, and ſtill ſhall dwell, 'till Death diſſolve it. 'Tis the Soul's Garment, that clothes and covers it. It hath worn this Garment of Fleſh from the beginning, and is to wear it ſtill, 'till Sickneſs hath brought it to Rags, and Death ſtript it from the Soul.

'Tis the Tool and Inſtrument by which it doth all its Works, whilſt it is in this State of Compoſition; and therefore the Soul cannot but love it fervently. No Man ever yet hated his own Fleſh, but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it.

§ 2. The Caſe ſo ſtanding betwixt the Soul and Body, the Wiſdom or Folly of the Soul is plainly diſcovered in its way and manner of governing the Body, as the Love and Prudence of an Huſband is in the Government of his Wife; or the Maſter in ordering the Affairs of his Houſe; or the neat Breeding of a Man, in the comely wearing of his Garments; or the skill and Care of an Artificer, in the brightneſs, keenneſs, and ſharpneſs of his Tools.

Some Husbands give Evidence to the World of their Governing-prudence and Ability, in ſuch an allowance of Liberty to their Wives, as the Laws of Conjugal Love require, and their Eſtates and Incomes will conveniently bear, and no more; and in reſtraining their Extravagancies, as well as by encouraging their vertuous Courſes, in keeping back no due Encouragement to Vertue, nor giving the leaſt Encouragement unto Vice.

A well-bred Man, that carries with him a becoming-ſenſe of his Quality, and the Decorum he ought accordingly to obſerve, will wear his Garments decently, and becoming his Rank: They ſhall be ſure to be neat and clean, and ſit fit and comely upon his Body. He abhors to wear a Garment tumbled in the Mire, and go like a Beaſt, without regard to his Reputation.

No prudent Owner and Governour of an Houſe, will let the Rain drop through the Roof, nor choak up the Paſſage to his Door with a naſty Dung-hill. His Houſe within ſhall be neat, and not naſty: The Rooms clean and comely: And yet abhors to ſuffer ſuperfluous Ornaments, and coſtly Vanities, to ſwallow up his Eſtate that ſhould maintain it, and bring Bailiffs (more odious than a Dunghill) to his very Doors.

The curious Artificer neither grinds away the Subſtance of his Inſtruments to make them bright and glittering, and ſet an Edge too fine to hold one Minute's uſe; nor yet ſuffers them to be thrown aſide in ſome neglected Corner, where Ruſt and Flaws ſhall render them utterly uſeleſs, or make him bluſh at the Botches ſuch Inſtruments will cauſe in his Work.

The prudent Husbandman will neither break the Heart of his Ground for want of Reſt and Compoſt, nor yet overload it with Dreſſing, which brings forth nothing but rank and uſeleſs Weeds; he will in a fit Seaſon turn in a Stream of Water to his Meadows, like a Cordial-draught to fainting Spirits; but will not drown it, and rot the very Roots of his Graſs, by letting in too much, or by ſuffering it to lie under Water too long. He will feed his Horſe high enough to perform his Journey, and carry him through the Mire; but will not feed him to ſuch an heighth, that the Rider ſhall neither be able to ſit, nor command him.

In all theſe Caſes, the common Prudence of every Man, directs him to that juſt Mediocrity, wherein both his Honour and Profit do apparently lie. And what we ſay in ſuch common Caſes and Concerns as theſe, is as true, and much more excellent in the Soul's prudent Government of its own Body, unto which it was eſpouſed in the Womb, and is its dear and conſtant Partner, both in preſent and future Good or Evil. 'Tis the Garment it wears, the Inſtrument it uſeth, and the Field it cultivates. It muſt neither deny the Body thoſe neceſſary Supports and Comforts which God and Nature allow it, nor yet ſurfeit and overcharge it with more than it is able to bear. In either of theſe Extreams, the extream Folly of the Soul is diſcovered.

§ 3. Now the dethroning of Reaſon, and frequent Oppreſſions of Nature, by the practice of Drunkenneſs, is the higheſt Exaltation of Folly in the Soul of Man; plainly manifeſting its Ignorance and Inability to order and govern the Body, to which it is married by a vital Union.

Here's a fooliſh Soul by Miſgovernment, diſhonouring, and deſtroying its vigorous and comely Body, under a pretence of Love and Kindneſs to it. We account it one of the greateſt outward Infelicities in this World, incident to a diſcreet and vertuous Woman, to be headed and governed by a ſottiſh Fool, neither able to govern himſelf, or her, nor give a Reaſon of his own Actions or Commands. A Man whoſe Folly ſhall make her bluſh in all ſober Companies he comes into, and forces her upon ſuch a Courſe of Life, as ſhe perfectly abhors, and will bring ſpeedy Ruin upon her; all Men pity ſuch a Caſe as this. And this is the very Caſe of many a comely, vigorous Body.

Only ſuch a Woman hath two Reliefs under her Bondage, which the Body of a Drunkard wants. She can ſometimes withdraw and retire from his Company, and enjoy the Relief of her Solitude, which the wretched Body of a Drunkard cannot do 'till Death, but is tied Day and Night to the Company of its fooliſh Soul, which is frequently abuſing it, and impoſing upon it.

Beſides, ſuch a Woman may haply over-live her vicious, abuſive Husband, and ſpend many a comfortable Year in the World with a more diſcreet, ſober, and religious Partner of her Life, whoſe Sobriety, Diſcretion, Piety, and Love, ſhall make full Compenſation for all thoſe Years of Miſery and Slavery ſhe endured before. But the Caſe before us, admits no ſuch Relief: For as long as ever the Body lives and breathes, the Soul is, and muſt be with it, and in it. And tho' Death will for a time ſeparate and divorce them, yet the Bodies ſecond Marriage at the Reſurrection, can be with no other but the ſame Soul which oppreſſed and ruined it in this World. And this ſecond Marriage will be far worſe than the firſt: For tho' it were the ſottiſh Souls Slave and Drudge in this World, and ſuffered many a Sickneſs, Shame, and Loſs by its Folly; yet in the

World to come, it muſt be its Partner and Companion in Hell-torments for evermore, inaſmuch as it was the Inſtrument the Soul uſed in moſt of thoſe Sins committed by it in this World. And this is the Caſe of all Bodies married to, and governed by Souls that have neither Reaſon, nor Religion enough prudently and ſoberly to order and govern their own Bodies.

§ 4. Sad and doleful therefore are the Laments and Complaints of the Bodies of Drunkards, againſt the Folly and Tyranny of their Souls; and as juſt as ſad. Let me therefore here act the part of an Advocate for your Bodies, which is a part of your ſelves, and to which by the Law of Nature you owe Love, Care, and Honour; or rather by a *Proſopopœa*, let me bring in the Body ſighing out its own Complaints in the Ears of its own Soul, and thus bemoaning it ſelf to it.

‘Oh, my Soul! I have cauſe to lament the Day, that ever I was married to ſuch a ſottiſh Fool as thou art, who art deſtitute both of Wiſdom and Love to Rule and Govern me. I may juſtly reſume *Job*'s Lamentation upon thy Account, and ſay with him: *Let the Day periſh wherein I was born, and the Night wherein it was ſaid, there is a Manchild conceived. Why died I not from the Womb? Why did not I give up the Ghoſt when I came out of the Belly? For now ſhould I have lien ſtill and been quiet; I ſhould have ſlept; then I had been at reſt.*

‘I have been a perfect Slave and Drudge to thy unreaſonable Luſts and Impoſitions. I was once an active, vigorous, comely Body, and hadſt thou been wiſe and ſober, I had been happy. But thou haſt been a cruel Tyrant to me, oppreſſing and loading me with more than I was able to ſtand under. Thou haſt plunged me many times into thoſe Puddles of Exceſs, wherein thou haſt drowned thy own Reaſon, and my Health. My well mixed Beauty is now turned into the Colour of flaming Fire; my Hands and Legs ſhake, my Tongue falters, my natural Craſis and Temperament is deſtroyed. Thou haſt made me miſerable in this World, and intendeſt to make me more wretched in the World to come.

‘Sober Nature gave me my ſtint and meaſure. I knew when it was enough, and gave thee ſufficient Items and Intimations (amidſt thy fooliſh Frolicks) that I could neither with Honour or Safety bear one Glaſs more. But thou waſt deaf to all my Moans, and ſhewedſt more Mercy to thy Horſe than me. Sick or well, able or unable, live or die, I muſt take in the full Number of Cups and Bottles thou enjoynedſt me to take. Like another *Pharaoh*, thou haſt required of me the full Tale, whether I had ſtrength to perform it or no. Yea, like another Devil, thou haſt ſometimes caſt me into fiery Fevers, and watry Dropſies; and will next caſt me, if thou continue this Courſe, into Hell-fire itſelf.

‘Other Souls have ſet thee a better Pattern in their more ſober and prudent Government of their Bodies. They give their Bodies the true Pleaſure of the Creature, by keeping them to that happy Mediocrity in which it conſiſts. They devote their Bodies to the Service of God; thou haſt devoted me to the immediate Service of the Devil. A Majeſtick Beauty ſits upon their Faces; Sottiſhneſs and Folly upon mine. Their Knees are daily bowed in Prayer to God; mine ſhake and tremble in the Service of the Devil. They enjoy pure and ſanctified Pleaſures every Day; but I am denied the ſober Pleaſures of a Beaſt. Their Bodies will be happy with their Souls in the World to come; but I muſt ſuffer eternally with thee, and for thee. Thou haſt both conſumed me, and thy Eſtate given to ſupport me; and now I am like to ſuffer as much by want, as I have done by Exceſs; and all this through thy Miſgovernment. Theſe Feet (if thou hadſt pleaſed to command them) would as readily have carried thee to thy Cloſet, or the Aſſemblies of God's People, as to an Ale-houſe, or Tavern. Theſe Fingers would have ſerved to open and turn the bleſſed Pages, which contain the Oracles of God, as to Cog a Die, or have Shuffled and Dealt a Pack of Cards. This Tongue might have been melodiouſly employed in ſinging the Praiſes of God among his People, as well as in Swearing, Roaring, and Singing among drunken Sots and Fools, if thou hadſt been endued with *governing Wiſdom*.

‘Thou knoweſt I could do nothing without thee. Thou haſt a deſpotical Power over all my Members. They are at thy Beck, and thou at the Devil's. Better had it been for me, had I been the Body of a contemptible Worm or Fly, than a Body animated and governed by ſuch a ſottiſh Soul as thou art.

‘And now, my Soul, what haſt thou to ſay for thy ſelf? What tolerable Account canſt thou give to God or me, of theſe thy vile Abuſes of both?

§ 5. Now let us hear what the Soul of the Drunkard hath to plead in its own Excuſe and Defence for all his Wrongs againſt God, miſchiefs to it ſelf, ruin to his Health, Name, and Eſtate. They have various Excuſes, tho' not one ſound or rational one among them all. Such as they are, let them be tried by the Rule of Reaſon, if any Reaſon be yet left in them, who daily dethrone it by this worſe than bruitiſh Practice?

That which they have to ſay for themſelves, is this:

1. That their Bodies are ſtrongly conſtituted, more capacious to receive, and able to bear greater Quantities of Wine and Strong-drink, than others are; and therefore, why ſhould they not drink down, and glory over thoſe that vye with them.

2. Others ſay, They would not take that Courſe they do, but that when they are ſober and ſolitary, they are ſo preſs'd with the Thoughts of their Debts and Incumbrances in the World, that they are upon a perfect Rack, and they find nothing like Goodfellowſhip in a Tavern or Ale-houſe, ſo effectually relieving againſt the Cares and Anxieties of their Minds.

3. Some will tell us, they are drawn into it by the Snare of Pleaſure, nothing being ſo grateful to their Palate, as their full Load of generous Wine or Strong drink. And ſeeing it is ſo pleaſant and delightſome to them, why ſhould they deny and abridge themſelves of their Pleaſures?

4. Others will profeſs they had never taken this Courſe, which they find upon many Accounts pernicious to them, but that they are not able in Civility to deny their intimate Friends and Companions, eſpecially ſuch with whom they

have Concerns in Trade and Buſineſs, and they muſt drink as they do, or ſuffer Loſs in their Trade; and beſide that, be ſtigmatized for Fanaticks.

5. They will alſo ſay, they are obliged in point of Loyalty, to pledge him that Conſecrates (as they *Catachreſtically* call it) the firſt Glaſs to the King, or Perſons of Quality and Honour.

6. And Laſtly, Some will tell us, They have plentiful Eſtates that will bear ſuch Expences; and ſince their Pockets are full, why ſhould not their Heads and Stomachs be ſo too?

Beſide theſe ſix Apologies for Drunkenneſs, nothing falls into my Imagination pleadable for this Sin. We will weigh theſe that are pleaded, in the common Ballance of the Reaſon of Mankind, and try the Validity of them one by one. And for the

### *Excuſe* I.

And Firſt, to what you ſay of the Capacity of your Bodies, Strength, and Ability of your Conſtitutions, to receive and bear greater Quantities of Wine and Strong-drink, than others can; and therefore, why ſhould you not give a proof of it when challeng'd, and get Reputation to your ſelves by drinking down, and glorying over ſuch as vye with you?

To this I reply three Things, which muſt be laid in the Counter-ballance, and let the Ballance be held in the upright Hand of your own Reaſon.

1. A ſtrong and vigorous Conſtitution will be readily acknowledged to be ſo great an external Bleſſing and Mercy, that no Man of ſound Intellectuals ought to do any thing to deſtroy it; but is obliged to uſe all proper Methods for the Preſervation of it. If therefore Temperance ſhall be found to preſerve it, and Exceſs to impair and deſtroy it; let your own Reaſon judge which of theſe two Courſes you are obliged to take. Conſult either the beſt Phyſicians, or your own, and other Mens Experience, and they will tell you, that Appoplexies, Palſies, Gout, and innumerable other Diſeaſes, are bred by ſuch Exceſſes in the ſoundeſt and ſtrongeſt Conſtitutions, and Death it ſelf haſtned by ſuch intemperate Courſes; whereas Temperance and Sobriety might have made your Lives more comfortable and durable. As ſtrong as you are, frequent Drunkenneſs will bring *Cain*'s Curſe upon your vigorous Bodies, and make you go ſhaking and trembling (as he did) about the World.

2. Let it be demanded of your own Reaſon, Whether it do really judge that God beſtowed more Strength and Vigour upon your Bodies, than he hath upon others, to Arm a ſtronger Enemy than others are, to fight more vigorouſly againſt him than others do, or can do? Or whether it were not deſigned by him for greater Uſe and Service to his Glory in the World, than others of his People (how willing ſoever they be) can do for want of that ſtrength you have? I am confident no Man of ſound Intellectuals will dare to aſſert the former, or deny the latter.

3. And Laſtly, For your glorying in Drinking down, and conquering others, you will certainly put your own Reaſon to a bluſh, by offering ſuch a Plea as this to it. You are not yet arrived to Impudence enough to deny Drunkenneſs to be a Sin, and your Reaſon is yet ſound enough, eaſily and naturally to infer, That by how much the more any Man exceeds and goes beyond others in Sin, by ſo much the greater Sinner that Man is.

And as for the Honour and Glory you talk of, in exceeding others in your Abilities to drink, your Reaſon will quickly make you aſhamed of that Glory; and prove, as well as aſſert it to be a Mark of baſeſt Infamy.

Do you think that *Lombard* was really honoured, or ſtigmatized, whom *Tiberius Cæſar* dub'd a Knight, for drinking off three Gallons of Wine at one Draught, and Sir-named him *Tricongius*; that is to ſay, the *Three Gallon Knight*; which Story *Pliny* in his Natural Hiſtory, relates to the perpetual Infamy of them both? Or think you, it added to the Glory of *Tiberius* himſelf, who Knighted this *Three Gallon* (not thrice Gallant) *Knight*, to have his Name changed among the People, from *Tiberius* into *Biberius*, as afterwards they did the Name of that Monſter *Nero* into *Mero*?

*Pliny Nat. Hiſt. lib.* 14. *cap.* 22.

Gentlemen, I appeal to your own Reaſon, if the vaſt Continent you have within you for Wine and Strong-drink, be really your Honour; whether the Butt or Hogſhead whence you have it, be not for the ſame Reaſon much more honourable than you? Your Reaſon will plainly give the Concluſion.

But, oh! conſider not only what Reaſon ſaith, but what God the Fountain of that Reaſon ſaith in *Iſa.* 5. 22. *Wo to them that are mighty to drink Wine, and Men of Strength to mingle Strong-drink.* Methinks it ſhould make you ſit in as little Eaſe upon the Tavern, or Ale-houſe Bench, as that Court-Paraſite ſat at a rich Banquet, furniſhed with variety of Dainties, and all ſorts of generous Wine, over whoſe Head *Dionyſius* cauſed an heavy Sword to be hanged with the Point downward by a ſingle Hair, every moment ready to drop perpendicularly upon it.

### *Excuſe* II.

As for thoſe that throw themſelves into theſe Exceſſes, on purpoſe to delude thoſe anxious Cares and Thoughts, which cruciate and oppreſs them, whenever they are ſober and ſolitary: I ſhall only propound three plain Queſtions to the ſmall Remainders of Reaſon in them, which yet I preſume ſufficient to determine rightly upon them.

### *Queſt.* I.

Whether they think that which greatly increaſeth Want and Poverty, be a rational Cure, and proper Remedy of it? And whether a Jar of Oyl be not as fit to quench a Flame, as Tavern and Ale-houſe Scores and Reckonings are to buoy up a ſinking Trade, and keep Bailiffs from Mens Doors? Certainly none but a ſottiſh Fool can think it to be otherwiſe. Your own Improvidence, or God's afflictive Providence have brought you into other Mens Books; and certainly you cannot think, if you be in your Wits, that Chamberlains Bills for ſo many Bottles of Wine, and Flaggons of Beer, will be accepted by your Creditors for good Bills, to quit your Scores with them. Were you ſober, frugal, and induſtrious, you would put your ſelves thereby into a better way to obtain a Bleſſing from God, and Reſpects, and Forbearance from Men, than in the Courſe you now take.

*Queſt.* 2.

Nor can you without manifeſt Impudence propound ſuch a Queſtion as this to your own Reaſon, Whether the addition of Injuſtice to Profaneneſs, be a rational Plea or excuſe for it? And is not that the very Caſe here? Whoſe Money is that you ſo laviſhly and prodigally waſte, out of your conſuming Eſtates? 'Tis either your Creditors, or the ſmall Remains of your own. Whether the one or the other, methinks that Wine and Drink ſhould not go down very pleaſantly, which muſt be mingled with manifeſt Injuſtice, or with the Tears, and (in a ſenſe) the Blood of your Wives and Children. If your Reaſons can allow theſe things for lawful Excuſes, then you are excuſed, elſe ſelf-condemned.

*Queſt.* 3.

I ſhall trouble your Reaſon with the Deciſion but of one *Queſtion* more, and 'tis briefly and plainly this.

Whether the addition of far greater Troubles, or Cauſes of Troubles to the Inner Man, be a proper expedient to alleviate and eaſe the Loads and Burdens of your outward Troubles, already grown almoſt too heavy for you to bear.

I dare venture all that I am worth, upon ſound Reaſon's ſide, that it will never allow or comprobate ſuch an abſurdity, as the affirmative part of this Queſtion draws along with it.

Believe it, Sirs, all the outward Neceſſities, Cares and Fears, which now oppreſs you upon the ſcore of worldly Affairs (which frame not to your Minds) are much more tolerable, and comparatively light and eaſie, to the Stings, Wounds, and Laſhes of a guilty Conſcience: But when all theſe inward Troubles, ſhall be ſuperadded to your outward Troubles, they will in conjunction make a Burthen too heavy for Man to bear.

Whatever Cares or Troubles Providence involves any good Man in, in the honeſt and painful purſuit of his civil Calling, he may in a great meaſure relieve his burthened Spirit under them, by the comfortable Teſtimony of his own Conſcience, and his free Addreſſes to God in Prayer. Theſe will ſweetly ſupport him under his other Intanglements and Perplexities in the World. But the Courſe you take, does not only ſtrike away theſe Props from under your Minds; but doubles and trebles the Burthen upon them. Were Men but once acquainted with that Relief and Chearineſs of Spirit which a good Conſcience, and a Spiritual Addreſs to God in Prayer, afford in the midſt of Troubles, they would run to their Cloſets, rather than to Taverns and Ale-houſes, to divert and cure their Troubles. I leave it therefore before your own Reaſon to conſider, what Weight or Validity there is in this Second Excuſe for Drunkenneſs.

*Excuſe* III.

Others plead they are drawn into this Sin by Pleaſure and Delight, whoſe Charms are too ſtrong for them to reſiſt.

In this, as in all the former, I reſolve to make you your own Judges. Give me leave but to ſtate the Queſtions right, and let your own Reaſon freely determine them. And what fairer dealing can Men that exerciſe Reaſon expect? And let the firſt Queſtion be this:

*Queſt.* 1.

Whether the Pleaſures of Temperance do not far excel thoſe of Intemperance? If they do, then this your Plea is vain and irrational. For you fooliſhly chooſe a leſſer Pleaſure, and refuſe a greater and ſweeter one. And that you do ſo in this Caſe, no wiſe Man can deny or doubt.

For temperate Drinking refreſhes the Body, and no way burthens it, as exceſſive Drinking doth. And that which burthens Nature, can never be equally pleaſant with that, which yields nothing but due refreſhment. Temperance doth not vitiate, but raiſeth the pure and ordinate Appetite of Nature to its juſt pitch and height; in which temper, and at which height, it is moſt capable of the ſweeteſt Pleaſure from the Creature. As the Strings of a Lute give us the ſweeteſt and moſt delicious Notes, when they are not let down too low, but are all fixed at their due height.

Temperance gives us the moſt pleaſing Enjoyment of the Good Things of this Life, ſtill leaving the Mind free and fit for the more ſpiritual and ſweet Enjoyments of a better and more excellent Life; which Exceſs never did, nor can do.

Moreover, Temperance maintains the Manly Grace and Majeſty of the Countenance, but Exceſs totally diſguiſes it. It draws the Lines of Drunkards Faces into a Form much like thoſe ridiculous *Dutch* Pictures, which ſome ſet upon their Chimney-pieces, to move Laughter in thoſe that behold them.

Now by the Vote of univerſal Reaſon, that Pleaſure which refreſhes the Body, but no way burthens it, which raiſes the ordinate and unvitiated Appetites of Nature, to its juſt pitch and due height, which gives Nature the ſweeteſt Refreſhment, leaving it always fitter and freer for higher and better Pleaſures, which maintains the Manly Grace and Majeſty of the Countenance, and makes not a wiſe Man look like a Fool or an Antick, muſt needs be better than the lower and flatter Pleaſures of a burthened Body, and vitiated Palate, which draw after them ſo great a Train of preſent Miſchiefs (which Temperance avoids), beſides far heavier and more durable ones in the Life to come.

*Queſt.* 2.

But if the preſent Pleaſures of Temperance were in ſome reſpect inferiour to thoſe of Exceſs (which I have proved they neither are, nor can be), I demand in the ſecond place, whether the loſs of your Honour and Health, your Time and Eſtate, your preſent Peace, and future Hopes, do not make ſuch ſenſitive Pleaſures baſe and inferiour, compared with thoſe of Temperance and Sobriety? Do you in good earneſt think a Glaſs or two above what ſatisfies and refreſhes Nature, can recompence for all that Shame, Sickneſs, Poverty, and Guilt that follows it? If you think ſo, Sin hath turned you into Brutes, and made you utterly uncapable of all Arguments and Manly Conſiderations, to reduce and recover you.

*Excuſe* IV.

You ſay you would not haunt Taverns and Ale-houſes as you do, but that you are drawn in by Company and Buſineſs, which you cannot well reſiſt or avoid, and ſhould you do ſo, it would be to your loſs; and beſides that, you ſhould be branded for Fanaticks.

I deny not but there is a Snare in vain Company; yet give me leave to propound a few plain and eaſie Queſtions to your Reaſon.

### *Queſt.* 1.

Why muſt the Importunity of Good Fellows (as you call them) be an irreſiſtible Temptation to you, and deprive you of all Power to deny them, whilſt you diſcern the Snares and Miſchiefs they draw you into? This ſeems to be a thing unaccountable to Reaſon. Suppoſe you were allowed to ſpend the longeſt Summer's Day in the higheſt Gratifications of all your Senſes together, or ſucceſſively one after another, upon Condition that you would endure the Torments of the Rack 'till that Day Twelvemonth came about again; do you think, the Importunity of all your Intimates in the World, would prevail with you to accept the Pleaſures of a Day under ſuch a Condition as this? And yet what are the Torments of a Year upon the Rack, to the Torments of Hell for ever and ever? Or to come lower: Suppoſe one of thoſe leud Companions, not worth a Groat, if every Man had his own, ſhould requeſt you to lend him an Hundred Pound upon his own Security, could you find no Power (think you) to deny him, eſpecially if the loſs of that Hundred Pound would certainly ruin you? If you would deny him (as I doubt not but in ſuch a Caſe you would), tell me then, why you ſhould not find power to deny him when he asks a far greater Matter than an Hundred Pound, even the Peace, Purity, and Safety of your Souls, as well as the Health of your Bodies, and Honour of your Names? Why then ſhould you be ſo eaſie and flexible when they ask the latter, and ſo ſtiff and unperſwadable to the former?

### *Queſt.* 2.

You ſay you have Buſineſs and Concerns in Trade, to diſpatch in ſuch Places and Companies, and this draws you into the Snares of Exceſs. I will not deny but Men may lawfully tranſact their Buſineſs in ſuch Places, and there may be a conveniency, and ſometimes a neceſſity for it: But that's not the Caſe. The Queſtion referred to the determination of your Reaſon, is this, *Why Drunkenneſs muſt accompany Buſineſs?* And whether a Man be not more fit to tranſact his Buſineſs, and drive Bargains of the greateſt Value, whilſt his Body and Mind are cool, ſober, and temperate, than when his Reaſon is beclouded and depoſed by Drunkenneſs? How many Men have undone themſelves, their Wives and Children, by Drunken-Bargains!

Beſides, I muſt tell you, that in all ſuch Drunken Meetings, the Devil comes to drive his Bargain with you, as well as your other Cuſtomers. He bids for your Souls, and offers you ſuch Pleaſures as you there find in exchange for them, and is content to make your Dying-day the time of your delivering them into his poſſeſſion. How do you like ſuch Trading as this, *Gentlemen?*

### *Queſt.* 3.

You ſay, Should you refuſe to accompany them, and do as they do, you ſhould be branded for Fanaticks. I would fain know, whether ſuch a Plea for Drunkenneſs as this, doth not juſtly caſt the greateſt Reproach of Fanaticiſm upon your ſelves, and ſet a Mark of true Honour upon thoſe Men whom the World unjuſtly ſtigmatizes with that Title? Gentlemen, I do aſſure you, the Fanaticks (as you call them) have Reaſon to thank you for the Honour and Juſtice you have done them, in acknowledging them to be none of the Members of your helliſh Society, but Perſons of a more ſober and honourable Character. And I appeal to your Reaſon, whether it would not be more for your Honour, to wear the unjuſt Title of a Fanatick, than the juſt Cenſure of a Drunken Sot.

### *Excuſe* 5.

You ſay you are obliged in point of Loyalty to pledge him that conſecrates the firſt Glaſs to the Health of the King, or any Perſon of Eminency. I leave it ſtill to your Reaſon to be Judge,

1. Whether the King have cauſe to account the manifeſt breach of the Laws by which he governs, to be a ſignal Expreſſion of his Subjects Loyalty to him? Is not his Royal Authority his Honour and Safety in his Laws? And is he not finely honoured, think you, by ſuch drunken Loyalty as this? Gentlemen, you have a King over you of ſounder Intellectuals, and more exemplary Temperance and Sobriety, than to be thus impoſed upon.

2. Can you think he reckons his Health in the leaſt degree advanced or ſecured by the ruin and ſubverſion of his Subjects Health? No, no; did the genteeleſt Drunkards in *England* enquire, they would quickly find, it would more pleaſe him, if they would conſult their own Health better, and pray for his more ſincerely and fervently than they do.

### *Excuſe* 6.

Your laſt Excuſe is, That you have plentiful Eſtates that will bear it; and ſince your Pockets are full, why ſhould your Heads or Stomachs be empty?

### *Queſtion.*

The only Queſtion I would here ſtate, and leave your own Reaſon to determine, is this, Whether you think the Expence of the Redundancy and Over-plus of your Eſtates in Exceſs and Drunkenneſs, be the very End and Deſign God aimed at, in beſtowing thoſe things with ſuch a bountiful Hand upon you? And whether the Expence of it in this way, will pleaſe him as well, as if you clothed the Naked, and fed the Hungry with it, and brought the Bleſſings of them that are ready to periſh, upon you and your Families? Ah, Gentlemen, you muſt come to a Day of Reckoning. Your Reaſons and Conſciences can never tell you, you can make up as comfortable an Account with God, by ſetting down ſo many Hundred Pound in Wine and Strong-drink, more than was neceſſary or beneficial; *Item*, ſo many Thouſand Pounds loſt in Play: So much upon Whores; as if you ſet down ſo much to feed and cloath the Naked and Hungry. So that all your Excuſes for this Sin, are baffled by your own Reaſon; and it was eaſie to conclude, that ſuch a Traytor to Reaſon as Drunkenneſs is, which hath ſo often dethroned it, could not poſſibly receive a more favourable Judgment and Sentence than this now given upon it.

Let all Drunkards henceforth conſider, what a voluntary Madneſs the Sin of Drunkenneſs is, how it Unmans them, and ſets them below the very Bruits. A Grave Father calls it rightly.

*Turbatio capitis, ſubverſio ſenſus, tempeſtas linguæ procella corporis, naufragium virtutis, amiſſio temporis, inſania voluntaria, blande Dæmon, dulce venenum, ſuave peccatum, quam qui habet, ſeipſum non habet, quam qui facit, peccatum non tantùm facit, ſed ipſe totus eſt peccatum.*

A Diſtemper of the Head, a Subverſion of the Senſes, a Tempeſt in the Tongue, the Storm of the Body, the Shipwrack of Vertue, the Loſs of Time, a wilful Madneſs, a pleaſant Devil, a ſugar'd Poyſon, a ſweet Sin, which he that hath, hath not himſelf; and he that commits it, doth not only commit Sin, but himſelf is altogether Sin. 'Tis a Sin at which the moſt ſober Heathens bluſhed. The Policy of the *Spartans* was more commendable than their Piety, in making Men drunk, that their Children might gaze upon them as a Monſter, and be ſcared for ever from ſuch an horrid Practice. He that is maſtered by Drunkenneſs, can never be Maſter of his own Counſels. Both Reaſon and Religion condemn this Courſe. Make a Pauſe therefore where you are, and rather throw that Wine or Beer upon the Ground, which elſe will caſt thy Body upon the Ground, and thy Soul and Body into Hell.

## CHAP. V.

### *Containing the Reſult and Iſſue of the Third Conſultation with Reaſon, upon the Caſe of Uncleanneſs; and the true Report of the Determination of every Man's Reaſon, with reſpect thereunto.*

### § I.

THE Bountiful and Indulgent God hath made more abundant Proviſion for the Pleaſure and Delight of Rational, than of Brutal Beings: And his wiſe and righteous Laws order and limit their Pleaſures to their great advantage; his Allowance under thoſe Reſtrictions being large and full enough. Both Reaſon and Experience aſſure us, that the trueſt Pleaſures are moſt freely and honourably to be enjoyed within the Pale and Boundary of his Laws; and that there are none fit for the enjoyment of a Man or Chriſtian, to be found without, or beyond them.

That prudent Owner provides beſt for his Cattel, who puts them into incloſed fragrant Fields, where they have plenty of proper and pleaſant Food, ſweet and pure Springs of Water, the pleaſant Covert of ſhady Trees, and all that is either neceſſary or convenient for them; altho' thoſe Fields be ſo incloſed within Pales or Walls, that they cannot ſtray without thoſe Boundaries into other Mens Grounds, to be by them impounded, and brought back lank, tired, and dirty, to their Owner, or by ſtraying into Waſts and Wilderneſſes, fall a Prey (as Stragglers uſe to do) to Wolves and Lyons.

God envies not any true, rational, and proper Pleaſure to Men or Women; when he bounds them in by his Command, within the allowance whereof, ſufficient Proviſion is made for the benefit and delight of Propagation. And tho' it be all Mens Duty, to tremble at the awful Solemnity, yet it would be any Man's Sin to repine and murmur at the ſtrictneſs and ſeverity of his Command, delivered with Thunder and Lightning from Mount *Sinai, Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.* Man's honourable Liberty, and God's wiſe and juſt Reſtraint and Limitation thereof, are both ſet together before our Eyes, in that one Scripture, *Heb.* 13. 4. *Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* Here's a liberal Allowance granted, and a ſevere Puniſhment threatned for the Inordinancies and Exorbitancies of boundleſs and ungovernable Luſts. God will judge with temporal Judgments in this World; and upon impenitent Perſiſtents, with eternal Judgments in the World to come.

### § II.

Such is the Corruption of Man's Nature by the Fall, that it hates Incloſures, Reſtraints, and Limitations. Theſe things which were intended to regulate, ſerve only to ſharpen and enrage their ſenſual Appetite. No Fruit ſo ſweet to corrupt Nature, as forbidden Fruit. *Nitimur in vetitum ſemper, cupimuſque negata.* The very reſtraint of Evil, makes it look like a pleaſant and deſirable Good. Sons of *Belial* can endure no Yoke of Reſtraint. There's a great Truth in that Obſervation of the Divine *Herbert,* That if God had laid all common, Man himſelf would have been the Incloſer. For his Reaſon and Experience would have plainly informed him of the great and manifold Advantages of Diſtinction and Propriety. How many Quarrels and barbarous Murders have been occaſioned by Whores! which by keeping within God's Bounds and Rules, had been both honeſtly and honourably prevented.

Were Men left to that Liberty Bruits are, to ſcatter their Luſts promiſcuouſly, Fathers would not know their own Children, nor Children their Fathers; whereby both their Duties and Comforts would be preſcinded together. Such Miſchiefs as theſe, would make Men glad of that Incloſure, which the Laws of God have made for them. But behold with admiration the perverſe Wickedneſs of corrupt Nature, manifeſted in this, that becauſe God hath encloſed and ſecured their Relations to them by his Laws (which Incloſure is every way to their advantage), yet this makes their Luſts the more head-ſtrong and outragious, and they cannot take that Comfort in their own, becauſe their own, that they think to find in another's, becauſe another's.

*Real Chriſtian,* page 60.

Remarkable to this purpoſe is that Relation of Mr. *Firmin's*, which he received from his near Relation, who was Miniſter to the Company of *Engliſh* Merchants in *Pruſſia.* The Conſul, or Governour of that Company being a Married Man, and that to a very proper and comely Woman, was yet enſlaved to others, not to be compared with his own Wife for Comelineſs. This Miniſter dealt with him about it. One Argument he urged was this: That of all Men he had the leaſt Temptation, having a Wife ſo comely, that few Women were like her. He anſwered, Yea, were ſhe not my Wife, I could love her. Had ſhe been his Whore, he could have loved her; he thought none like her; but becauſe ſhe was his Wife, hedged in by God, he cared not for her. Oh! what Hearts have Men, that they ſhould ever think that to be beſt for them, which is moſt croſs to God! Why ſhould ſtolen Waters be ſweeter than thoſe of our own Fountains?

### § III.

God's Choice muſt needs be far better for us than our own. Ordinate and lawful Pleaſures and Enjoyments, far better and ſweeter than exorbitant and forbidden ones. And the Reaſon is evident and undeniable: For amongſt all the Operations of the Mind, its reflex Acts are the Acts that beſt reliſh Pleaſure. And indeed without Self-reflection, a Man cannot tell whether he delights or no. All Senſe of Pleaſure implies ſome Reflection of the Mind: And thoſe Pleaſures of a Man muſt needs be the ſweeteſt, which afford the ſweeteſt Reflections upon them afterward: And thoſe the baſeſt Pleaſures, which are accompanied and followed with preſent regret, or the ſtinging and cutting Reflections of the Conſcience upon them afterwards.

Lawful and ordinate Enjoyments are as Honey without the Sting. Forbidden Pleaſures are imbitter'd and extinguiſhed by theſe Regrets and Reflections of the Conſcience. They are like that pleaſant Fruit which the *Spaniards* found in the *Indies*, which were ſweet to the Taſte, but ſo environed and armed on every ſide with dangerous Briers and Thorns, that they tore not only their Cloaths off their Backs, but the Skin off their Fleſh to come at them: And therefore they called them *Comfits in Hell.* And ſuch are all forbidden and unlawful Pleaſures.

A Merchant (ſaith the forenamed Author) Dining with the Friars at *Dantzick*, his
*Page* 63. Entertainment was very Noble. After he had dined and ſeen all, the Merchant fell to commending their pleaſant Life. *Yea*, (ſaid one of the Friars to him) *we live gallantly indeed, if we had any Body to go to Hell for us when we die.* You ſee what mingles with Mens ſenſual and ſinful Luſts.

2. Your Honour is ſecured by keeping within God's Bounds and Limits. *Marriage is honourable in all.* Here Guilt can neither wrong your Conſciences, nor Infamy your Reputations. Fornicators and Adulterers go up and down the World, as Men burnt in the Hand: Their Conſcience laſhes them within, and Men point at them abroad. They are a Terror to themſelves, and a Scorn to Men.

3. The Health of the Body is ſecured by chaſt and regular Enjoyments; but expoſed to Deſtruction the other way. God hath plagued the Inordinacy of Mens Luſts with moſt ſtrange and horrid Diſeaſes. That *Morbus Gallicus*, *Sudor Anglicus*, and *Plica Polonica*, were Judgments ſent immediately by God's own Hand, as the Witneſſes of his high Diſpleaſure, againſt the bold and daring Contemners of his ſacred and awful Command. Thus as *Prov.* 5. 11. *They mourn at laſt, when their Fleſh and Body are conſumed.* Other Sins are committed in the Body, but this againſt it, as well as in it.

4. The Blaſt and Waſte of our Eſtates (which is the uſual Conſequent of Uncleanneſs) is prevented and avoided, by keeping within God's Rules. The truth of what the Scripture tells us, *Prov.* 10. 5. is often exemplified before our Eyes; That *by reaſon of a Whoriſh Woman, a Man is brought to a Morſel of Bread.* Adultery gives a Man Rags for his Livery; it lodgeth his Subſtance in the Houſe of Strangers, and entails Wants and Curſes on him and his.

5. In a word, Continence, or lawful Marriage, expoſes not the Soul to the eternal Wrath of God, as Uncleanneſs doth, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. This Sin does not only ſhut a Man out of his own Houſe, and the Hearts of good Men, but out of Heaven it ſelf, without thorough Repentance and Reformation.

### § IV.

The Caſe ſtanding thus, 'tis matter of juſt Admiration how the Sin of Uncleanneſs ſhould grow ſo Epidemical and Common as it doth, ſeeing ſuch as live in this filthy Courſe, muſt needs counter-act and oppoſe their own Reaſon and Intereſt together. For they forſake God's way, which gives them as much Liberty as can be reaſonably deſired, and caſt themſelves into a Courſe of Life, clogg'd with all manner of Temporal and Eternal Miſeries of Soul and Body, Honour and Eſtate.

The plain Rule and Dictate of common Reaſon, which I laid down before, being applied to this particular Caſe, manifeſtly condemns it. For ſeeing Honeſty and Chaſtity comprizes the true Pleaſure, Profit, and Honour of the whole Man, is more congruous to Humane Nature, and Preſervative of it, it ought therefore to be preferred in the Eſtimation and Choice of all Men to unlawful adulterous Pleaſures, which (for the Reaſons above) are inferiour in themſelves to chaſt, conjugal Enjoyments; and beſides that, are attended and followed with ſuch a Train of preſent and future Miſeries, deſtructive to the whole Man.

And yet for all this, to the Amazement of all ſerious Obſervers, never was any Age more infamous for this Sin, than the preſent Age is, and that under the clear ſhining Light of the Goſpel.

What the ſpecial Cauſes and Inducements to the overflowing and abounding of this Sin, are in the preſent Age, will be well worth the enquiring and ſifting at this time.

### § V. *Inducement* 1.

'Tis highly probable the influencing Examples of Great Men, have had no ſmall Hand in the ſpreading of this abominable and crying Sin amongſt all inferiour Ranks and Orders of Men.

Great Mens ill Examples, like a Bag of Poyſon in the Fountain, corrupt and infect Multitudes.

The Vulgar think they are priviledged, or at the leaſt very much excuſed, when they do but follow the Preſidents and Examples of Great and Eminent Perſons.

But this will be found a weak and fooliſh Plea for Uncleanneſs, which will never be able to endure the Teſt of your own Reaſon: For the inbred Notions of a God, and of a future Life of Retribution, being ſo firmly ſealed and engraven upon humane Nature, they can never be utterly eradicated; your own Reaſon will argue from thoſe inbred Notions in this manner, and how you will be able to refel the Argument, and eſcape Conviction and Self-condemnation, quite ſurmounts my Imagination, whatever it do yours. And thus it will diſpute, and *Dilemma* you, do what you can.

That God, before whom greater and leſſer, honourable and baſer Sinners ſhall appear in Judgment, will be either partial or impartial in his Judgments upon them. There is, or there is not Reſpect of Perſons with him. If there be (which both his Nature and Word utterly deny) then thoſe great and honourable Adulterers or Fornicators, whoſe Examples you follow, may haply be excuſed for their Eminency and Honours ſake; but you that have no ſuch Eminency and Honour in the World, as they have, muſt be condemned, tho' you thought to eſcape as well as they.

But if there be no Partiality, or Reſpect of Perſons with God (as moſt aſſuredly there is none) then both greater and leſſer, honourable and baſer Adulterers, muſt be condemned together to the ſame common and intolerable Miſery.

So that to take any (tho' the leaſt) Encouragement to Sin from the Preſidents and Examples of Great Ones, is a moſt ſenceleſs and irrational thing, utterly unworthy of one that believes there is a juſt and impartial God; and he is worſe than a Devil that believes it not: For the Devils themſelves believe and tremble.

## § VI. *Inducement* 2.

But others would perſwade us they are drawn into this Sin by a kind of inevitable neceſſity, they being neither able to contain, nor marry.

They are not yet arrived to Eſtate ſufficient to maintain a Family with Reputation: But when they have gotten enough by Trade, or by the fall of their Paternal Eſtates, to live in equal Reputation with their Neighbours, then they deſign to alter their Courſe of Life, and abandon theſe Follies.

But, *Reader*, if this be thy Plea for Uncleanneſs, thou ſhalt have as fair a Tryal for a foul Fact, as thine own Heart can deſire; be ſtill thine own Judge, and let thine own Reaſon give a fair Anſwer to theſe three pertinent Queſtions.

*Queſt.* 1.

Whether Whoredom be as likely and promiſing a way to engage God's Bleſſing upon your Trades and Employments, as Continence or Conjugal Chaſtity are? That is to ſay plainly, Whether Obedience and Diſobedience to the Law of God, be all one, and pleaſe him alike? You know your Succeſs of Buſineſs is not in your own hand; 'tis God that giveth thee Power to get Wealth. His Bleſſing maketh Rich. And is Sin as likely a way to engage his Bleſſing, as Duty and Obedience is? I am confident your own Reaſon will never give it.

Object. *If you ſay ſuch Perſons proſper in the World, as well as others for ought you can ſee.*

*Sol.* The contrary is evident in the common Obſervation of Mankind; by reaſon of Whoredom, Multitudes are brought to a piece of Bread. And tho' God ſuffer ſome unclean Perſons to proſper in the World, yet Chaſtity with Poverty, is infinitely preferable to ſuch accurſed Proſperity.

*Queſt.* 2.

Whether the Courſe of Sin you are now driving and accuſtoming your ſelves to, will not in all probability ſo infatuate and bewitch you, that when you come into a married Eſtate, you ſhall ſtill be under the Power of this Sin, and ſo ruin the Perſon you marry, as well as your ſelf? If the Word of God ſignifie any thing with you, it ſignifieth this, that there is a Witchcraft in Whoredom; and comparatively ſpeaking, *None that go to her return again, neither take they hold of the Paths of Life*, Prov. 2. 18, 19.

Object. *If to invalidate this Teſtimony you ſhall ſay, That he that ſpake this, did himſelf go after ſtrange Women.*

*Sol.* 'Tis true, he did ſo: But then withal, you muſt remember, that he hath warned you by his own ſad Experience, that you never follow him in thoſe his Footſteps, Eccleſ. 7. 26. *I find* (ſaith he) *more bittter than Death, the Woman whoſe Heart is Snares and Nets, and her Hands as Bands. Whoſo pleaſeth God, ſhall eſcape from her; but the Sinner ſhall be taken by her.*

*Queſt.* 3.

And laſtly, I demand of your Reaſon, Whether it can, or will allow any place to this Plea of neceſſity, before you have uſed and tried all God's appointed Remedies, which are ſufficient to prevent that neceſſity you plead.

There are lawful Remedies enough, ſufficient with God's Bleſſing to keep you from ſuch a neceſſity to Sin; ſuch as Temperance, and more abſtemiouſneſs in Meats and Drinks; avoiding laſcivious Books, Play-Houſes, and filthy Company; laborious Diligence in your lawful Callings, and fervent Prayer for mortifying and preventing Grace; and if Temptations ſtill ſtir amidſt all theſe Preventives, then caſting your ſelves upon the Directions and Supply of Providence, in the honourable Eſtate of Marriage. Never plead neceſſity, whilſt all theſe Preventives might, but have not been uſed.

## § VII. *Inducement* 3.

Others plead the abſence of their lawful Remedies, and preſence of tempting Objects. This is the Caſe of our Soldiers and Sea-men. But tho' this be the moſt colourable Pretence of all the reſt, yet your own Reaſon and Conſciences will even in this Caſe ſo *Dilemma* and *Non-plus* you, that if you will adventure upon the Sin, you ſhall never have their leave or conſent with you: For they have a ſpecial and peculiar conſideration of you, as Perſons more eminently and immediately expoſed to the Dangers of Death than other Men. And thus (would you but give them a fair hearing) *they will expoſtulate* and *reaſon out the matter* with you.

Either thou ſhalt eſcape, or not eſcape the hazard of this Voyage or Battel. If thou fall (as to be ſure many will) will this be an honourable, ſafe, and comfortable cloſe, and winding up of thy Life! What, from a Whore to thy Grave! God forbid. From burning Luſts to everlaſting Burnings! Better thou hadſt never been born.

Or if thou do eſcape and return again to thy Family; how canſt thou look her in the Face, with whom thou haſt ſo baſely broken thy Marriage-Vow and Covenant? Whatever elſe thou bring home with thee, to be ſure thou ſhalt bring home Guilt with thee, and a Blot never to be wiped away.

Object. *If you ſay, you are not ſuch Fools to publiſh your own Shame, you'll follow* Cæſar's *Advice to the young Adulterer,* Si non caſtè, tamen cautè: *If I act not chaſtly, I'll act cautelouſly.*

*Sol.* Your Reaſon and Conſcience will both deride the Weakneſs and Folly of this Pretence: For they both very well know, no Man ſins ſo ſecretly, but he ſins before two infallible Witneſſes, *viz.* God, and his own Conſcience, and that the laſt and leaſt of theſe, is more than a Thouſand Witneſſes. That God uſually detects it in this World, carry it as cloſely as you will; but to be ſure, it ſhall be publiſhed as upon the Houſe-top, before Men and Angels in the Great Day.

### § VIII. *Inducement* 4.

Another Inducement to this Sin, (and the laſt I ſhall mention) is the Commonneſs of it, which abates the Shame of it.

What need they trouble themſelves ſo much, or be ſo ſhy of that which is practiſed by Thouſands, which is ſo frequently acted in every place, and little made of it?

But if either your Reaſon or Conſcience will admit this Plea for good and lawful, the Devil hath utterly blinded or infatuated the one or other, as will evidently appear by the following Reaſons. For,

#### *Reaſon* I.

If the thing be Evil, (as you cannot deny but it is) then by how much the commoner, by ſo much the worſe it muſt needs be. Indeed, if a thing be good, by how much the commoner, ſo much the better; but to attribute this eſſential Property of Good unto Evil, is to confound and deſtroy the difference between them, and make Good and Evil both alike.

#### *Reaſon* II.

If the commonneſs of Uncleanneſs will excuſe you, it will more excuſe all others that ſhall commit this Sin after you; and ſtill by how much more the Numbers of Adulterers and Fornicators are increaſed, ſtill the leſs ſcruple Men need make to commit it; and ſo the whole Community ſhall in a little time be ſo infected and defiled, that Chriſtian Kingdoms ſhall quickly become like *Sodom,* and God provoked to deal with them, as he did by that wretched City.

#### *Reaſon* III.

If the commonneſs of Sin be an Excuſe and Plea for it, ſuppoſe the Roads ſhould be more infeſted than they are with Highway-men, ſo that every Month you ſhould ſee whole Cart-loads of them drawn to *Tyburn*; would your Reaſon infer from thence, that becauſe Hanging is grown ſo common, you need not ſcruple ſo much as you were wont to do, to take a Purſe, or Piſtol an honeſt innocent Traveller upon the Road?

Object. *If you ſhall ſay, Uncleanneſs is not ſo coſtly a Sin as Robbery is, there's a great deal of difference between* Tyburn, *and a Whore houſe Puniſhment.*

*Sol.* There is a great difference indeed, even as much as is betwixt *Tyburn* and Hell, or a ſmall Mulct in the Court of Men, and the Eternal Wrath of a Sin-revenging God. So great will the difference betwixt the Puniſhments of all Sins by God, and by Men be found.

Thus you ſee, *Gentlemen,* the common Pleas for Uncleanneſs over-ruled by your own Reaſons and Conſciences.

We live in a plentiful Land, abounding with all the Comforts of this Life, and with Thouſands of full-fed Wantons, of whom the Lord complains this Day, as he did of the *Jews,* whom that Flowing-land vomited out, *Jer.* 5. 7. *When I had fed them to the full, they committed Adultery, and aſſembled themſelves by Troops in the Harlots Houſes; they were as fed Horſes in the Morning, every one neighed after his Neighbours Wife.* How many ſuch *Stallions* are thus neighing in the fat Paſtures of this good Land!

Nor do I wonder at all to ſee the Growth of Atheiſm, in a Land ſwarmed and over-run with ſo many thouſands of Blaſphemers, Drunkards, and Adulterers. It was a great Obſervation of that gallant Moraliſt, *Plutarch*: *If* Epicurus *(ſaith he) ſhould but grant a God in his full Perfections, he muſt change his Life preſently, he muſt be a Swine no longer.*

The Lord purge out this crying Abomination alſo, with Atheiſm and Drunkenneſs, the Inlets of it, which darken our Glory, and threaten to make us deſolate.

# CHAP. VI.

## *Wherein Reaſon and Conſcience are once more conſulted about that bitter and implacable Enmity, found in Thouſands this Day, againſt all ſerious Piety, and the ſtrict Profeſſors thereof, who differ from them in ſome External Modes and Rites of Worſhip; and their Determination upon that Caſe, impartially reported.*

### § I.

MAN is naturally a ſociable Creature, delighting in Company and Converſe. He that affects to live by, and to himſelf, muſt be (ſaith the Philoſopher), Ἢ θηρίον, ἢ θεὸς, either a God that is ſelf-ſufficient, and ſtands in need of none; or a wild Beaſt ſo ſavage and fierce, that it can endure nothing but it ſelf.

This natural Quality of Sociableneſs is diverſly improved. Sometimes *ſinfully* in wicked Combinations to do miſchief, like the herding together of Wolves and Tigers. Such was the Confederation of *Simeon* and *Levi*, Brethren in Iniquity, *Gen.* 49. 56. Sometimes 'tis improved *Civilly* for the more orderly and proſperous Management of Humane Affairs. Thus all civilized Countries have improved it for common Security and Benefit. And ſometimes Religiouſly, for the better promoting of each others ſpiritual and eternal Good.

Now the more firmly any Civil or Religious Societies are knit together by Love, and coaleſce in Unity, by ſo much the better they are ſecured againſt their common Enemies and Dangers, and become ſtill the more proſperous and flouriſhing within and among themſelves. For when every Man finds his particular Intereſt involved in the Publick Safety and Security, (as every private Cabbin and Paſſenger is in the ſafety of the Ship) every particular Perſon will then ſtand ready to contribute his uttermoſt Aſſiſtance for the Publick Intereſt both in Peace and War. United Force, we all know, is more than ſingle; and in this Senſe we ſay, *Unus homo, nullus homo*; one Man is no Man, that is, conſidered disjunctively and alone; when yet that ſingle Perſon ſtanding in a proper place of Service in the Body, may by his Prudence and Courage, ſignifie very much to the Publick Weal of his Country; as *Fabius* did to the *Roman* State, of whom the Poet truly obſerved,

> *Unus homo nobis cunctando reſtituit rem.*

That one Man by his prudent Delay and Conduct, hath ſaved the whole Common-wealth.

### § II.

'Tis therefore the undoubted Intereſt of Chriſtian States and Churches, to make every individual Perſon as uſeful as may be to the whole, and to enjoy the Services of all their Subjects and Members, one way or other, according to their different Capacities, that it may be ſaid of them (as the Hiſtorian ſpeaks of the Land of *Canaan*) that there was in it, *Nihil infructuoſum, nihil ſterile*; not a Shrub but bare ſome Fruit.

No prudent Kingdom or Church, will deprive themſelves of the Benefits they may enjoy by the Services of any conſiderable Number of Men (eſpecially if they be able and good Men) without a plain inevitable neceſſity. No Man without ſuch a neceſſity will part with the Uſe and Service of the leaſt Finger or Toe, much leſs with a Leg or Arm; but would reckon himſelf half undone, if a Paralytick Diſeaſe ſhould ſtrike one half of the Body, and render it utterly uſeleſs to defend and ſuccour the other part in time of danger.

### § III.

Much ſo ſtands the Caſe with Churches and Kingdoms, when the cauſleſs and cruel Enmity of one part, prevails ſo far againſt the other, as to deprive that State or Church of the Uſe and Service of Multitudes of good and faithful Members.

It is Folly in its higheſt Exaltation, for one part of a Nation, out of bitter Enmity to the other, not only to ſeek all ways and means to ſuppreſs and ruin it, whilſt a common Danger hangs over the whole; but to rejoyce in the Miſeries of their Brethren, as the principal thing which they fancy would contribute to the great advantage of their Cauſe. What but a general Puniſhment (if that will do it) can work Mens Hearts into a more general Compaſſion?

The Hiſtories of thoſe Times ſufficiently inform us, That the great Feuds and Factions in the *Weſtern* Church, not only immediately preceded, but opened the way to the terrible Inundations of the *Goths* and *Vandals*. Whilſt the ſuffering part cries out, *Cruelty, Cruelty*; thoſe that inflict it cry as loud, *Juſtice, Juſtice*. Whatever rational Apologies, or Methods of Peace, come from the oppreſſed Party, are cenſured by the other as Murmur and Mutiny. All Men commend Unity, and aſſert it to be the Intereſt of Kingdoms and Churches. They wiſh all Men were of one Mind, but what Mind muſt that be? To be ſure, none but their own.

The more cool, prudent, and moderate Spirits of each Party, may ſtrive to the uttermoſt to allay theſe unnatural Feuds and Animoſities. The Wiſdom of the Governing part may take the Inſtruments of Cruelty out of their hand; but 'tis God alone that can pluck up the Roots of Enmity out of their Hearts.

And what is the matter, when all is ſifted and examined? Why, the matter is this: Some will be more ſerious, ſtrict, and conſcientious, than others think or neceſſary for them to be. They dare not Curſe, Swear, Whore, and be Drunk, as others do. They ſcruple to comply with what God hath not commanded, and the very Impoſers confeſs to be indifferent antecedently to their Command. They reverently mention the Name of God without an Oath, and the ſolemn Matters of Religion, without a Jeſt in their Company. They will aſſume as much Liberty to reprove Sin, as others do to commit it. They take more pleaſure in heavenly Duties, and holy Conferences, than in Ranting and Roaring in Taverns and Ale-houſes. That is, in a word, they live up to the Principles of Religion, which all pretend to; and this is their unpardonable Crime, a Fault never to be expiated by any leſs Puniſhment than their Deſtruction.

And are not People (think you) come to a fine paſs, when the ſtricteſt Obedience to the Laws of God ſhall be accounted more criminal, than the moſt open and profane Violation of them? Nay, tho' they reprove the other Parties Sins no other way, but by their more ſerious and religious Lives; yet this alone ſhall be ſufficient to make them culpable and obnoxious.

§ IV. If the Party thus generally hated and maligned, be (for the generality of them) ſerious and godly Chriſtians; or if the ſtrictneſs and holineſs of their Lives, and tenderneſs of their Conſciences be the true Ground and Reaſon of our hatred of them; ſuch an hatred, when it becomes general, is a direful preſage of ſome common Calamity and Miſery haſtning upon ſuch a People, Hoſ. 9. 7. *The Days of Viſitation are come, the Days of Recompence are come, Iſrael ſhall know it; the Prophet is a Fool, the Spiritual Man is mad; for the Multitude of thine Iniquity, and the* great Hatred.

And our own Reaſon will give us this Concluſion, as well as Scripture: For whatſoever brings Sin to its full maturity, muſt needs haſten Judgments. And what can heighten and accent the Sins of a People, more than ſuch a cruel hatred of good Men, upon the ſcore and account before given? All hatred of Godlineſs, hath a tang of Deviliſhneſs. 'Tis a deſperate flying in the very Face of God, whoſe Image Holineſs is. Sin can ſcarce be graduated a Peg higher.

Reaſon tells the Husbandman, 'tis time to mow and reap his Corn, when it is full ripe. And it may convince you, that God's time of reaping down a ſinful People is near, when their Sins are grown to ſuch full maturity as this: *Put ye in the Sickle, for the harveſt is ripe; come, get ye down, for the Preſs is full, the Fats overflow, for their Wickedneſs is great*, Joel 3. 13.

§ V. The true Cauſe and Riſe of this great and fixed Hatred amongſt profeſſed Chriſtians (whatever may be pretended to ſalve Reputation) is the Contrariety and Repugnancy of the Natures, and Principles, by which the Godly and Ungodly are governed. There is an Enmity betwixt the two Seeds, *Gen.* 3. 15. And this Enmity runs down in a Blood, more or leſs in all Ages and Places, *Gal.* 4. 29. *As then, he that was born after the Fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even ſo it is now.* So it was, and ſo it is, and ſo it will be, 'till Converſion changeth the Heart and Principle. This Enmity cannot die, whilſt Satan lives, and rules in the Hearts of Children of Diſobedience.

And the Enmity is mutual. *An unjuſt Man is an abomination to the juſt; and he that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked,* Prov. 29. 27. Only with this difference; the good Man hates, *Non virum, ſed vitium*; not the Perſon, but his Sin. The wicked Man hates both the Perſon of the Godly, and his Godlineſs too; yea, the Perſon for his Godlineſs ſake.

This hatred of the Godly, ſecretly and habitually lurks in the Nature of a wicked Man, as Rapaciouſneſs doth in a young Wolf that never ſaw a Lamb. It extends it ſelf univerſally to the whole Kind, and reaches thoſe, whoſe Lives are moſt obligingly ſweet; yea, thoſe that are bound to them in the ſtricteſt Bonds of Nature. As we may ſee in that moſt unnatural Inſtance of *Cain's* murthering his own Brother *Abel*. It diſcovers it ſelf in ſeeking the Deſtruction of them they hate upon a Religious account, and in rejoycing at any Evil that befals them. Nothing is more grateful to them, than any occaſion to diſgrace and expoſe them with contempt to the World.

§ VI. But tho' the ſtrictneſs and holineſs of good Men, cauſing the Conſciences of wicked Men privately to condemn, and inwardly to gaul and grate them for their Looſeneſs and Profaneneſs, be the true and real Ground and Cauſe of the Grudge and Hatred; yet they think it fit for Reputation-ſake, that this be wholly ſuppreſſed and ſilenced, and ſomething elſe pretended for the Cauſe and Reaſon of it, elſe it would look too like the Devil himſelf. And therefore, amongſt other plauſible Pretenſions for their Malignity to thoſe that are better than themſelves, theſe Three are principally inſiſted on, and pleaded.

1. That it is not their Piety, but their Hypocriſie which they hate. Not becauſe they have indeed more Piety than others, but becauſe they make more vain Shew and Oſtentation of it, than themſelves do; who, ſetting aſide their ridiculous Grimaces, and affected fantaſtick Words and Actions, are every whit as good as themſelves.

2. Becauſe under a pretence of greater ſtrictneſs in Religion, they do but hatch and carry on Sedition and Rebellion; and that the World will never be quiet, whilſt ſuch Vipers are ſuffered in the Bowels of it.

3. That both the former have been made ſufficiently evident and apparent, in ſeveral former, and more recent Inſtances of the Hypocriſie and ſeditious Deſigns of as high Pretenders to Religion and Reformation, as thoſe are, whom they truly hate, and would not ſuffer them to live, if their Power were anſwerable to their Hatred.

As to this firſt Plea, *viz.* their Hypocriſie, 'twill quickly be found to be too thin and weak, to endure the Teſt of your own Reaſon and Conſciences. For how will you anſwer them, when they ſhall thus argue and expoſtulate the matter with you?

You that thus cenſure, and thoſe that are cenſured for Hypocriſie by you, do both profeſs one and the ſame Religion. Your profane Lives are notoriouſly contrary to all the Principles of this Religion. You Swear, Drink, Whore, Revile, and Perſecute the others, only becauſe you fancy their Tones, Geſtures, *&c.* to be ſome way or other indecent. You cannot deny, but they live ſoberly and godly. They attend upon all the Duties of Religion ſtrictly and conſcientiouſly. Your Malice againſt them can find nothing to carp at, but ſome little Trifles, with which the Eſſence of Religion is not concerned. Did they run into the ſame Exceſs of Riot with you, greater Matters than theſe would be over-looked, yea, and applauded too.

Now let Reaſon and Conſcience ſay, who is moſt likely to be the Hypocrite, the Man that calls himſelf a Chriſtian, and under that Profeſſion wallows in all Profaneneſs, not once cenſuring himſelf for it; or he that lives Soberly and Godly, againſt whom Malice it ſelf can produce nothing but ſuch inconſiderable Trifles as theſe? Is not this the very Caſe which Chriſt hath determined to our hands, and made ſuch Cenſurers the Hypocrites, *Matth.* 7. 3. *And why beholdeſt thou the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye, but conſidereſt not the Beam that is in thine own Eye?* It was but one Blemiſh, and that a very ſmall one too, but a *Mote*; however this you can quickly ſpy, and as raſhly cenſure. But mean while there's a *Beam*, an horrid flagitious Wickedneſs in your ſelves; but 'tis too near your own Eyes to be diſcerned by you. Which of theſe two (think you) is the Hypocrite?

2. But what if this Mote that you diſcern, be but a Fancy, a meer Imagination of your own, how will that aggravate your Sin, and evince both your Malice and Hypocriſie together? You ſay their Tones and Geſtures in Religious Duties are Ridiculous and Scenical. This you take up lightly againſt ſome few of them, and as unjuſtly apply unto the aſperſing of the whole Party, which your own Reaſon muſt and will immediately condemn. For there are multitudes of that Party, whoſe Countenances, Tones, and Geſtures, are as decorous, grave, and becoming the preſence of that God with whom they have to do, as any Men in the World.

3. And as for thoſe few whom you thus blemiſh for their indecent Tones or Geſtures; what if thoſe Tones you ſpeak of, amount to no more, but natural Defects, and unavoidable Infirmities, which they would, but cannot help? Do they for this, and no worſe than this, deſerve to be cenſured and condemned for Hypocrites? Or, what if they be inſenſible Actions, occaſioned by the greater Intention of their Spirits in the Service of God? May not thoſe very things which you profanely flout, cenſure, and ſcoff at, either not all be noted as Blemiſhes to their Devotion by the Eye of God, or noted with Approbation and Delight, as the Effects of Spiritual Fervency in his Service? Certainly, Gentlemen, you are no good Marks-men, that neither draw the right Arrow, nor level at the true Mark.

4. And were not this a vain and empty Pretence to cover your own Malice againſt Godlineſs; how comes it to paſs, that more Scenical Habits, Words, and Geſtures, ſhould paſs as Ornaments in others, whom you affect? Whether this be not Partiality unworthy of a Man, let Reaſon and Conſcience freely judge.

In a word, What Commiſſion or Authority, can you produce, thus to aſcend the Throne of God, and draw your bittereſt Cenſures through the very Hearts of God's People, for ſuch pitiful Trifles as theſe; firſt condemning them as Hypocrites, which is a moſt unwarrantable Preſumption; and then perſecute them as far as you can for their preſumed Hypocriſie? Have a care what you do; be not Mockers, leſt your Bonds be made ſtrong. This is a Sin which haſtens National Deſolation, 2 Chron. 36. 16, 17. *They mocked the Meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his Word, and miſuſed his Prophets, until the Wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his People, 'till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the King of the Chaldees, who ſlew their young Men with the Sword,* &c.

*Plea* 2. You ſay, *'Tis not Godlineſs you hate, and would perſecute; but they are a ſort of Perſons, who under a pretence of Zeal for Religion and Reformation, deſign nothing elſe but Sedition and Rebellion, that the Nation will never be quiet, whilſt ſuch Vipers are ſuffered to live in it; and to fortiſie this Plea, you add, that both their Hypocriſie and Sedition have been made ſufficiently evident to the World in many Inſtances.*

Zeal for the Laws, and Security of the Government, if rightly tempered and qualified, is highly commendable; and where-ever Sincerity animates, and Prudence governs it, it ought by no means to be diſcouraged. But there are too many Grounds and Cauſes of Suſpition, that both theſe will be found wholly wanting, or extreamly defective, in many high Pretenders to it, when it comes to be ſifted to its bottom Principles, and weighed in the juſt Ballance of ſound Reaſon.

For if you be inflamed with a pure Zeal for the Laws and Government you live under, then you will find your ſelves obliged for your own Vindication, to ſatisfie the juſt Expectation of your own, and other Mens Reaſons and Conſciences in the following Particulars.

*Expectation* 1. *Firſt*, Reaſon and Conſcience in your ſelves and others, will expect it from you, that you of all Men living ſhould be moſt preciſely and punctually Obedient to all thoſe juſt and good Laws you live under, ſince your Zeal burns ſo hot againſt thoſe that comply not punctually with them. For thoſe that make ſo much Conſcience (as you ſeem to do) of other Mens Offences againſt the Laws, muſt be preſumed (if your Profeſſion be ſincere) to make at leaſt as much Conſcience of breaking any of them in your own Perſons; elſe neither Reaſon nor Conſcience will ever admit this Plea of yours for ſound and good.

Now the Laws ſometimes appoint Puniſhments for Non-conformity to the Rites and Ceremonies, affixed to the publick National Worſhip; and ſo they do always for convicted Swearing, Drunkenneſs, and Adultery. All theſe Laws have the very ſame Sanction by the Authority we live under. They forbid, and puniſh the one as well as the other. And if there be any difference, it lies in this, that theſe latter are expreſly forbidden and threatned by God, antecedently to the Magiſtrate's Prohibition of them, which hath no ſmall weight in the matter under conſideration.

Now if any Man ſhall pretend Zeal and Conſcience againſt diſſent in Judgment or Practice from the Church, but makes no Conſcience at all to Curſe and Swear, be Drunk or Unclean; he will find it a difficult Task to perſwade his own, or other Mens Reaſons or Conſciences, that this his Zeal for the Laws and Government, is ſincere and pure. For were it ſo, it could never allow him to live in the notorious Violation of the Laws himſelf, which he is ſo fierce and bitter againſt others for.

*Expectation* 2. *Secondly*, If your Zeal be ſincere, it will contain it ſelf within the Bounds and Limits of the Offence, and not lay hold upon the Innocent, as well as upon the Guilty, and make you hate and perſecute them that were never turbulent and ſeditious, equally with the greateſt Criminals. If you will hug this Principle, as things ſtand now, Reaſon will tell you, 'tis as juſt at all other times, as it is at this.

Would you not think it an unreaſonable and moſt injurious thing, to be plucked out of your Shops, or Houſes, and hurried away to the Goal, becauſe two or three diſſolute Fellows in the City or Town where you live, have been riotous or ſeditious, tho' you poſſibly know not the Men, nor can be ſo much as juſtly ſuſpected of any Confederacy with them? True Zeal for the Laws and Government, is content to wait, and ſuſpend its Revenges, 'till a fair Conviction have paſſed upon the Guilty. And when it falls upon them, 'tis careful that it touch none beſides them; but ſuffers a Man to retain in the very height of it, due Love and Honour for all that are innocent.

If Chriſtians be firſt denominated by general Titles and Terms of Diſtinction, which they cannot help, and then the Crimes of any particular Perſon, that the World pleaſes to denominate as one of the ſame Party, muſt be charged and imputed to the whole; what muſt the conſequence of this be, but that the whole Community become obnoxious to Puniſhment, and the very Government it ſelf thereupon be diſſolved?

For I take it to be paſt denial or doubt, that ſome of each Denomination have been, are, or may be guilty of ſeditious Practices. Some Hypocrites will lurk among thoſe vaſt Bodies of People, under the moſt ſtrict and watchful Government; but God forbid their Guilt ſhould affect the whole Body, under whoſe Name they ſhelter themſelves. God, Reaſon, and Conſcience, do all command the hotteſt Zeal to make its Pauſe and juſt Diſtinction here. Let the Guilty be brought to condign Puniſhment, upon fair Trial and Conviction. This Diſcourſe deſigns no Favour for ſuch. But let not thoſe who abhor their Wickedneſs, and are as pure from their Crimes as your ſelves, ſuffer with them, or from them. For then your Reaſon will tell you, your ſelves are as liable to Sufferings as they, and that your Zeal is not kindled by love to Juſtice, but the hatred of a Party.

It is not in the Body Politick, as in the Body Natural. If the Hand ſteal, the Feet are juſtly laid in Irons, and the Neck put into an Halter; becauſe all the Members of the Body Natural are animated and governed but by one Soul. But in the Body Politick every Individual hath a diſtinct Soul of his own, and therefore that Member only that offends, ought to be puniſhed, and all the reſt to enjoy their full Liberty and Honour as before. Away therefore for ever with this Church and State-deſtroying Synecdoche.

*Expectation* 3. *Thirdly*, If there be a change made upon the Laws, and they ſhall at any time tolerate and protect that Party and Practice which once they made Criminal; then your Reaſon, and every Man's elſe, will expect from you (if your Zeal for the Laws and Government be ſincere and unfeigned) that your Countenance and Carriage to that People be changed and altered, according to the different Aſpect of the Laws and Government upon them: That your Envy and Hatred ceaſe with the Offence, and that you be as ready to aſſiſt and encourage them, when they act according to Law, as you formerly were to afflict and proſecute them for acting contrary to Law; elſe, pretend what you will, 'tis plain enough, that it was not Zeal for the Laws and Government, but ſomewhat elſe (which every Body may gueſs at) that inflamed your Rage againſt them.

For whenſoever the Wiſdom of the Government finds it neceſſary by Toleration to take away the Crime and Offence, it muſt neceſſarily take away this very Plea for Hatred and Perſecution with it. Otherwiſe it would be all one to act for Law, and againſt Law; to puniſh them that are Offenders, and them that offend no more than your ſelves; to turn the Edge of your Rage and Fury, againſt thoſe that undermine the Government, and thoſe that are as Zealous as your ſelves, to ſupport and defend it, by their Perſons and Purſes.

*Expectation* 4. *Fourthly*, Your Reaſon will juſtly expect it from you, that when or whereſoever you ſhall ſee eminent Piety meeting with punctual Conformity in one Man, that Man ſhall be your very Darling, and that both theſe Qualifications ſhould recommend him to your deareſt Affection. The more ſtrictly godly he is, the more conformable he is to the Laws of God; as well as by his punctual Compliance with enjoyned Rules and Rites of Worſhip, to the Laws of Men. If he be a Man of Catholick Charity to all of every Perſwaſion, whom he judges to fear God, and be truly conſcientious; if he boldly and impartially reprove Sin where-ever he finds it, tho' it be in his own Patron, or Men of his own Profeſſion; you will ſtill love him the more for that. For if Sincerity and Conformity (as you pretend) be the very things which you make ſuch a Noiſe and Buſſle for in the World, here you have them both in conjunction. This is the Man you ſeem to ſeek (by theſe Pleas of yours) for a Pattern and Standard to reduce other Men to.

And is it really ſo, Gentlemen, with you? Do you heartily affect and prize a ſtrict and ſerious Conformiſt, that fears not to expoſe the odious Shamefulneſs and Wickedneſs of profane Swearing, Curſing, Drunkenneſs, and Uncleanneſs, without reſpect of Perſons, both in his Pulpit and private Converſes? Do you love him the better for his plain dealing with your Conſciences, in detecting the grand Cheat of Formality in Religion; for his cloſe cutting Convictions of the Inſufficiency of meer Civility to your Salvation; and the indiſpenſable neceſſity of Regeneration? Do you heartily love and honour him, for thundering you out of Ale-houſes and Taverns, unto your Family and Cloſet-Duties? ‘For telling you plainly, your Love muſt not be confined to your own Party, but extended to all that fear God, however they be externally diſtinguiſhed among Men? Nay, for convincing you plainly, that Religion lies not in external Modes and Rites, in Standing, Kneeling, or Reſponſes? That the Name and Cry of *the Church, the Church*, will as little avail to your Salvation, as the Cry of the ſuperſtitious and profane *Jews, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are theſe*? That true Religion is an inward, ſerious, ſpiritual thing, conſiſting in an evidencing it ſelf by the

‘ Mortification of your Sins, and real Devotedneſs of your Hearts to the Lord?

If ſuch a Man as this will pleaſe, and delight your very Hearts; then my Reaſon is bound to conclude, there may be reality in what you pretend. But if you ſhall hate and loath ſuch a Man as this, equally with a profeſſed Diſſenter, you muſt excuſe me, and all the Rational World with me, if we ſhall conclude, that it is not true Zeal for the Laws, for the Church, or for the Sincerity and peaceable Lives of its Profeſſors, but an inward, rooted Enmity at Religion it ſelf, that ſets you on work under the feigned Pretences of other things.

*Expectation* 5. *Fifthly*, Your Reaſon will expect and exact it from you, that whenſoever you ſhall be convinced, that all theſe Stirs and Buſtles that have been in the World, all this Fining, Impriſoning, and Impoveriſhing your Proteſtant Brethren and Neighbours for their Conſcience-ſake, hath done the Church no good, but given a great and real Advantage to our common Enemy, to ruin us together; that we may diſtinguiſh our ſelves how we pleaſe in our Folly, but they will never diſtinguiſh us in their Fury; for we are all known to them by one common Name of Hereticks.

In this Caſe, your Reaſon exacts it from you, and ſo doth the common Reaſon of Mankind, that a Sence of common Intereſt, and common Danger, now quiet thoſe Feuds, and extinguiſh thoſe Fires, which our own Luſts firſt kindled, and the Devil and our common Enemies have incenſed, to the great Damage and Hazard of the whole Proteſtant Cauſe.

Such a ſeaſonable and becoming Sence as this, were in it ſelf ſufficient to cool a wiſe Man's Heats, if Penal Laws were left ſtanding in their full force and vigour; but when the Wiſdom and Reaſon of the State ſhall plainly diſcern both the Uſefulneſs and Neceſſity of Liberty, and thereupon take away (as they have now moſt prudently and ſeaſonably done) the further Occaſions of Miſchiefs to the whole, by relaxing the Yoke that bound ſome (and thoſe a very great Body of truly Loyal and Uſeful Subjects) leaving the reſt in the quiet Poſſeſſion of their own Liberties and Properties; what ſhall we call that Fire, which ſtill continues burning and increaſing, not only after, but by all this, but an unquenchable Hell-fire?

If Chimera's, and ſelf-created Jealouſies, that ſome carnal Intereſts of ours are not ſo well ſecured to us under Liberty, as they were under Perſecution and Tyranny; this were the right way to perpetuate Diſſentions and Perſecutions to the end of the World.

And now, Gentlemen, I hope I may ſay, without being vain or opinionative, that your own Reaſon hath fairly diſarmed you of theſe Pleas and Excuſes, by which you have hitherto defended your ſelves in your moſt ſinful Practices of profane Curſing, and Swearing, Drunkenneſs, Uncleanneſs, and bitter Enmity againſt your Proteſtant Brethren for things that touch not the Eſſence of Chriſtianity.

And believe it, Sirs, it is truly Genteel and Glorious, to ſuffer your ſelves to be ſubdued and conquered by the plain Convictions of your own Reaſon and Conſcience. 'Tis ten thouſand times more Honourable and Glorious to lay down your Arms at the Feet of theſe, than to lay down both Reaſon and Conſcience at the Feet of Satan and your Luſts, and continue fighting obſtinately againſt God, your own Souls, Bodies, Eſtates, Reputations; yea, your very Reaſons and Conſciences, your innocent Brethren, and the Peace of Church and State, under Satan's Banner.

In all this Diſcourſe I have not deſigned to exaſperate, but aſſwage and reſtrain your Luſts and Paſſions, by laying the loving and gentle Hands of your own Reaſons and Conſciences upon them. I have not given the leaſt injurious Touch to your Honour, but all along pleaded for the Recovery, or Security of it. I have expoſed no Man by any particular Mark or Indigitation.

But now I have done with you; if your own Conſciences ſhall begin to make a rounder and more particular Application of theſe general Reaſonings and Arguments, and ſay to you, as *Nathan* to *David*, *Thou art the Man*; I am not accountable for that. But be confident of it, you are accountable to God for all thoſe plain Convictions and faithful Endeavours uſed with you, and tried upon you, to ſave you from all thoſe Miſeries your head-ſtrong Luſts with furious Precipitation are manifeſtly running you into.

If you can ſubſtantially and ſolidly refel thoſe Arguments againſt; and vindicate thoſe Pleas for Sin, which Reaſon and Conſcience have urged and cenſured above; and can produce ſtronger and clearer Arguments to defend and juſtifie the Courſes here cenſured and condemned: Or if you can obtain a Writ of Error to remove theſe Cauſes to another lawful Court of Judicature, where you ſhall obtain a more favourable Verdict, your Complaint of ſevere Dealing with you here, will not want ſome ground or colour: But if you cannot (as you know you cannot) then never blame your own Reaſons, nor mine, for dealing rigorouſly or injuriouſly with you.

I am willing to hope, and perſwade my ſelf, that I ſhall at leaſt obtain a Reformation of Life from many of you. I have tugg'd hard for it with you here. I will tug harder with God in Prayer to obtain it for you. But yet, Gentlemen, I muſt tell you in the cloſe, That tho' an external Reformation of theſe evil Courſes may make your Lives more healthy, happy, and durable in this World, and will greatly conduce to the publick, as well as your perſonal and private Intereſt; yet if you expect compleat and perfect Happineſs in the World to come, you muſt advance one ſtep further beyond Reformation, unto ſound Converſion. The firſt makes you comparatively happy here; but the ſecond will make you perfectly happy and bleſſed for ever hereafter. The firſt frees you from many temporal Miſeries upon Earth; but the ſecond from eternal Miſeries in Hell. And this brings you to the other bleſſed Step, by Converſion; which is the *Second Part*.

# THE
# SECOND PART:
# EVINCING THE
# Poſſibility, Neceſſity, & Excellency,
# OF
# Converſion to GOD;
# THE
# Only Thing that makes Men truly Happy, and perfectly Bleſſed, in the World to come.

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### § I. *Conviction ſuppoſed, and Grace admired.*

Reaſon and Conſcience having been ſhaming Men out of their Profaneneſs, in the former Part of this Diſcourſe. Free Grace invites them to the Life of Holineſs, and thereby to the Life of Bleſſedneſs, in this *Second Part*.

There you ſee what it is to live like Beaſts: Here you may ſee what it is to live like Chriſtians.

My Charity commands me to ſuppoſe, that ſome Readers ſtand by this time Convicted in their own Conſciences, both of the extream Wickedneſs, and the immediate Danger of that profane Courſe they have hitherto purſued, and perſiſted in. And that by this time they begin to interrogate them in the Apoſtle's cloſe and cutting Language, *Rom.* 6. 21. *What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the end of theſe things is death.* 'Tis hard to imagine, that ſo many cloſe Debates, and Reaſonings, as you have heard in the former Part, ſhould not leave many of you under Conviction and Trouble of Spirit. You ſee your own Reaſons and Conſciences have condemned you: *And if our Heart condemn us,* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all things,* 1 John 3. 20. 'Tis Folly to imagine, you ſhall be acquitted at God's immediate Bar, who are already caſt and condemned at your own Privy Seſſions.

If this be the happy effect (as I hope it is) of all the former cloſe and ſolemn Debates with your Conſciences, it will naturally and immediately caſt thy Soul, Reader, into great admiration of, and aſtoniſhment at the Patience and Long-ſuffering of God, that hath born with thee, under a Life of prodigious and reiterated Provocations until this Day. And his Goodneſs will be as admirable to thee, as his Patience; in that he hath not only ſuffered thee to live 'till this Day, but made it the Day of thy Conviction, the firſt neceſſary Step towards thy Converſion; and the very firſt Things he entertains thy convinced and troubled Soul with, to be the poſſibility and probability of thy Converſion to God.

The Greatneſs of his Patience ſhews his Almighty Power, *Rom.* 9. 22. *Nahum* 1. 3. But his willingneſs to paſs by all the Wrongs you have done him, and to be at Peace with you, diſcovers the immenſe Riches of his Grace, *Tit.* 3. 3, 4.

That God ſhould be ſo quick in the Executions of his Wrath upon your Companions in Sin, and ſo patient and long-ſuffering towards you, that have out-ſinned them all, is ſuch a comparative Conſideration of his Bounty, as ſhould even overwhelm the Man that beholds it, *Rom.* 11. 22. *Behold the goodneſs and ſeverity of God! on them that fell, ſeverity; but towards thee goodneſs.*

If thou be that very Man, who in the paſt Courſe of thy Life, haſt been a profane Swearer, a beaſtly Drunkard, a laſcivious Perſon, an Hater and Perſecutor of Good Men; and after all this, the Lord hath brought an Offer of Mercy to thy Soul, and ſhall convince thee it is not come too late, but that the Door of Hope ſtands yet open to thee; my Advice to thee is, That thou caſt thy ſelf down at the Feet of Mercy, and after this manner pour forth thy Laments and Deſires before the Lord.

'And is there yet a poſſibility of Mercy, O Lord God, for ſuch a vile Wretch as I have been! Can the Arms of Free Grace yet open themſelves to embrace ſuch a Monſter of Wickedneſs as I am! Who then is a God like unto thee! And what Patience, Mercy, and Goodneſs is like thine! I have far exceeded others in Sin; I have lived the Life of a Beaſt, yea, of a Devil. I have darted thy dreadful and glorious Name, with thouſands of horrid Blaſphemies, trampled all thy glorious Attributes under my Feet; challenged thee to thy very Face to do thy worſt, even to damn me to the Pit of Hell; I have yielded up this Soul, with all its Noble Faculties and Powers, as Inſtruments of Sin unto the Devil; and made this Body, which ſhould have been the hallowed Temple of thy Spirit, to be the noyſom Sink or Common-Shore for all unclean and abominable Luſts, to run and ſettle in. I have hated, reviled, and perſecuted thoſe that were more ſtrictly, ſoberly, and godly than my ſelf, becauſe their Convincing-Examples diſquieted, checked and convicted my Conſcience in the eager Purſuit of my Luſts and Pleaſures.

‘I have lived in the profane neglect of Prayer, Meditation, Self-reflection, and all other ſpiritual Chriſtian Duties, thinking to make an Atonement for all, by a few hypocritical external Formalities.

‘To accommodate my carnal Intereſt in the World, I have come reeking hot out of an Ale Houſe, or Whore-Houſe, to the Table of the Lord, where with unhallowed Hands, and a more unhallowed Heart, I have crucified again the Lord of Glory; and given the vileſt affront and deſpight to that moſt ſacred and precious Blood, which now muſt ſave me, or I am loſt for ever. Thus have I done; and becauſe thou kepſt ſilent, I thought thee to be altogether ſuch an one as my ſelf. But this Day haſt thou reproved me, and ſet mine Abominations in order before me.

‘I have tempted and induced many others into the ſame Impieties with me, of whom ſome are already gone down to the Dead; and others ſo fixed, and fully engaged in the purſuit of their Luſts, that there appear no Signs of Repentance or Recovery in them.

‘Thy Wrath, Lord, ſoon brake forth againſt the Angels that ſinned in Heaven; yet hitherto haſt thou forborn and ſpared me, who have been highly provoking thee, ever ſince I was born, by a Life of unparallell'd Wickedneſs upon Earth. Vile Wretch that I am! I have deſpiſed the Riches of thy Goodneſs, Forbearance, and Long-ſuffering, not knowing that the Goodneſs of God leadeth me to Repentance. And after all, here I am told, that there is yet a poſſibility of Pardon, Mercy, and Salvation for me. The News is ſo great and ſo good, that I am zealouſly concerned to examine the Grounds and Evidences of it. And if it ſhall appear to be as true, as it is aſtoniſhingly ſtrange and raviſhingly ſweet, I hope it ſhall effectually lead me to Repentance, and diſſolve for ever the ſtrongeſt Ties betwixt me and my Luſts.

## § II. *Converſion of the vileſt Sinner poſſible.*

THat it is poſſible for the greateſt and moſt infamous Sinner to be recovered by Repentance and Converſion, and thereupon to find Mercy and Forgiveneſs with God, is a Truth as ſure and firm, as it is ſweet and comfortable. Three things will give full Evidence of it.

1. That their Sins do not exceed the Power and Sufficiency of the Cauſes of Remiſſion.
2. That ſuch Sinners are within the Calls and Invitations of the Goſpel.
3. That ſuch Sinners are found among the Inſtances and Examples of Pardoning Mercy, recorded in the Scriptures.

And if the Cauſes of Pardon be ſufficient, and able to produce it; if the Goſpel Invitations do take them in; and ſuch Sinners as theſe, every way as vile and wicked, have not been ſhut out, but received to Mercy; then 'tis beyond all doubt that there is (at leaſt) a poſſibility of Mercy for ſuch Sinners as you are.

I. 'Tis paſt all rational doubt, that the Cauſes of Remiſſion are every way ſufficient and able to produce the Forgiveneſs of ſuch Sins as yours are. For conſider with your ſelves,

The Power of { 1. The *Impulſive* Cauſe.
2. The *Meritorious* Cauſe.
3. The *Applying* Cauſe.

1. The Sufficiency and Ability of the *Impulſive* Cauſe of Pardon, which is none other but the Free Grace of God, the immenſe Riches and Treaſures whereof, do infinitely exceed the Accompts and Computations both of Angels and Men, *Exod.* 34. 6,7. *And the Lord paſſed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, and tranſgreſſion, and ſin.* Mic. 7. 18, 19. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſions of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy: He will turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us, he will ſubdue our iniquities, and thou wilt caſt all our ſins into the depths of the Sea.* Once more, Rom. 5. 20. *Where Sin abounaed, Grace did much more abound.* So that whatever thy Sins have been, they do not, they cannot exceed the ability and power of the Grace of God, the all-ſufficient *Impulſive Cauſe* of Remiſſion. That infinite *Abyſs*, or Sea of Mercy can ſwallow up and cover ſuch Mountains of Guilt as thine have been.

2. Nor do thy Sins exceed the Power and Ability of the *Meritorious Cauſe* of Remiſſion, namely, *the Blod of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; for that Blood is the Blood of God, *Acts* 20. 28. He is the Lamb of God, whoſe Blood is ſufficient to take away the Sins of the World, *John* 1. 29. There is but one Sin in the World exempt from Remiſſion by this Blood; and if thy Heart be now wounded with the Senſe of Sin (as I here ſuppoſe it to be) that's none of thy Sin, how heinous ſoever thy other Sins be.

3. Nor do thy Sins exceed the Ability and Power of the *Applying Cauſe* of Pardon, namely, *the Spirit of God.* For tho' I ſhould ſuppoſe thy Mind to be clouded and overſhadowed with groſſeſt Ignorance, thy Heart to be as hard as an Adamant, or Nether Mil-ſtone, thy Will ſtiff and obſtinate, thy Affections enchanted and bewitched with the Pleaſures of Sin; yet this Spirit of God, in a moment, can make a convincing Beam of Light to dart into thy dark Mind, make thy hard Heart relent, thy ſtubborn Will to bow, and all the Affections of thy Soul to comply, and open obedientially to Chriſt, *John* 16. 9, 10. *The Spirit, when he cometh, he ſhall convince the World of Sin,* &c.

Thus you ſee whatever your Guilt be, it does not exceed the Abilities of the Cauſes of Remiſſion. Oh what an Encouragement is this?

II. And there is yet further Encouragement in this, that if you will open your Bibles, you may find your ſelves within the Calls and Invitations of the Goſpel. And no Man can ſay, that Man is without hope, that is within a Goſpel-Invitation. Conſider *Iſa.* 55. 7, 8. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon: For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts,* &c. Here you have the Nature of Converſion deſcribed Negatively and Poſitively, by forſaking your Ways and Thoughts, and turning to the Lord. The Way notes the external Courſe of the Converſation; the Thoughts denote the internal Frame and Temper of the Mind; both theſe muſt be forſaken. And *turning to the Lord,* denotes the ſincere Delicacy of the whole Man to God; all which is poſſible and eaſie for the Spirit of God to do; and this being once done, abundant Pardon is aſſured. If you ſay you cannot think it; God tells you in the very next Words, That his Thoughts are not your Thoughts, but as far above them as the Heavens are higher than the Earth. Read to the ſame purpoſe, *Iſaiah* 1. 18. *Rev.* 3. 20. *John* 7. 37.

III. And to make the poſſibility of Remiſſion yet clearer, know for your encouragement, that as vile, infamous, and prodigious Sinners as your ſelves, are recorded and found amongſt the Inſtances and Examples of forgiven Sinners in Scripture. *Paul* was once a fierce and cruel Perſecutor and Blaſphemer, yet he obtained Mercy, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13, 14. That ſinful Woman recorded *Luke* 7. 37, 38. was an infamous and a notorious Sinner, yet her Sins, which were many, were forgiven her, *v.* 47. *Manaſſeh* was a Monſter of Wickedneſs, as you may read, 2 *Chron.* 33. yet found Mercy. And if you view that Catalogue of Sinners given in 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. you will ſeem to find among them the very Forlorn-hope of deſperate Sinners, advanced neareſt to Hell of any Men upon Earth; yet ſee *ver.* 11. what is ſaid of ſome of them: *And ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are juſtified.*

All theſe things plainly ſhew (I ſay not the *Certainty* that you *ſhall* be, but) the *Poſſivility* that you *may* be pardoned; which is a Mercy and Encouragement unſpeakable.

### § III. *The Converſion of Profane Ones highly probable.*

AND becauſe Satan labours to diſcourage them that are gone in Sin ſo far as you are, by cutting off all Hopes of Mercy from them, and bringing them to this deſperate Concluſion, Damned we know we ſhall and muſt be; and therefore as good be damned for more, as leſs. If we had lived ſober and civil Lives, we might have had ſome hope; but becauſe we have no hope, 'tis as good for us to take our full Swinge in Sin, as to think of returning by Repentance and Converſion, ſo late in the Day as this is.

To obviate this deadly Snare of Satan, I ſhall here further add, That there is not only a *Poſſibility* of your recovery, but in ſome reſpect a ſtronger *Poſſibility,* that ſuch as you may be converted and ſaved, than there is for thoſe that have led a ſmoother and more civil Life in the World, and wholly truſt to their own Civility for their Salvation, inſtead of the imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

This plainly appears by that convictive Expreſſion of Chriſt to the Scribes and Phariſees, *Mat.* 21. 31. *Verily I ſay unto you, That the Pulicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you. Publicans,* the moſt infamous among Men; and *Harlots,* the worſt of Women; yet theſe are ſooner wrought over to Chriſt by Faith and Repentance, than the more civil and ſelf-righteous Scribes and Phariſees.

And indeed, 'tis far eaſier to come at the Conſciences of ſuch Sinners by Conviction, than at the others. They having nothing to ward off the Stroke of Conviction: It muſt fall directly and immediately upon their Conſciences. The moſt ſmooth and civil part of the World truſt to their own Righteouſneſs, and this Self-confidence, like *Armour of Proof,* reſiſts all Attempts to bring them to Chriſt for Righteouſneſs. Nothing fixes Men in a ſtate of Evil more, than a ſtrong Conceit that their Condition is good.

But ſuch as you are, whoſe whole Lives have been polluted with Profaneneſs and all Impiety, your Conſciences will more eaſily receive Convictions of your preſent danger, and of the neceſſity of a ſpeedy and thorough change. You cannot think as others do, that you need no Repentance or Reformation. In this reſpect, therefore, you lie nearer the Door of Hope and Mercy, than other Sinners do.

If therefore it ſhall pleaſe the Lord (whoſe Grace is rich and free to the vileſt of Sinners) to pluck out ſuch as you, as Brands out of the burning, by thorough Converſion to Chriſt, you will not only become real Chriſtians (as all true Converts are) but the moſt excellent, uſeful, and zealous amongſt all Chriſtians. As you will be moſt eminent Inſtances of his Grace, ſo will you be the moſt eminent Inſtruments for his Glory. As you have gone beyond other Sinners in Wickedneſs, ſo you will ſtrive to exceed them all in your Love to Chriſt, *Luke* 7. 47. *She loved much, for much was forgiven her.* You'll never think you can do enough for him, who hath done ſuch great things for you.

Who more fierce and vile before Converſion, than *Paul,* who was a Blaſphemer, a Perſecutor, and Injurious, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13? And who among all the Servants of Chriſt loved or laboured for him more than he? How did he rather fly, than travel up and down the World, in a Flame of Zeal for Chriſt? As you have been Ring-leaders in Sin, ſo you will not endure to come behind any in Zeal and Love to the Lord Jeſus: Yet not thinking this way to make him a Requital for the Injuries you have done him (that would be the moſt injurious Act of all the reſt): But to teſtifie this way the deep ſence you have of the Riches and Tranſcendency of his Goodneſs and Mercy to you above others.

### § IV. *Converſion frequently and fatally miſtaken.*

BUT here I muſt warn you of ſome common, but moſt dangerous Miſtakes committed in the World with reſpect to Converſion unto God. Except theſe be ſeaſonably prevented or removed, none of you will ever ſtir or move further than *you* are towards Chriſt. Amongſt others, beware eſpecially of theſe three *following fatal Miſtakes*; that of,

1. Baptiſmal Regeneration.
2. Common Profeſſion of Chriſtianity.
3. Formality in Religious Duties.

1. There is a Notion ſpread among Men, and almoſt every-where obtaining, That the Scriptures mean nothing elſe by *Converſion*, but *to be baptized in our Infancy into the viſible Church*; and that this Ordinance having paſt upon them long ago, they are ſufficiently converted already; and that Men make but a needleſs Stir and Buſtle in the World about any other, or further Converſion.

But, Sirs, I beſeech you conſider how dangerous a thing it is, to take your own Shadow for a Bridge; and venturing upon it, drown your ſelves. If Baptiſm be Converſion enough, why doth Chriſt ſay, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned?* Baptiſm without Faith, ſignifies nothing to Salvation; but Faith without Baptiſm (where it cannot be had) ſecures Salvation. And why doth the Apoſtle ſay, *Gal.* 6. 15. *Neither Circumciſion, nor Uncircumciſion availeth any thing, but a new Creature?* Or what needed Chriſt to have preſſed and inculcated the indiſpenſible neceſſity of Regeneration upon *Nicodemus*, as he doth, *Joh.* 3. 3, 5, 7. who had been many Years a circumciſed Jew? This your dangerous dependance upon your Baptiſmal Regeneration, is what hath given ſuch deep offence and prejudice to many (tho' without juſt cauſe) againſt that Ordinance. I lament it as much as they, that Men ſhould turn it into ſuch a deadly Snare to their own Souls, yet will ſtill honour Chriſt's abuſed Ordinance.

2. Some think the common Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, makes them Chriſtians enough. They are no Heathens, Mahometans, or idolatrous Papiſts, but Proteſtants, within the Pale of the True Church; that is, profeſſed Reformed Chriſtians.

But Friends, I beg you to conſider, that convictive Text, 1 *Cor.* 4. 20. *The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.* Many there be, that in *Words* confeſs Chriſt, but in *Works* they deny him. And why were the fooliſh Virgins (that is, profeſſed Reformed Chriſtians) ſhut out of the Kingdom of God; if the Lamps of verbal Profeſſion, without the Oyl of internal Godlineſs, were enough for our Salvation? *Mat.* 25. 3, 12. Believe it, Sirs, many will claim Acquaintance with Chriſt upon this account, and expect Favour from him in the Great Day, of whom he will profeſs he never knew them, *Mat.* 7. 22. Chriſt need not have put Men upon ſtriving as in an Agony to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, if Baptiſm in our Infancy, or Verbal Profeſſion of Chriſtianity were all the Difficulties Men had to encounter in the Way to Heaven.

3. *Formality in external Duties of Religion*, is another fatal Miſtake of Converſion. Have not theſe been the inward Thoughts of your Hearts: As bad as we are, tho' we take liberty to Swear, be Drunk, and Unclean ſometimes; yet we ſay our Prayers, keep our Church, and hope for Heaven and Salvation, as well as thoſe that are more preciſe?

But tell me, Gentlemen, ſeriouſly, What do you ſay or plead for your ſelves more in all this, than thoſe convicted Hypocrites did, *Iſa.* 58. 2. *Yet they ſeek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a Nation that did Righteouſneſs, and forſook not the Ordinances of their God: They ask of me the Ordinances of Juſtice; they take delight in approaching to God.* Or to come nearer yet to your Caſe, and cut off at one ſtroke for ever this vain Plea of yours, read and ponder God's own Cenſure of it, in *Jer.* 7. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. *Behold, ye truſt in lying words, that cannot profit: Will ye Steal, Murder, commit Adultery, and ſwear falſly,* &c. *and come and ſtand before me in this Houſe, which is called by my Name, and ſay we are delivered to do all theſe Abominations? Is this Houſe which is called by my Name, become a Den of Robbers in your Eyes? Behold, even I have ſeen it, ſaith the Lord; but go ye now to my place, which was in Shilo, where I ſet my Name at the firſt, and ſee what I did to it, for the Wickedneſs of my People Iſrael.*

### § V. *Of the Nature of true Converſion.*

YOU have heard that Converſion does not conſiſt in theſe external things; at your eternal peril be it, if you truſt in them. But true Converſion is the turning of the whole Man to God, *Acts* 26. 18. 'Tis nothing leſs than the total change of the inward Temper and Frame of the Heart, and the external Courſe of the Life, *Iſa.* 55. 8. 'Tis not the cold confeſſion, but the real forſaking of Sin, in which we ſhall find Mercy, *Prov.* 28. 13. Thy Heart and Will, Love and Delight, muſt turn Sin out, and take Chriſt in, or thou art no Goſpel-Convert. A true Convert loaths every Sin, and himſelf for Sin, *Ezek.* 36. 31. But general Confeſſions of Sin, are conſiſtent with the full Dominion of Sin. Moreover, in all true Converſion there is a poſitive turning unto God, a whole Heart-choice of him for your ſupreme and ultimate Happineſs and Portion, *Pſal.* 73. 25. And of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as your Prince and Saviour, *Acts* 5. 31. And anſwerably it will devote your whole Life to his Service and Glory, *Phil.* 1. 21. And thus it brings forth the New Man. And the whole Frame of your Heart and Life, is marvellouſly changed and altered, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *Old things are paſſed away, behold all things are become new.*

It may be you will think ſuch a change as this impoſſible to be made upon you. And ſo it is indeed, until the Day of God's Power come, *Pſalm* 110. 3. What! to forſake with loathing your old Companions and Courſes, which you have ſo long lived with, and delighted in, and to embrace with higheſt pleaſure ſtrict Godlineſs, which you have ſo loathed and ridiculed! This would be a ſtrange alteration indeed. But as ſtrange as it ſeems to be, 'twill be effected in a moment, when God fulfils that gracious Promiſe (as I hope he is now doing) to you, *Ezek.* 36. 26. *A new Heart alſo will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you:* Operations follow Natures. When the Heart of a Beaſt was given to that great King *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan.* 5. 21. his Dwelling was with the wild Aſſes, they fed him with Graſs like Oxen. But let the Spirit of a Man return to him again, and he'll bluſh to think of his brutiſh Company, and way of Life: And ſo will you of yours alſo. As marvellous a change as this, has paſt upon as eminent and notorious Sinners as your ſelves, *Gal.* 1. 22. the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh can with eaſe and ſpeed produce all this by that Almighty Power, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.

### § VI. *Of the Hazards attending Converſion.*

IF the Lord ſhall in his rich Grace and Mercy to your Souls, ſtir up in them the Thoughts and Reſolutions of a change of your Courſe, great care ought to be taken in the time of this change, leſt they miſcarry in their remove from one State to another. Multitudes miſcarry betwixt a State of Profaneneſs, and true Godlineſs. To continue in the State of Profaneneſs, is to be certainly loſt; and ſo it is to take up ſhort of Chriſt in meer Civility and Formality in Religion. This Middle State takes up Multitudes by the Way, who do but change the open Road for a more private Way to Hell.

Meer Civilized Nature, is Unregenerated Nature ſtill. *They return, but not to the Moſt High; they are like a deceitful Bow,* ſaith the Prophet, *Hoſ.* 7. 16. They ſeem to aim at Chriſt and Salvation; but as an Arrow from a weak Bow, it goes not home; or as from a deceitful Bow, it ſlents aſide, and miſſes the Mark. 'Tis true, they are not openly profane, as they were before; but they take up and ſettle in an Unregenerate State ſtill. Their Condition is the ſame, tho' their Company be not.

This is excellently ſet forth by our Saviour, *Mat.* 12. 43, 44, 45. The Devil may be caſt out as a profane Devil, and yet keep his Propriety ſtill as a formal Devil. The Sence of that Text is well expreſſed by one in this Note upon it, That a reſtraint by Formality keeps the Devil's Propriety, and diſpoſes the Soul to final Apoſtacy. You are as far from Chriſt and Salvation under the Power of Formality, as you were before. He that's cured of a Fever, hath no great cauſe to rejoyce, if his Fever have left him under a Conſumption, which will kill him as ſurely, tho' it may be leſs violently or ſpeedily.

### § VII. *Of the abſolute Neceſſity of a thorough Change.*

WHatever the Difficulties and Hazards be that attend this Change by Converſion unto God, the Change it ſelf is abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary to every Man's Salvation. The Door of Salvation can never be open'd without the Key of Regeneration. Chriſt aſſures Civil and Formal *Nicodemus, That except he be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God,* Joh. 3. 3. Think not Converſion to be the attainment of ſome ſingular and extraordinary Chriſtians; for 'tis the very Point upon which every Man's eternal Happineſs or Miſery depends. There is one Law for all the World, They muſt be changed or damned. No Reſtitutions or Reformations, no common Gifts or Abilities, no Religious Duties or Services, can ſave any Man from Hell without a Change by thorough Converſion, *Rom.* 8. 8. *They that are in the Fleſh, cannot pleaſe God.*

Satisfie and pleaſe not your ſelves with this: Tho' we live in Sin, yet God is a merciful God; we will confeſs our Sins to him, ſay our Prayers, keep our Church, and no doubt, but God will be merciful to us, as well as others. Conſider it, Man, that this *merciful God* is alſo a *God of Truth*; and this God of Truth hath plainly aſſured thee, That all theſe external things ſignifie nothing to thy Salvation, unleſs thou become a new Creature, *Gal.* 6. 15. And that thou muſt be born again, *John* 3. 3. Say not without this, you will hope in God. If you hope in God, you muſt hope in his Word, *Pſalm* 119. 81. Now where will you find that Word in the Bible, that warrants the hope of Salvation in an unregenerate Perſon? All Scriptural Hope is of a purifying nature, and evermore productive of an Holy Life, 1 *John* 3. 3.

If you ſay, Chriſt died for the greateſt of Sinners, and you truſt to be ſaved through him: 'Tis true he did ſo; but Converſion is his only Method of Salvation, *Tit.* 2. 14. And thoſe that are not waſhed by Sanctification, have no part in him, or in his Blood, *John* 13. 8. He came not to ſave Men continuing in their Sins, but to ſave his People from their Sins, *Mat.* 1. 21. His way is to lead you through Sanctification unto Salvation, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 13. If you have a Mind to ſee whom and how he ſaves, you have it before your Eyes, *Tit.* 2. 14. *Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* Thoſe only are ſaved by him, that denying *Ungodlineſs* and *worldly Luſts,* live not only *ſoberly* and *righteouſly,* but *godly* in this preſent World.

And this is the Change I am here preſſing you to: And until this Change be made, you cannot find your ſelves within the Compaſs of any Covenant-Promiſe, *Eph.* 2. 12. But if you will turn to *Heb.* 12. 14. You may the very next Minute find your ſelves barr'd out of Heaven by a Scripture-threatning. Let no Man therefore impoſe ſo great a Cheat upon his own Soul, as once to imagine, that any thing ſhort of ſound Converſion, can ever put him out of the danger of Damnation.

### § VIII. *Every Man might do more than he doth towards his own Converſion.*

IT is not in any Man's Power to convert himſelf: but yet becauſe every Man might do more towards it than he doth do, and doth it not, he is juſtly chargeable with his own Damnation. We are bid and and bound to ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, *Luke* 13. 24. 'Tis true, a Man in his natural ſtate can do nothing that is ſpiritually or ſupernaturally good; yet he can do, and forbear to do many things, the doing or forbearing of which have a true, tho' remoter Tendency to his Converſion; and not doing or forbearing of them, his Deſtruction is of, and from himſelf.

You can, if you will, forbear to ſwear and blaſpheme the Name of God: Who can, or does, compel, or force your Tongues to it? The Devil can tempt, but not compel them. You can, if you will, ſtop, when Nature is duly refreſhed: Your wicked Companions can provoke, but not force you. You can, if you pleaſe, ſhun laſcivious Books and Company, and keep your Bodies chaſt, at leaſt from the external Acts of Uncleanneſs.

And why cannot you (if you pleaſe) perform, as well as neglect, the external Acts of Religious Duties? The ſame Feet that carry you to a Tavern, can carry you to your Cloſets, if you pleaſe to have them do ſo. Nor do I know any Reaſon why you cannot compoſe your ſelves, when engaged in God's publick or private Worſhip, to a cloſe and ſerious attendance to thoſe Duties. The Application of the Mind to what is ſpoken, is of great concernment to you: And if an unſanctified Miniſter can apply his Thoughts to compoſe a Sermon and preach it, I ſee no Reaſon why an unſanctified Hearer may not alſo compoſe and apply his Mind to hear it. And I am paſt all doubt, that ſomething may be done beyond all this. You have ſome power certainly to reflect upon, and conſider what Concernment you have in the Things you read or hear, and how they agree, or diſagree with your Experience.

Now if Men would but do this (which certainly they have a power to do) tho' they cannot convert themſelves, yet thereby they would lie in the hopeful way of Converting Grace; which is more than they could ever yet be perſwaded to do. And tho' there be no poſitive Certainty or Aſſurance, that Converſion and Salvation ſhall follow theſe Acts; yet Hope and Probability are Engagements enough. Hope ſets all the World on work without Aſſurance. The Plough-man ploughs in hope, and the Merchants ventures in hope. Do but as much for your Souls, as theſe do for their Bodies.

### § IX. *Temptations and Diſcouragements in the Way of Converſion.*

BUT here I expect to be encountered by all the Policy and Power of Hell. Satan and your own Luſts are in Confederacy to turn away your Minds from ſuch Counſel and Perſwaſions as theſe. They will tell you, this is no proper Seaſon to mind your Converſion: 'tis either too ſoon, or too late. You have not yet had Pleaſure enough in Sin, or ſo much as hath put you beyond all hope of Mercy: That Religion is a melancholy thing, and if once you look that way, you'll never have a merry Day, or Hour, more. With a thouſand ſuch Damps and Diſcouragements.

But pray, Gentlemen, do ſo much at leaſt for your Souls, before you turn away your Ear from the Inſtructions of Life, as to hear theſe Matters examined. If they be not worth that, they are worth nothing.

I will ſuppoſe you in the Flower and Vigour of your Youth, and this dangerous Seaſon now nick'd with a more dangerous Temptation, that it is too ſoon to mind ſuch ſerious Matters now: You have not yet had your full Pleaſure out of Sin.

Need I to ſpend a word to refute and baffle ſuch a Temptation as this? I doubt not but you your ſelves can eaſily do it. Ask your ſelves, Sirs, if Sentence of Death were paſs'd upon you by Men (as it is by God, *John* 3. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already*) would you think a Pardon could come too ſoon? Be aſſured every Bit of Bread you eat, is the Bread of the Condemned. You are in hazard of Hell every Day and Hour: There wants nothing but a Sword, a Bullet, a Shipwrack, or Diſeaſe, (of which Multitudes wait on you every Day) to put you beyond Mercy, and all hopes of Mercy. And can you get too ſoon (think you) out of this Danger and Miſery? Oh, why do you linger any longer? The Danger is too great and imminent to admit one Hours longer delay.

And it is as ſtrange and ſtrong a Deluſion on the other ſide, to fancy it is now too late. The Vanity and Groundleſneſs of this hath been evinced in the *Second Section*, to which I refer you for full Satiſfaction.

And for the loſs of your Pleaſures by Converſion to God, that's the thinneſt and ſillieſt Pretence of all the reſt. That's the ſame thing as to imagine it is to a Thirſty Man's loſs, to leave the Puddle-waters of a broken Ciſtern, to enjoy the Criſtal Streams of a flowing Fountain: For the Pleaſures of an Ale-houſe, Play-houſe, or Whore-houſe, to be ſweeter than the Light of God's Countenance, the Comforts of his Pardon, or the lively Hopes of Glory with him in Heaven, of which you read, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8.

Poor Men! O that you did but once know what the Life of Holineſs, and Dedication to God is! What the Seals, Earneſt, and Firſt-fruits of his Spirit are! How willingly and joyfully would you trample all the ſordid Pleaſures of Sin under your Feet, to enjoy them!

### § X. *Motives and Conſiderations perſwading to Converſion.*

THis ſhort Diſcourſe ſhall wind up it ſelf in Motives and Conſiderations to prevail with you, not only to make the firſt Step out of Profaneneſs to Civility; but the other neceſſary and happy Step too, for the Lord's ſake, Gentlemen, that bleſſed Step beyond meer Civility, to ſerious Godlineſs.

Oh, that I knew what Words to chuſe, and what Arguments to urge, that might poſſibly prevail with you! My Witneſs is in Heaven, I would do any thing within my power to procure your temporal and eternal Happineſs. I beg you in the Bowels of Chriſt Jeſus, as if I were upon my bended Knees before your Feet, turn not away your Eye or Ear from theſe Diſcourſes. Ponder and conſider once and again what hath been rationally debated in the Firſt Part, about your Reformation, and what hath and ſhall be offered in this Second Part.

*Oh, my God! thou that haſt counted me faithful, and put me into the Miniſtry; thou that haſt inclined my Heart to make this Attempt, and encouraged me with hope that it ſhall not be in vain to all them that read it, if it muſt be ſo to ſome; I beſeech thee, lay the Hand of thy Spirit upon the Heart and Hand of thy Servant, ſtrengthen and guide him in drawing the Bow of the Goſpel, and directing the Arrows, that they may ſtrike the Mark he aims it, even the Conviction and Converſion of lewd and diſſolute Sinners. Command theſe Conſiderations to ſtay and ſettle in their Hearts, 'till they bring them fully over to thy ſelf in Chriſt.*

1. *Conſideration.* And Firſt, O that you would conſider how the whole of your Life paſt hath been caſt away in vain, as to the Great End and Buſineſs you came into the World for. You have breathed many Years, but not lived one Day to God. Your Conſciences could never yet prevail with you to get out of the Noiſe and

Hurry of the World, and go along with it into ſome private Retiring-place, to debate the State of your Souls, and think cloſe (but for one Hour) to ſuch awful Subjects as God, Soul, Chriſt, and Eternity, Heaven, Hell, Death, and Judgment. Do you think, Gentlemen, that you came into this World to do nothing elſe but to eat and drink, ſport and play, ſleep and die? Aſk your ſelves, I beſeech you, whether the Life you have hitherto lived, have looked to your own Eyes like an earneſt Flight from Hell, and a ſerious Purſuit of Heaven and Salvation? How much nearer are you got to Chriſt now, than you were when in your Cradles? The ſweeteſt and fitteſt part of your Life is paſt away in Vanity, and there's no calling one Day or Hour of it back again.

2. *Conſideration.* Conſider, Gentlemen, for Chriſt Jeſus ſake, you have yet an opportunity to be eternally happy, if you will ſlight and neglect Opportunities of Salvation no longer. The Door of Mercy is not yet finally ſhut up. The Lord Jeſus yet waits to be gracious to you. Such is his aſtoniſhing Grace and Mercy, he will pardon and paſs by all that you have done againſt him; if now, after all, you will but come unto him that you may have Life. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die? Your Swearing and Blaſpheming, your Drunkenneſs, Uncleanneſs, and Enmity at Godlineſs, ſhall never be mentioned, if you will yet repent and return, *Ezek.* 18. 21, 22. *If the Wicked will turn from all his Sins that he hath committed, and keep all my Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die. All his tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, they ſhall not be mentioned unto him.*

If you ſay, theſe are hard and impoſſible Terms to Nature. 'Tis true they are ſo; and God's end in urging them here upon you, is to convince you of your Natural Impotence, and drive you to Chriſt, that by Union with him, the Righteouſneſs of the Law might be fulfilled in you.

3. *Conſideration.* Let it be throughly conſidered, 'tis no leſs than Salvation, and your own Salvation too, which depends upon your Converſion. How diligent was Chriſt in purchaſing Salvation! How negligent and remiſs are we in applying it! Oh, what Compoſitions of Sloth and Stupidity are unconverted Sinners! How do they ſit with folded Arms, as if it were eaſie to periſh? Is this your running and ſtriving to obtain the Palms and Crowns of Immortal Glory? *Work out* (ſaith the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 2. 12, 13.) *your own Salvation with fear and trembling.* 'Tis for Salvation, and nothing leſs, you are here preſſed to ſtrive. And what Care, Pains, or Sollicitude of ours can be equal and proportionate to ſo great a thing as Salvation? If every Thought of the Heart were reſcued from all other Concerns, and the Mind ſtand continually fixed with utmoſt Intention upon this Subject, ſurely ſuch a Subject deſerves it all, and much more.

But when you conſider it is not another's, but your own Salvation you are ſtriving for, how powerfully ſhould the Principle of Self-preſervation awaken and invigorate your utmoſt Endeavours after it! The Law of Charity, and Bowels of Mercy, would compel us to do much to ſave the Body, and much more the Soul of another; and will they move us to do nothing for our own Salvation?

Say not, if I ſhould be careleſs and neglective, yet God is good and gracious; if this Seaſon be neglected, there be more to come. Alas! that's more than you know. 'Tis poſſible your eternal Happineſs may depend upon the Improvement of this preſent Opportunity. There's much of time in a ſhort Opportunity.

4. *Conſideration.* Do you think your Hearts would be in ſuch a dead, careleſs, and unconcerned Frame, about this great and awful Matter of your Converſion and Salvation, if thoſe things were now before your Eyes, which certainly and ſhortly muſt be before them?

How rational and neceſſary is it for you now to ſuppoſe thoſe very things, as preſent before you, which you know to be near you, and a few Days or Hours will make preſent? Here let me make a few Suppoſitions, ſo rational, becauſe certainly future and near, that no wiſe Man will, or dare to ſlight them, as Fictions, or Chimera's.

1. *Suppoſition.* Suppoſe your ſelves now upon your Death-beds, your Heart and Breath failing, your Eye and Heart-ſtrings breaking, all earthly Comforts failing and ſhrinking from you; theſe things, you know, are unavoidable, and muſt ſhortly befal you, *Eccleſ.* 8. 8. Suppoſe alſo in theſe your laſt Extremities, your Conſciences ſhould awake (as probably they will, there being now no more Charms of Pleaſure, and ſinful Companions to divert or ſtupifie them) what a Caſe will you find your ſelves in! What a cold Sweat will then lie upon your panting Boſoms! What a pale Horror will appear in your Countenances? Will you not then wiſh, Oh that the time I have ſpent in Vanity, had been ſpent in the Duties of ſerious Piety! Oh that I had been as careful of my Soul, as I was of my Body! What are the Pains of Mortification, which I was ſo afraid of, to the Pains of Damnation, which I begin to ſcent and apprehend! I thought it hard to pray, mourn, and deny my ſelf, but I ſhall find it harder to grapple with the Wrath of an incenſed God to all Eternity.

2. *Suppoſition.* Suppoſe your ſelves now to be at the Judgment-Seat of God, where you know you muſt be immediately after Death; or that you did behold the Proceſs, and awful Solemnity of the General Judgment of the Great Day, both which Appearances are indiſputably ſure and certain, *Heb.* 9. 27. 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. Suppoſe you ſaw all *Adam*'s Poſterity there aſſembled and convened, even Multitudes, Multitudes, which no Man can number; all theſe ſeparated into two grand Diviſions; Chriſt the Supream and Final Judge upon the Judgment-Seat, the Chriſtleſs and Unregenerate World, quivering at the Bar, the laſt Sentence pronouncing on them, the Executioners ſtanding ready to take them away: Will you not then (think you) be ready to tear your ſelves with Indignation, for this your ſupine and ſottiſh Careleſneſs? A Voice from the Throne, like the Voice of a Trumpet, ſounds a loud Alarm to all Careleſs, Negligent, and Trifling Sinners; and this is the Voice, if you will not be in the ſame Caſe with the miſerable condemned World. Put to it heartily then, in the uſe of all means with God and Men, for Converting and Regenerating Grace *now*, which is the only thing that diffe-

rences your State from thoſe miſerable Wretches *then*.

3. *Suppoſition.* Suppoſe God did but give you a Fore-ſight, or Fore-taſte, in the Terrors of your Conſciences, of that Damnation you have jeſted at, and ſo often imprecated upon your ſelves; did you but lie one Night in that Plight poor *Spira*, and many others beſide him have done, with the Terrors of the Lord upon your Spirits, under Horror and Remorſe of Conſcience, which are the firſt Niblings and Bitings of that Worm that ſhall never die:

*———Tum pallida mens eſt,*
*Criminibus, tacitâ ſudant præcordia culpâ.*

Paleneſs and Horror, Fear and Trembling upon the outward and inward Man, whilſt God is making the immediate Impreſſions of his Wrath upon the Conſcience; ſeeming to want ſome one to let out that miſerable wretched Soul, that is weary to ſtay any longer in the Body, and yet afraid to be diſlodged, leſt its Condition be made worſe by the exchange; do you think you would ever imprecate Damnation any more? And yet all theſe Terrors and Horrors upon the Conſcience, are but as the Sweating of Marble-ſtones before the great Rain fall.

But what if God ſhould give you a Viſion of Hell it ſelf, and of the inconceivable and unexpreſſible Miſery of thoſe deſperate and forlorn Wretches, that lie there ſweltring and groaning under the heavy Preſſures of the Wrath of a great and terrible God, immediately and everlaſtingly tranſacted upon their Souls? Would you ever jeſt with Damnation any more, as with an harmleſs thing? Nay, would you not ſtrive to the uttermoſt to flee from this Wrath to come? Do you not ſeem to hear in this rational and juſt Suppoſition, a doleful Cry coming from Hell, and the State of the Damned, with this very Sound and Senſe; Good Souls, if ever you expect to be delivered from this State and Place of Torments, ſtrive to the utmoſt, ſtrive while you have Opportunity, ſtrive whilſt Breath and Strength do laſt, to flee from, and eſcape by a ſound Converſion, this doleful State of eternal Damnation.

4. *Suppoſition.* Laſtly, and in a Word: Suppoſe you had a Viſion of Heaven, as *Stephen* and *Paul* had in the Body; ſuppoſe you ſaw the Glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding at his Right-hand, ſurrounded with the triumphant Myriads of Palm-baring Saints, ſinging Hoſanna's and Allelujahs to God, and the Lamb for ever, and Bleſſing, Praiſing, and Admiring Him, that gave them another Spirit, vaſtly different from that which governs ſuch as you; Bleſſing the Lord that enabled them to be Praying and Praiſing, whilſt others were Curſing and Swearing; to be Sighing and Groaning for Sin in ſecret, whilſt others were Shouting and Singing, in Taverns and Alehouſes; to beat down their Bodies, and keep them under, whilſt others were pleaſing and gratifying their Luſts; would you ſtill drive that Courſe you do? Well, Sirs, if ever you expect to come where theſe Bleſſed Ones are, you muſt take the Courſe they did. Let this be your Endeavour, and it ſhall be my fervent and hearty Prayer.

# A
# Coronation-Sermon,
## Preached at
# DARTMOUTH.

### CANT. III. xi.

*Go forth ye Daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon, with the Crown wherewith his Mother Crowned him in the Day of his Eſpouſals, and in the Day of the Gladneſs of his Heart.*

A Crown is the Top of Earthly Glory, the Culminating Point of Humane Dignity. *Pſal.* 21. 2, 3. *Thou haſt given him his Heart's Deſire, thou haſt ſet a Crown of pure Gold upon his Head.* The Ambition of *the many*, moves in various *Spheres* below it, the Ambition of none aſpires above it ; except it be that *Anomalous Monſter*, the Man of Sin, who affects to ſit in the very Throne of God, and exalts himſelf above all that is called God, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 4.

When God puts a Crown upon the Head, and a Scepter into the Hand of a Man, he engraves upon that Man in a qualified Senſe, both his Name, and the lively Characters of his Majeſty and Authority, *Pſal.* 82. 6. *I have ſaid ye are Gods, and all of you the Children of the Moſt High* : But yet in all the Grants and Conveyances of Heaven, there is always a Reſervation and Salvo to the Divine Prerogative , to * diſplace it at pleaſure, and ſet it upon what Head he ſhall pleaſe, *Ezek.* 21.26. *Thus ſaith the Lord God, Remove the Diadem, and take off the Crown ; this ſhall not be the ſame, exalt him that is low, and abaſe him that is high.*

* *Deponit Reges, diſponit Regna.*

Tho' Dominion be not founded in Grace, yet Grace both embelliſhes and ſecures the Dominion of Men ; the Princes of the Earth owe Fealty and Homage to Jeſus Chriſt ; and had ſome of them been more ſubject to his Laws, their Kingdoms had flouriſhed , and their Government beeen more auſpicious.

*Pſal.* 2. 10, 11, 11, 12.

The Coronation-Day of a King, is, in a Sence, the Marriage-Day betwixt him and his People, and is accordingly ſolemnized with all the Signs and Demonſtrations of Joy and Gladneſs : *For the Shout of a King is among them.* Thus when the Crown of *Iſrael* was ſet upon the Head of *Solomon*, the Scripture repreſents their exuberant Joy in an elegant and lofty Hyperbole, 1 Kings 1. 40. *And all the People came up after him, and the People piped with Pipes, and rejoyced with great Joy, ſo that the Earth rent with the Sound of them.*

Carnal Men rejoyce carnally, and ſpiritual Men ſhould rejoyce ſpiritually. The moſt glorious Part of the Solemnity of ſuch a Day, conſiſts in,

1. Praiſes and Prayers for him that wears the Crown.
2. In a Spiritual Improvement of the Action to our ſelves.

1. In Praiſes and Prayers for the King whom God hath ſet over us : Your Prayers and Praiſes reflect more Glory upon the Crown, than all the Jewels and ſparkling Stones with which it ſhines ; and ſo I am perſwaded our King will account it, according to *Zech.* 12. 5. *The Governours of Judah ſhall ſay in their Hearts, The Inhabitants of Jeruſalem ſhall be my ſtrength, in the Lord of Hoſts their God.*

Praiſe thy God, O *England* ! for ſetting thy Crown this Day upon the Head of a Proteſtant Prince, who accounted not his Treaſures, or Blood, dear unto him, to redeem the Intereſt of Chriſt out of the Dangers that were ready to ſwallow it up.

Pray fervently for your King this Day ; the Concernments of the People of God are ſo great in him, as that they exact from all the Saints the uttermoſt Importunity in Prayer :

(1.) That God would cleanſe and waſh the Crown of *England*, from all that Guilt and Pollution it hath contracted under former Governments, that the Sins of the Crown may not deſcend with it.

(2.) That the Royal Head on which it ſhall be ſet this Day, may be filled with the Wiſdom of God, and match'd with an holy Heart, inflamed with Love to God, and Zeal for his Glory.

(3.) That as ſoon as Men have ſet the Crown upon his Head, he may chearfully take it off again, and caſt it at the Feet of Jeſus Chriſt, as the Twenty-four Elders did, *Rev.* 4. 10. *And the Twenty-four Elders fell down before him that ſat on the Throne, and worſhipped him that liveth for ever and ever; and caſt their Crowns before the Throne,* &c.

(4.) That God would make the Crown ſit eaſie and long upon his Royal Head. *Eaſie*, becauſe Crowns are uſually lined with thorny Cares; and *Long*, for the Church's Peace and Tranquility.

(2*dly*,) The next thing belonging to the due Solemnity of this Day, will be the Spiritual Improvement, of the whole Scene of Actions, to your own Inſtruction, and Spiritual Advantage; and this will be much more glorious than all the Triumphant Arches, Royal Robes, Thundering Guns, and Loud Acclamations of the People. To this purpoſe, I have choſen this Text, for the Direction, and Spiritualizing of the Duties of the Day. *Go forth ye Daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon, with the Crown wherewith his Mother crowned him, in the Day of his Eſpouſals, and in the Day of the Gladneſs of his Heart.*

This Book of the *Canticles*, is a Spiritual *Epithalamium*, ſung in Parts, betwixt the Heavenly *Bridegroom*, and the *Bride*. The Matter of it is moſt ſpiritual and weighty, the Stile of it rapturous and lofty; the intimate Union and Communion of Chriſt and the Church, is elegantly illuſtrated in an *Allegory* of Marriage; but nothing is found here light or obſcene:

——*Procul hinc, procul eſte profani.*
*Nil hic niſi caſtum.*

'Tis a Chryſtal Stream of pure Spiritual Love, ſliding ſweetly betwixt two pleaſant Banks, Chriſt and the Church.

In the Ninth and Tenth Verſe, you have the Deſcription of a *Triumphant Chariot*, prepared by King *Solomon* for the Daughters of *Jeruſalem*: *The Pillars thereof of Silver, the Bottom of Gold, the Covering of Purple, and the Midſt thereof paved with Love.* A Chariot is an Inſtrument framed for eaſie, ſafe, and honourable Conveyance. This Chariot is the Covenant of Grace fitted by Chriſt, for the ſafe and honourable tranſporting of his Bride, the Church, through this World, to her ſtately Pavilion, or glorious Manſion, in the higheſt Heavens.

But how ſtately and magnificent ſoever this Royal Chariot be, he that contrived and fram'd it, is much more glorious to behold; and therefore in the next Words, which are my Text, Believers are ſummoned and invited, to behold and contemplate Chriſt that fram'd it: *Go forth ye Daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with his Crown,* &c. In which Words we have,

1. The Spectators ſummoned or invited.
2. The Spectacle they are invited to ſee.

1. The Spectators invited, *The Daughters of Zion.* By *Zion* underſtand the Church; and by the Daughters of *Zion*, the Members of the Church, or every particular Believer. Theſe are here invited or ſummoned to go forth, *i. e.* of their entangling, diverting Temptations; and to behold, *viz.* by the Eye of Faith, this moſt glorious and heart-raviſhing Object.

2. The Spectacle they are invited to behold and contemplate, *King Solomon with his Crown,* &c. The moſt illuſtrious, glorious, and raviſhing Sight that ever the Eyes of Men did, or ſhall behold. By King *Solomon*, underſtand Chriſt, of whom *Solomon* in this Book is the Figure or Shadow; yet one to whom *Solomon*, in all his Glory, was but as a depainted Sun on a Sign-poſt, to the Sun in the Mid-heavens, ſhining in all his Glory.

And by his *Crown*, underſtand not any material *Crown*, as that of *Solomon*'s was; but the Glory and Honour that is put upon Chriſt the King of *Zion*; of which Glory, a Crown is the *Emblem*.

What Crown is here meant, *Interpreters* are not all agreed about it. Some would have it to be underſtood of our *Human Nature*, which he was Crowned withal by his Mother *Mary*, of whom he took it; but tho' his Aſſumption of our Nature put ſuch a Crown of Glory upon it as it never had before, yet it was rather an obſcuring of Chriſt's Glory, than any addition of Glory to him.

Others interpret it of the *Crown of Thorns*, with which his Mother, the *Jewiſh* Church, or Synagogue, Crowned him in the Day of his Paſſion at *Jeruſalem*; but this ſeems to be as hard and foreign a Senſe as the former.

The moſt Judicious *Expoſitors* are agreed in a third Sence, *viz.* That by the Crown on Chriſt's Head, we are to underſtand that Glory and Honour which Believers give unto, or put upon Chriſt, when in the Day of their Eſpouſals to him by Faith, renouncing Satan, Sin, and all that had exerciſed Dominion over them before, with all truſt and dependance on any Righteouſneſs of their own, they give their deliberate, full, and hearty Conſent, That Chriſt alone ſhall Reign over them for ever and ever, ſaying, *The Lord is our King, the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver.* Chriſt is *the Lord our Righteouſneſs*, and in all things we will obey him. This Chriſt eſteems as a Crown of Glory put upon his Head, in the Day of his Eſpouſals, and in the Day of the Gladneſs of his Heart. There is no ſuch Honour, no ſuch Pleaſure a poor Sinner can give to Chriſt, as to believe in him; this is as the putting of a Crown of Glory upon his Head. 'Tis true, it adds no Glory to him, but it is the greateſt Manifeſtation of his Glory, we are capable to make.

Object. *But then it will be objected, in what Sence Believers can be tolerably ſtiled his Mother? For the Text tells us, it was the Crown his* Mother *put upon him.*

*Anſw.* They may be ſo ſtiled in a double reſpect.

(1.) Becauſe Chriſt is formed in every Believer, he in a Spiritual Sence conceived and formed in their Souls, as the Child is formed in its Mother's Womb; ſo the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Gal.* 4. 19. *My little Children, of whom I travail again in Birth, till Chriſt be formed in you.*

(2.) In reſpect of the dear Affection Chriſt bears to every Soul that believeth in him: No Man loves his Brother, Siſter, or Mother, as Chriſt eſteems and loves Believers, *Mark* 3. 34. When he was told, his Mother, and Brethren were without, ſeeking him, he ſaid, *Behold my Mother, and my Brethren: For whoſoever ſhall do the Will of God, the ſame is my Brother, and Siſter, and Mother.* The Day of a Sinner's Conſent to come under Chriſt's Government, is the Day of Eſpouſals, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. And the Day of a Sinner's

Eſpouſals to Chriſt, is the Day of the Gladneſs of his Heart, *Luke* 15. 32. Thus you have the Parts and Sence of the Text. The Point from it is this:

Doct. *That the Day of a Believer's Eſpouſals to Chriſt by Faith, is to Chriſt as the Day of a King's Coronation is to him, even the Day of the Gladneſs of his Heart.*

'Tis very remarkable, what we find in *Luke* 10. 21. where the Spirit hath carefully recorded one Hour of Joy in the Life of Chriſt, for he had not many, being a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief. *In that Hour, Jeſus rejoyced in Spirit*, ſaith the Text; And what Hour was that? Why, it was the ſame Hour in which the Seventy returned with theſe joyful Tidings to him, *Lord, even the Devils are ſubject to us through thy Name*, *ver.* 17. The Hour when Chriſt ſaw *Satan falling as Lightning from Heaven*, ver. 18. His Kingdom tottering, his Forces routed by the Goſpel, his Subjects running away to Chriſt, from under his cruel Bondage, and made willing to come under his Government; *In that Hour Jeſus rejoiced in Spirit.* This was joyful News to Chriſt, it was the Day of the Gladneſs of his Heart. He had now got a new Throne in the Souls of poor Sinners, over whom the Devil and Sin had reigned; this was as a Crown of Glory to Chriſt.

In opening this Point, I ſhall diſcourſe theſe Three Things:

(1.) In what reſpect a Sinner's Eſpouſals to Chriſt, reſembles the Day of a King's Coronation, over his Subjects.

(2.) Wherein theſe two Days differ each from other.

(3.) On what Accounts it is the Day of the Gladneſs of Chriſt's Heart, as the Text calls it. And then apply it.

Let me ſhew the Reſemblances and Agreements which are betwixt the Day of a King's Coronation, and the Day of a Sinner's Eſpouſals to Chriſt by Faith: And this will appear in ſix Reſpects.

(1.) A King that is duly Crowned over his Subjects, hath a lawful Right to govern them, either by *Lineal Deſcent*, *Conqueſt*, or *Compact*. *Solomon* had his Right and Title to the Kingdom by Deſcent from his Royal Father *David*, who by his Laſt Will and Teſtament, conſtituted and appointed him to be his immediate Succeſſor upon the Throne of *Iſrael*, 1 *Kings* 1. 35. The *Roman Cæſar*'s Title to that Kingdom was by Conqueſt, and this Title was legitimated not only by the Jews acknowledgment of it, but alſo by Chriſt's expreſs owning it, and ſubmiſſion to it. The People ſaid, *We have no King but Cæſar*, John 19. 15. and Chriſt owned it, *Luke* 20. 25. when he payed Tribute, ſaying, *Give unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's.* But *David* had his Title by *Compact* with, and voluntary Election of the People; *Abner* confers with the *Elders of Iſrael* about it, and they meet *David* at *Hebron*, and there chuſe him King in the room of *Saul*, 2 *Sam.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. and that in conſideration of the eminent Service he had performed for that Kingdom, in delivering them from their mortal Enemies the *Philiſtines*, Enemies to their Religion, and Civil Liberties; and certainly the Crown of *Iſrael* was not a Reward above the Merit of ſuch a performance. *Then came all the Tribes of Iſrael to David unto Hebron, and ſaid, Behold, we are thy Bone, and thy Fleſh. Alſo in time paſt, when Saul was King over us, thou waſt he that leddeſt out, and broughteſt in Iſrael: And the Lord ſaid to thee, Thou ſhalt feed my People Iſrael, and thou ſhalt be a Captain over Iſrael. So all the Elders of Iſrael came to the King to Hebron, and King David made a League with them in Hebron before the Lord: And they anointed David King over Iſrael.*

But Chriſt hath Right to Reign over our Souls, by all theſe Titles and Claims; the Throne of our Souls is by his Father's Conſtitution and Decree, *Pſal.* 2. 6. *Yet have I ſet my King upon my holy Hill of Zion*; by *Conqueſt*, for he wins it by the Sword of his Spirit, before he poſſeſſeth it. 2 *Cor.* 10. 4, 5. he caſts down by Spiritual Weapons all that oppoſeth, and brings every Thought into Obedience to him. And he hath Right alſo by *Conſent* and *Compact*, Pſalm 110. 3. *The People ſhall be willing in the Day of thy Power.* Of which more anon.

(2.) On the Coronation-Day, Kings appear in all their Royal Robes, glittering Jewels, and all the Luſtre that can be put upon them; they ſhine in the Eyes of the People more glorioully than all that are about them. *Velut luna, inter minora ſidera*: There's none like him in the Beauty of his Ornaments. Much more doth Chriſt excel all others in Beauty and Glory, to the Eyes of thoſe that chuſe him for their Lord and King, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. *To you that believe, he is precious*, Ἡ τιμὴ, Honour it ſelf, *Col.* 1. 17. *He is before all things*; not only in Time, or in Order, but in real Dignity, and ſolid Glory, and Excellency. So his Spouſe pronounceth him, *Pſal.* 45. 2. *Thou art fairer than the Children of Men, Grace is poured into thy lips.* And *Cant.* 5. 10. *My Beloved is white and ruddy; the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.* Examine and mark all the Creatures in both Worlds, Angels, and Men; and they bear no more proportion to Chriſt in Glory, than a Glow-worm to the Sun.

(3.) On the Coronation-Day, the Conſent of the People is demanded and given. Conſent was demanded by *Abner* in the behalf of *David*, 2 Sam. 3. 17, 18. and freely given by them, in order to *David*'s Coronation, 2 *Sam.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. Thus at the Coronation of our Kings, the Conſent of the Nobles and Commonalty is demanded on the Publick Theatre, in theſe words:

'I Here preſent you ſuch an one, ( naming 'the King ) the rightful Inheritor of the 'Crown of this Realm: Are you willing to do 'your Homage, Service, and do bounden Duty 'to him?

And they ſay,

'WE are willing; or ſignifie they are ſo, by 'their loud and joyful Acclamations.

So it is when Chriſt is Crowned King over the Soul. His Right is aſſerted, and their Conſent demanded by his Ambaſſadors; the Believer maniſeſts his hearty Conſent, *Pſal.* 110. 3. *Thy People ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* And over all that are made truly willing to receive him, he reigns, and inveſts them all with the Priviledges of his Kingdom, *John* 1. 12. The Unbeliever is not

willing to come under Chriſt's Government, *John* 5. 4. *You will not come to me,* &c. and the iſſue of their unwillingneſs, is their eternal ruin, *Luke* 19. 27. *But thoſe mine Enemies that would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring them hither, and ſlay them before me.* Now, to make a Soul truly willing to accept Chriſt's Government, and give his Conſent to him, four things muſt be done upon, and by ſuch a Soul. (1.) He muſt be convinced of his Sin and Miſery: No Man will be willing to change his Lord, whilſt he finds no Matter of Complaint. (2.) He muſt know, and deliberate upon the Terms of Chriſt; for an ignorant Perſon cannot be ſaid to conſent. *Non conſentit qui non ſentit.* Chriſt will have all the World to know his Terms, and will not hide the worſt and hardeſt things from them, whether they like them or not. No Man ſhall ſay afterwards, I was ſurprized, or impoſed upon; had I known this, I had never conſented to be a Chriſtian. Therefore the hardeſt Terms of Chriſtianity are plainly propounded, *Luke* 14. 26. and that to cut off all after Pleas and Pretences for reſiling from Chriſt, *John* 16. 1. *Theſe things have I ſpoken to you, that ye ſhould not be offended in me.* (3.) Upon Deliberation; there muſt appear to the Soul that chuſeth Chriſt, and conſents to his Government, a preponderating Good; that Chriſt with all his Reproaches and Sufferings, is better than Sin with all its Honours and Pleaſures. No Man will change for no advantage, much leſs to his loſs. Thus *Moſes* ſaw more Glory and Excellency in the very Reproaches of Chriſt, than in all the Treaſures of *Egypt*, or Pleaſures of Sin, *Heb.* 11. 25, 26. O! ſaith the Soul, tho' there be hard and bitter Sufferings in the way of Godlineſs, yet 'tis infinitely better for me to endure them for Chriſt, than to be damned. And upon ballancing the Gains and Loſſes, the Conveniences, and the Inconveniences of Chriſtianity, the Odds appears ſo great, that the Soul pronounceth, they are not worthy to be compared, *Rom.* 8. 18. (4.) When all is done, there muſt be a Divine Almighty Influence upon the Will, without which Men will never heartily conſent to Chriſt's Terms. *No Man* (ſaith Chriſt) *can come unto me, except my Father, which hath ſent me, draw him,* John 6. 44. This Influence of God upon the Will, is in a way ſuitable to its Nature, *Hoſea* 11. 4. and produceth a Conſent without Co-action. If the Lord ſhew any Man the infinite Advantages that come, and accrue to his Soul by Chriſt, this very diſcovery doth, as it were, compel that Man to come into Chriſt, as that Expreſſion is uſed, *Luke* 14. 23. a Scripture vilely abuſed in our times. Chriſt compels none into his Kingdom, as the *Spaniards* did the poor *Indians* to Baptiſm; or as others have been compelled to the Lord's Table. He will Reign over a willing People, or not Reign at all.

(4.) On the Coronation-Day, a Champion appears on the King's behalf, to challenge any that ſhall deny his Right, or by Allurements, or Threatnings, attempt to draw his Subjects from their Duty and Allegiance; he throws down the Gantlet, and defies the proudeſt Enemy the King hath.

So when Chriſt is Crowned King over the Souls of his People, there is a publick Defiance bid, a formal Challenge given to all the Enemies of Chriſt and his People, as you may read at large, *Rom.* 8. 33, 34, 35. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth? Who ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of Chriſt?* Devils and Men are defied to do their worſt. Chriſt muſt Reign 'till all his Enemies be put under his Feet. Sin ſhall not have Dominion over his People; for they are not under the Law, but under Grace. Come *Gebal*, *Amon*, and *Amaleck*, come Satan and all his Infernal Powers; they are all defied in the Name of Chriſt; Believers are his own Subjects, and none ſhall pluck them out of his hand.

(5.) At or about the Coronation-Day, an Act of Indempnity, Pardon, and Oblivion is paſt, and publiſhed, pardoning the Offences the Subjects had committed unto that Day.

Thus it is at the Day of Chriſt's Coronation over the Believer's Souls, and its Eſpouſals to him by Faith; all his Sins are pardoned, new and old, great and ſmall; and of this, Proclamation is openly made in the Goſpel, *Acts* 10. 43. *To him give all the Prophets witneſs, That through his Name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins.* O glorious Pardon! free without purchaſe, full without exception, and final without revocation. Now there's a Goal-delivery, the Priſon-doors are open, Liberty proclaimed to the Captives, *Iſa.* 61. 1, 2. The King of *Sion* is a merciful King, and his Subjects ſhall find him ſo; they have gladded his Heart, by accepting his Government, and he will glad theirs by his Pardons; the Son hath made them free, and they are free indeed.

(6.) In a word, a Coronation-Day is a Day of Gladneſs, a Day of Joy and Triumph: Joy diſplays it ſelf in the Faces of all Loyal Subjects; thoſe only that had rather be under another Government, hang the Head, and bite the Lip.

So 'tis here, all that are Loyal Subjects to Jeſus Chriſt, rejoyce exceedingly in his Government; and it muſt needs be ſo, becauſe his Kingdom conſiſts in Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, *Rom.* 14. 17. when *Zacheus* came under this King, he came down joyfully, *Luke* 19. 6, 9. When the Eunuch received him for his Lord and King, he went home rejoycing, *Act.* 8. 39. When *Samaria* ſubmitted to his Scepter, there was great Joy in that City, *Acts* 8. 5, 6. and let the Joy be what it will, the Cauſes of Joy are greater than the Joy it ſelf. But thoſe that belong to Satan's Kingdom, that love to be under the Dominion of Sin, and hate the Strictneſs and Severities of Religion, theſe are the only Male contents, theſe fret to ſee Chriſt's Kingdom enlarged, and ſecretly plot to deſtroy it. Thus we ſee the Agreement betwixt the Day of a King's Coronation over his Subjects, and Chriſt's Coronation over Believers.

But tho' they harmonize in theſe Particulars, and divers others that may be named; yet,

*2dly*, There are as many remarkable Differences and Diſagreements betwixt them, but none to the Believer's loſs or diſadvantage, for they all fall on his ſide; as, *ex gr.*

(1.) 'Tis not the Priviledge of every Subject; no, nor of one among many thouſands, to ſee the King who is Crowned over them, to hear his Voice, or give their explicit Conſent in his Preſence. But every Subject in Chriſt's Kingdom, doth ſee Chriſt by the Eye of Faith. *John* 6. 40.

*He that ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him.* Seeing, and believing, are Terms convertible ; they do all hear his Voice, and give their explicit Conſent to take him for their King. Union with Chriſt is not a work to be done by a *Proxy*, or *Repreſentative*, but it is the Reſult of a ſolemn Debate betwixt Chriſt and the Soul.

(2.) Kings are Crowned over many that love them not, but are fill'd with prejudice againſt their Perſons and Government.

But it cannot be ſo in the Kingdom of Chriſt ; *To them that believe, he is precious*, 1 Pet. 2. 7. all Chriſt's Subjects love him above Father or Mother, Wiſe or Children ; yea, above their own Lives, otherwiſe they cannot be his Subjects, *Luk.* 14. 26. They alſo delight in his Government, and nothing would be more pleaſant to their Souls, than to find every Thought of their Heart brought into Subjection to him, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4, 5. They dare not confederate with his Enemies, and will chuſe rather to die than forſake him ; they will eſteem it a glorious thing, tho' their Right-arm ſhould be ſevered from their Shoulder-blade, for their regular Endeavours to defend and ſupport the Crown upon the Head of their Royal Maſter.

(3.) The relation betwixt a King and his Subjects, may, and muſt be diſſolved by Death. Death fears not to arreſt the moſt potent Monarch upon his Throne, and tranſlate his Crown to another Head.

But our King, Chriſt, lives for ever, Death hath no Dominion over him ; his Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom, and his Dominion that which ſhall have no end, *Dan.* 7. 13, 14. Death is ſo far from ſeparating Chriſt and his Subjects, that it brings them nearer together than ever they were before ; it brings them into his immediate Preſence, to his Facial Viſion, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. and fixes them there for ever, 1 *Theſ.* 4 17.

(4.) Kings may degenerate into Tyrants, and Subjects into Rebels ; they may undermine the Laws, Liberties, and Religion of their People. They that Rule over the People, may make them to howl, *Iſa.* 52. 5. the World is too full of ſuch Inſtances and Examples. But Chriſt can never oppreſs his Subjects, the *Scepter of his Kingdom is a right Scepter*, Pſal. 45. 6. *His Yoke is eaſie, and his Burden is light*, Mat. 11. 29. and his true Subjects can never ſhake off their Allegiance to him, they will rather die than do it.

(5.) Kings will not permit their greateſt Favourites to ſit in their Thrones ; 'tis their peculiar Honour, and not communicable to any, *Gen.* 41. 40. *Only in the Throne I will be greater than thou*, ſaid *Pharaoh* to his *Joſeph*.

But Chriſt permits and appoints all his Subjects to ſit with him upon his Throne, *Rev.* 3. 21. the Glory which God gave him, he hath given to them, *John* 17. 22. What King is like Chriſt ?

(6.) To conclude : The Joy and Triumph at a King's Coronation, is only among Men, in this lower World ; but the Joy and Triumph at Chriſt's Coronation, is among Angels in Heaven, *Luke* 15. 7. The City of God holds a ſolemn Triumph at the Converſion of a particular Sinner. What are the Shouts of Men, to the Jubilations of Angels ?

Thus you have ſix Particulars wherein they agree, and as many in which they differ.

We come, in the next place, to enquire into,

*3dly*, The Reaſons why Chriſt's Coronation over Believers, is the Day of the Gladneſs of his Heart : And it muſt be ſo,

(1.) Becauſe it is Chriſt's Marriage-Day, at leaſt the Day of his Eſpouſals ; and the Day of Marriage, or Eſpouſals, is a Day of Joy and Gladneſs. Chriſt hath now a new Spouſe, a Soul in which he never dwelt before ; and *as a Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, ſo doth Chriſt over Believers*, Iſa. 62. 5. here is a new Relation entred, and that with the King of Kings, the Angels of God rejoyce exceedingly in it, but much more Chriſt the bleſſed Bridegroom.

(2.) 'Tis Chriſt's Day of Conqueſt, and Victory over Satan ; the Day in which he hath depoſed him from his Throne, *Mat.* 12. 29. delivered a Soul of invaluable worth in his Eyes, out of the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlated it into his own Kingdom, *Col.* 1. 13. And the Day of Conqueſt is a Day of extraordinary Joy and Triumph. *Iſa.* 9. 3.

(3.) 'Tis the Day in which he receives the Fruit and Reward of his bloody Travels, and bitter Agonies ; there is now a Son or Daughter born to God, an Heir born to the Heavenly Inheritance. Now 'tis moſt pleaſant and joyful to Jeſus Chriſt, to ſee of the Travel of his Soul, *Iſa.* 53. 11. no Satisfaction in this World comparable to it. When a young Heir is born to the Kingdom and Crown of Heaven, it deſerves a Triumph.

(4.) 'Tis the Day in which Chriſt finds a Soul that was loſt, *Luke* 15. 5, 6. What Joy was it to the Father of the Prodigal, when he had found his loſt Son? *Luke* 15, 20. there was Mirth and Muſick, Feaſting and Rejoycing ; *This my Son was loſt, and is found ; was dead, and is alive.*

Poor Sinners are loſt Creatures by Nature, they have loſt their God, and therein themſelves too. God hath loſt, and the Devil found every Unregenerate Sinner ; all Strayers from God fall to his ſhare ; but this loſs is not irrecoverable ; the Errand and End for which Chriſt came into the World, was to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt, *Mat.* 18. 11. And when the Sinner that was loſt, comes home to him by Repentance and Faith, he obtains the End of his Incarnation, Life and Death, upon that Soul, which cannot but be the Day of the Gladneſs of his Heart.

If then the Day of King's Eſpouſals, or Marriage, be a Day of Joy and Gladneſs to his Soul : If a Day of Conqueſt, and dividing the Spoils, be a Day of Joy to the Conqueror, after a ſharp and bloody Fight. If it be a Joy to a Mother after long and ſore Travail, to embrace in her Arms, and kiſs the Child for whom ſhe endured ſo many bitter Throws ; if it be a Joy to a Father to find and recover a Child that was loſt, and as dead to him : In a word ; If it be high delight and ſatisfaction to ſee a great Deſign, on which the Heart is intently ſet, brought at laſt by orderly Conduct, to the deſired happy Iſſue ; then let us allow the Day of a Sinners coming into Chriſt by Converſion, to be as a Coronation-Day to a King, the Day of his Eſpouſals, and of the Gladneſs of his Heart.

*Uſe* I. This Point, like a fruitful Root, ſends forth many Branches, and all loaden with diverſity of Fruits. The firſt is for Information, in ſeveral Inferences from it.

Inſer. 1.

Infer. 1. *Be informed from hence what is the true Cauſe and Reaſon of Satan's Rage and Spite againſt the Goſpel, and the moſt painful, able, and ſucceſsful Preachers of it in the World.* The great Deſign of the Goſpel, and of all that ſincerely preach it, is to win and perſwade Satan's Subjects to forſake his cruel, unjuſt, and tyrannical Government, and ſubmit to the Kingdom and Scepter of the Lord Jeſus. What is the Preaching of the Goſpel, but the ſounding of a Trumpet in the Devil's Kingdom, to win his Subjects from their Allegiance to him; to proclaim another King in his Territories? Every faithful Miniſter's Buſineſs, is, to gather theſe wretched Vaſſals of Satan together, and ſet before them the miſerable Captivity and Bondage they are in under that Tyrant that rules over them, whoſe Laws, like *Draco*'s, are written in the Blood of their Souls, to exaggerate their Sin and Miſery, and to let them know how willing Chriſt is to receive and ſave them, if they will renounce and abandon Satan's Government. To ſet before them the bleſſed Freedom, and glorious Privileges of the Subjects of Chriſt. To beſeech and perſwade them to break away from their old cruel Maſter, and come over to Chriſt, to anſwer all their Pleas and Objections againſt it, and to denounce the Wrath of God againſt all the Refuſers of Chriſt's gracious Proclamation. Now Satan is not ignorant of all this; he eſteems the loſs of one, much more the Revolt of many, a greater miſchief than a King reckons the loſs of a Kingdom, and to ſee them break away ſo faſt from him, and be liſted to fight againſt him: Oh how it grates that envious Spirit, and ſharpens his Malice againſt the Inſtruments and Agents in this Work! 'This, as a late Worthy ſpeaks, torments 'the foul Spirit, to ſee himſelf forſaken 'of his old Friends and Servants, and 'this new Lord to come and take away 'his Subjects from him. Hence comes 'Perſecutions, Slanders, *&c.* In Showers, upon 'Chriſt's faithful Miniſters. He knows his Kingdom of Darkneſs muſt vaniſh, as the Light of the Goſpel riſes and ſpreads it ſelf. You read, *Rev.* 14, 6, 7. *Of an Angel fleeing in the midſt of Heaven, having the everlaſting Goſpel to preach to them that dwell on the Earth.* And in *ver.* 8. you have another Angel following him, ſaying, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great City.* No ſooner is the two-edged Sword of the Goſpel drawn, but the next Voice is Victory, Victory. He knows every Home-charge made by the Goſpel, will iſſue in a Rout of his Infernal Legions. Now Miniſters coming forth againſt him as Heralds, to proclaim Chriſt's Right, and as Captains of the Army of Chriſt their General; he owes them a particular Grudge, and ſeeks every way to ſtop their Mouths, and deſtroy their Perſons. And ſurely he hath puſhed hard at them, and made deſperate Attempts againſt them in our Days; no doubt but it was reckon'd a great Service done him, to ſhut up the Mouths of ſo many at once; but the time draws nigh, that *Babylon* muſt fall; and thoſe that could not lately ſhew their Faces on Earth, muſt fly in the midſt of Heaven, with the everlaſting Goſpel. The dead Witneſſes of Chriſt, ſhall hear ſhortly a great Voice from Heaven, ſaying, *Come up hither*; and they ſhall aſcend in a Cloud, their Enemies beholding, but not able any more to hinder them.

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Infer. 2. *How cauſleſs and altogether groundleſs are the Diſcouragements and Fears of humbled and convinced Sinners, That Jeſus Chriſt will reject them, and ſhut the Door of Mercy againſt them, if they ſhould go to him, and caſt their poor ſinful Souls upon him by Faith?*

Certainly ſuch Perſons fear, where no fear is. That which is the Command of Chriſt, the earneſt Deſire of his Soul, that Act which makes his Heart glad, as the Text ſpeaks, can never meet with ſuch a Repulſe as you fear. Was ever any King unwilling to have the Crown ſet upon his Head? Do they uſe to frown upon their Subjects that are upon the Knee, tender their Homage and Allegiance to them? No, no, 'tis the Day of the Gladneſs of their Hearts. Renounce thy old Maſter Satan, give a Bill of Divorce to thoſe Luſts which have reigned over thy Soul; ponder well Chriſt's Terms, and heartily conſent to them, and try whether he will not quickly confute theſe vain Fears of thine, and fully make good his gracious, ſweet, and moſt encouraging Word, *John* 6. 37. *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* A ſweet Encouragement to a Coming-ſoul; and becauſe Sence of Guilt and Unworthineſs uſually doubles their Fears, Christ hath cauſed a double Negative to be put into that Text, on purpoſe to obviate their Fears and Diſcouragements, *οὐ μὴ ἐκϐαλω ἔξω*: I will not, no, I will not; or as we render, I will in no wiſe caſt him out. Acts of Delight flow freely and eaſily, and ſo doth this.

Infer. 3. *What an high and honourable Relation doth Faith bring the Soul of a Sinner into! The Day of Converſion, is the Day of that Soul's Eſpouſals to Chriſt.*

A King from Heaven makes Suit for a poor Sinner's Heart, woo's for Union with ſinful Creatures; rejoyces exceedingly when he wins their Conſent; and eſpouſes them for ever to himſelf, when he obtains it; for *Contractus* is nothing elſe, but *Conſenſus explicatus*; a Contract is Conſent explained, in affirmative plain words, *de preſenti.* I do diſclaim, and for ever renounce all others, and willingly yield up my Heart and Life to Jeſus Chriſt. Now *Ex contractu oritur vinculum*, an Obligation reſults from this Contract with Chriſt; and a moſt honourable Myſtical Union with him. *He that is joyned to the Lord, is one Spirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. The greateſt Honour that was ever put upon the Humane Nature, was by its Aſſumption into Union with the Son of God *Hypoſtatically*; and the greateſt Honour that can be done to our Perſons, is by our Union with Chriſt *Myſtically*; hereby we become *Members of his Body, of his Fleſh, and of his Bones*, Eph. 5. 30. the Spouſe of Chriſt: Oh what a Preferment is this! What Soul feels not it ſelf lifted up far above all earthly Honours, in ſuch a relation to Chriſt as this? The *Nobles* and *Barons* of the Kingdom, think it a Preferment to ſerve the *Queen*; and the *Angels* of Heaven do not think themſelves degraded by performing Service to the *Bride*, the *Lamb's Wife.* Well might Great *Conſtantine* prefer the Honour of being a Member of the Church, to that of being Head of an Empire.

Let all the Saints underſtand their Dignity and Privileges, by this their honourable Union with Chriſt; and with it, let them ballance all the Reproaches, Scorns, and Contempts, this vile World loads them with for his ſake.

Infer. 4. *Be informed hence of the dreadful and damning Nature of the Sin of Unbelief; a Sin that queſtions, yea denies Chriſt's Right to rule over the Soul; blinds the Mind, hardens the Heart, ſtiffens the Will, and makes the Soul obſtinate and inflexible to all the gracious Tenders of Chriſt in the Goſpel.*

Unbelief is the poyſonous Breath of Satan, whiſpering Jealouſies, Surmizes, and dangerous Prejudices againſt Chriſt into the Ear of the Soul, and all tending to this miſchievous Deſign and Purpoſe, *viz.* to hinder or break the Treaty of the Spiritual Marriage betwixt Chriſt and the Soul. Now 'twill be digging at the very Root and Foundation of the aſſenting Act; and thus it whiſpers, How canſt thou be ſure of the reality of the things reported in the Goſpel? Is it not poſſible they may be deviſed Fables? the cunning Artifices of Men to keep the World in awe? Thou never ſaweſt Chriſt, for whoſe ſake thou art ſo earneſtly ſollicited to renounce all thy real ſweet and preſent Comforts and Enjoyments. Then it dilates rhetorically upon the ſevere Terms of the Goſpel, adviſes the Soul to think ſadly, how hard, grievous, and unreaſonable the Demands of Chriſt be, *Luke* 14 26. *If any Man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Siſters; yea, and his own Life alſo, he cannot be my Diſciple.* How likeſt thou this, Soul? Here be all thy principal Comforts, thy moſt dear and deſirable Things in the World, both perſonal and relative, to be forſaken, yea, hated for Chriſt's ſake; the Terms are ſet ſo high, that a Man muſt loſe his Brains and Bowels too, ſaith Unbelief, before he can be wrought up to them. Canſt thou endure to ſee all the Labours of thy Life to become a Prey to thine Enemies? That which hath coſt thee ſo much Study and Toyl, ſcattered and deſtroyed in a Day, when it is yet in the Power of thine Hand to ſave all; thy Habitation to caſt thee out, thy pleaſant Fields poſſeſt by Strangers: *Impius has ſegetes*; Haſt thou Hardineſs enough to encounter Beggery? To fight with Hunger, Thirſt, and Nakedneſs? To lie in a naſty Goal, to endure a Parting-pull with neareſt Relatives, which are as thine own Soul? But yet there are harder Trials than theſe: Canſt thou endure a tormenting Death, by cruel barbarous Enemies? Canſt thou ſtand quietly at a Stake, and endure the exquiſite Torments of the Fire, and that in the fulneſs of thy time, whilſt thou art in the Flower of thine Age, Fulneſs of thy Senſes, and haſt ſo fair a Proſpect of many pleaſant Years before thee; and all this for an unſeen Glory in another World? Theſe are the feeling Arguments urged by Infidelity, againſt embracing Chriſt's Overtures in the Goſpel, or coming under the Scepter of this new Lord; And with how many do they prevail! Thus Satan fixes his Subjects, and makes them ſecure to himſelf.

But Sinner, if God have any Intention of Saving-Mercy to thy Soul, thou ſhalt feel the more potent Principles of Divine Faith and Love, overpowering and ſubacting theſe carnal Reaſonings within thy Soul. 'Tis admirable to behold the Almighty Influences of Grace upon Nature. How the Drawings of the Spirit, his Omnipotent-pull at the Heart, makes the ſtrongeſt Ties this World hath upon it, to give way, and eaſily to loſe, *Mark* 10. 28. *Lord, we have left all, and followed thee.* If not, but thou be fixedly reſolved not to change Satan's Government for Chriſt's; if thou ſay in thy Heart, and ſtand to that ſaying, I will never conſent to ſuch hard Conditions; then hear thy Sentence, read thy *Mittimus*, Luke 19. 27. *But thoſe mine Enemies, that would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me.* The Sentence is dreadful, the Execution ſure; thy Unbelief will as ſurely damn thee, as a Millſtone about thy Neck, in the midſt of the Sea will drown thee, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth not, ſhall be damned*; thou haſt caſt the vileſt Diſhonour upon Chriſt, thou haſt rejected the only way of Salvation; And what can the iſſue of thy final Unbelief be, but ruin and deſtruction?

*Uſe* II. My next Work will be perſwaſive Work, to gain the Conſent of the Souls to come under the Scepter and Government of Chriſt; to make his heart glad, and your ſelves happy for ever by your Eſpouſals to him. And Oh that I could this Day ſo repreſent this King in his Glory, ſo diſcover the miſerable Thraldom you are in under Satan, and your Luſts; ſo clear up the Reaſonableneſs and Eaſineſs of Chriſt's Terms and Demands, that there might be as chearſul and hearty (tho' not ſo loud and audible) an Applauſe, and Acclamations returned to my demand of your conſent to Chriſt, as this Day is, or ever was at the Coronation of any King.

1. And to this end, firſt conſider the Glory and Dignity of the Perſon of Chriſt; he is the Son of God by Nature, the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, *Heb.* 1. 3. *He is the Prince of the Kings of the Earth*, Rev. 1. 5. The moſt glorious Monarch that ever ſway'd a Scepter over Men, is but as a Worm of the Earth, or a deſpicable Inſect in the Air, compar'd with *Solomon* in his Glory; the moſt perfect Beauty in the Creatures beneath or above, is Blackneſs and Deformity, in compariſon with Chriſt; the Beauty of Roſes, Lillies, Sun, Stars, Angels, is not worthy to be mentioned in compariſon with Chriſt: *Thou art fairer* (ſaith his Spouſe) *than the Children of Men*: None ever ſaw him ſavingly by the Eye of Faith, but were charmed into his Boſom by Love. The Facial Viſion of Chriſt, is the Feaſt of bleſſed Souls above.

This King of Glory makes Suit for your Hearts this Day; he woo's for your Conſent; he paſſed by *Apoſtate Angels*, not once making them a Tender of Reconciliation or Union, but comes to you in his red Garments, glorious in his Apparel: He ſhed his invaluable Blood to redeem you to God: He loved you, and gave himſelf for you; if there be a Drop of Love in your Hearts, methinks the Excellency of Chriſt ſhould extract and engage it; write that Man a Beaſt, a ſenceleſs Stock, that hath no Love for Chriſt.

2. Conſider Secondly, What a bleſſed State abounding with glorious and invaluable Privileges your Conſent to be Chriſt's, is introductive to; it opens into all Privileges, Mercies, and Bleſſings, deſirable in the Eyes of Men; it opens into Freedom and Liberty, from the Vaſſalage of Satan, the Servitude of Sin, the Curſe of the Law, the Danger of Wrath to come, *John* 8. 36. *If the Son therefore make you free, then are ye free indeed.* It opens the Door into Reſt and Peace, Peace with God, Peace in your own Conſciences, *Rom.* 5. 1, 2, 3. The Delicioufneſs of Peace you never yet taſted, who are Strangers to

Chriſt, nor ever ſhall till you Conſent to be his, *Rev.* 2. 17. this ſhall be your Support amidſt all the Confuſions and Diſtractions, Hurries and Tumults of this reſtleſs and unquiet World, *Mic.* 5. 5. *This Man ſhall be the peace, when the Aſſyrian cometh into our Land, and when he ſhall tread in our Palaces.* Chriſt hath pitch'd his Standard in the Goſpel, repair unto it, come under his Banner, and liſt your ſelves among his faithful Subjects, and the Glory of the World to come is yours, if you overcome and be faithful unto death, *Rev.* 3. 21. The Subjects of Chriſt in this Kingdom of Grace, are ſhortly to be all tranſlated into the Kingdom of Glory, *Rom.* 8. 30.

3. Conſider the miſerable Bondage you are now in, over whom Satan rules, and how your Condition ſtill grows worſe and worſe, 'till it ſhall not be capable of any further addition of Miſery, to make it more abſolutely and compleatly miſerable.

You are now without God, without a Promiſe, without Peace, without the Pardon of one Sin, *Eph.* 2. 12. You have no Communion with God, nor Title to Heaven, Slaves to your ſordid Luſts, *Titus* 3. 3. You are under the Curſe, *Gal.* 3. 10. Condemned already, *John* 3. 18. And when ever you die out of Chriſt, you ſhall die in your Sins, *John* 8. 24. He that was your Ruler in this World, is to be both your Companion and Tormenter in the World to come, *Mat.* 25. 41.

Is this a Condition to be ſatisfied in? Can you ſleep quietly in your Chains? O methinks the poor Priſoners of Satan ſhould ſigh and cry, through the Grates of the Priſon, eſpecially when they are informed of Deliverance at the Door?

You have no reaſon to ſcare at the Terms and Conditions propounded to you by Chriſt; they are equal, neceſſary, and eaſie, *Mat.* 11.29. *Come unto me; my yoke is eaſie, and my burden light. His Commands are not grievous,* 1 John 5. 3. *All his ways are pleaſantneſs, and all his paths are peace,* Prov. 3. 17. *The joy of the Lord ſhall be your ſtrength,* Neh. 8. 10. If there be Repenting-work, Believing-work, Sin-mortifying-work, or Suffering-work for you; there is alſo a ſuitable proviſion of Divine Aſſiſtance to enable and carry you through it all, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. *My Grace is ſufficient for thee.* If Men caſt you out, God will receive you, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17, 18. If any ſharp Trial befal you, there's a Door of Eſcape prepared for your out-let, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. If you meet with Trouble in the World, you ſhall not fail of Peace in Chriſt, *Joh.* 16. 33. If you loſe any outward Enjoyment for Chriſt's ſake, it ſhall be recompenced an hundred-fold in this World, beſides the Reward of Heaven hereafter, *Mat.* 19. 29. If you be caſt in Priſon for Chriſt, the Comforter ſhall come from Heaven, and reſt upon you there, 1 *Pet.* 4. 13, 14. If you ſuffer with him, *you ſhall reign with him,* 2 Tim. 2. 12.

What think ye Brethren of Chriſt's Terms now? What is there here for Men to ſcare and fright at? Can you mend your ſelves elſewhere? O! when ſhall the Match be made? When will you come to Chriſt, and ſay, Lord, I heartily conſent to take thee for my King; I am pleaſed with the hardeſt Condition required in thy Word!

5. Laſtly, Be convinced of the unreaſonableneſs of all that you can pretend againſt this great Duty. If you ſay, the Pains of Mortification are hard; you muſt in Reaſon yield, that the Pains of Damnation are harder; and that it's better for you to enter into Life halt and maimed, than having two Eyes or Hands to be caſt into Hell, where the Worm dies not, and where the Fire is not quenched, *Mat.* 5. 29. If you ſay, you have no power to come to Chriſt; your Conſciences will preſently tell you, that you never yet put forth the uttermoſt power that you have, in ſtriving for your own Salvation. It will alſo tell you, that you ſuppoſe you have ſuch a power; elſe, why have you ſo long delayed Repentance and Converſion upon this pretence, that you will ſeriouſly perform them hereafter? Beſides, tho' your Endeavours do not oblige God to do that for you, you cannot do of your ſelves; yet 'tis more probable he will do ſo, when you ſtrive to your utmoſt, than when you careleſly neglect thoſe Duties, and give your ſelves up to the contrary Courſes. If you ſay, you would ſtrive, if you were aſſured of ſucceſs, and that you ſhould be received and accepted by Chriſt, if you came unto him, and did caſt your poor Souls upon him; you can anſwer your ſelves, if you will, that you daily ſpend your Time, Pains, and Studies, upon leſſer things, having no aſſurance at all of ſucceſs. The *Husbandman* toils all day at Plough, yet is not aſſured of a good Harveſt; his Corn may die in the Seed, or be blaſted in the Ear. The *Mariner* ventures his Eſtate upon the Sea, yet hath no aſſurance of a good Return; the Ship may miſcarry. The *Miner* will dig into the Bowels of the Earth, and try here and there, yet hath no aſſurance he ſhall find that rich Vein of Ore, that ſhall recompence his Coſt and Pains. Now, if Men will labour ſo hard, and adventure ſo much upon Uncertainties for a little of the World, doth not your own Reaſon conclude you ought to do more, and adventure further than any of them to obtain Chriſt, and eternal Salvation? O ſtrive, ſtrive to make your eſcape out of Satan's Kingdom, to Chriſt; ſit not with folded Hands on the Seats of Sloth, ſaying, 'Tis to no purpoſe.

Suppoſe your ſelves now upon your Death-bed, all earthly Comforts inſipid things to you; Conſcience preſaging the Wrath to come; Time and Hope ending together; would you not then wiſh, O, that we had been ruled and governed by Chriſt's Laws and Spirit, and not by Satan, and our own Luſts! Had we been the Servants of Chriſt, we had now been going to Chriſt; had he governed, he would have ſaved us; but his Servants we are to whom we obey; we have ſerved our Luſts, and the Wages of Sin is Death.

Or ſuppoſe you ſaw the Glory of Heaven, or the Horrors of Hell; that you heard the *Allelujahs* of the Palm-bearing Multitude, or the Shrieks of damned Caſt-aways; would it be ſo indifferent a thing to you, whether you obey Chriſt's Call or no? Believe it, theſe are no deviſed Fables, but do really exiſt, whether you mind them or not. And why ſhould you not ſuppoſe, and forethink things ſo ſure, and ſo nigh? A ſweet Voice comes from Heaven this Day, ſaying, Let all that expect to enjoy the Glory that is here, ſee that they ſubmit heartily to Chriſt's Scepter, for he ſaves no more than he rules; and the whole Number of the Glorified in Heaven, is made up of ſuch as heartily cloſed with Chriſt's Terms on Earth. A dreadful Voice comes up from Hell, crying, as it were in your Ears; As ever you expect to eſcape the Miſeries and Torments that are here, do not reject Chriſt's Yoke and Government as we did; our yielding up of our ſelves to the Sway and Government of our Luſts, was our ruin.

*Uſe* III. To conclude: Let all Men try their own Eſtates, and examine to what King they do indeed belong; and whoſe Subjects, in truth, they are, Chriſt's or Satan's; for theſe two Kingdoms divide the whole World. God hath furniſhed us with Self-reflecting Powers; we are able to retire out of the confuſed Noiſes of the World, and ſit retired in the innermoſt Cloſet of our own Souls, where none but God and our Conſciences ſhall be privy to our Debates; and there ſolemnly demand of our Conſcience, and charge it to make plain and faithful Anſwers to ſuch Queſtions and Enquiries as theſe:

*Queſt.* 1. To whom do I yield the moſt prompt, chearful, and conſtant Obedience? To the Commands of Chriſt, or to Solicitations of Satan, and my own Luſts? He that hath my Obedience, the ſame is my Lord and King, *Rom.* 6. 16. *To whom ye yield your ſelves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom ye obey.* When God and Conſcience calls me to pray, and the World calls me off to attend its enſnaring Pleaſures, and unneceſſary Employments, which of theſe Calls do I pay Obedience to?

*Queſt.* 2. Who governs the ſecret and unſeen part of my Life? That every Man is in the account of God, which he is in ſecret, *Rom.* 2. 28, 29. Now, who is King in the Cloſet? And what Rules do my Thoughts move by? If Chriſt bring my Thoughts into Obedience, ſo that I dare not indulge to my ſelf a ſinful liberty, to enjoy the ſpeculative Pleaſure of the Sins I have acted, or would act, had I opportunity for it: And if I am in the fear of God when alone, and make Conſcience of my ſecret, as well as publick Duties, then I am under Chriſt's Government, and he is King of my Soul, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. *Mat.* 6. 6. But if I make an external ſhew of Obedience to Chriſt, and ſecretly obey my Luſts, I am really the Servant of Sin, and belong to another King. O my Conſcience, what ſay'ſt thou to theſe things?

*Queſt.* 3. Whom do I follow, or heartily reſolve to follow, when it comes to a Parting-point betwixt Chriſt and the World? When I muſt cleave to the one, and forſake the other, *Mat.* 6. 24. Do I with full purpoſe of heart cleave to the Lord? *Acts* 11. 23. Is it my ſincere Reſolution to follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth? *Rev.* 14. 4. Or have I ſecret Reſerves to quit Chriſt's Service, and give Religion the ſlip, when it comes to a real diſtreſs and difficulty? Theſe are ſounding Queſtions, and will diſcover whoſe Government we are under.

## *The* CONCLUSION.

Thus I have endeavoured to ſpiritualize and improve the great and ſolemn Actions of this Good Day; a Day, for which I hope the Children yet unborn, ſhall praiſe the Lord: How happy will our King and Queen be, if they Reign over a People that Chriſt Reigneth over, and will conſcientiouſly pay them Obedience in, and for the Lord! I believe it will be a greater Joy to their Souls, to ſee you ſet the Crown upon Chriſt's Head, in your Subjection to his Laws, than to ſee the Imperial Crown of *England* ſet upon their own Heads: Religion breeds the beſt Subjects.

Let *England* praiſe the Lord for ſuch a Day as this! How many ſad Years are run out, ſince it ſaw the Crown upon the Heads of a Proteſtant King and Queen at once! Let faithful Magiſtrates rejoyce, they ſhall never more be put upon the odious and dangerous Drudgery of perſecuting good Men, under ſuch a Government as this.

Let Miniſters rejoyce; yea, let them rejoyce with double Joy to others; they ſhall no more be driven into Corners, nor put to Silence; a Silence as bitter as Death, whilſt the Royal Scepter is ſwayed by ſuch Hands as God hath now put it into.

Let all the People rejoyce; for theſe their Rulers ſhall be to them as the Light of the Morning, and as the clear ſhining after Rain, 2 *Sam.* 23. 3, 4. And let us all ſay, *Iſaiah* 25. 9. *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will ſave us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will rejoyce and be glad in his Salvation.*

# THE CHARACTER OF A Compleat Evangelical PASTOR, DRAWN by *CHRIST*.

## MAT. XXIV. 45, 46, 47.

*Who then is a faithful and wiſe Servant, whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Houſhold, to give them Meat in due ſeaſon?*

*Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.*

*Verily, I ſay unto you, that he ſhall make him Ruler over all his Goods.*

THIS Great and Solemn Aſſembly (met upon a a Greater and more Solemn Account), brings to my Mind thoſe *Words*, and with the *Words*, a very ſenſible Touch of the ſame *Affection* with which the Church uttered them, *Iſa.* 49. 20, 21. *Children which thou ſhalt have after thou haſt loſt the other, ſhall ſay again in thine Ears, The place is too ſtraight for me: Give place to me that I may dwell. Then ſhalt thou ſay in thine heart, Who hath begotten me theſe, ſeeing I have loſt my children, and am deſolate; a Captive, and removing to and fro? And who hath brought up theſe? Behold, I was left alone; Theſe, where had they been?*

Words big with holy Admiration and Wonderment, at her ſtrange and ſudden increaſe and multiplication, after ſuch a waſting time, as thoſe Seventy ſad Years had been to her. This was a miraculous and ſurprizing Work of God in their Eyes.

We have had our *Waſting-time* as well as they: Multitudes of *Faithful* and *Prudent* Miniſters have been ſwept into their Graves by **Ejections**, **Baniſhments**, **Impriſonments**, and Heart-breaking **Silencings**. Whence then are all theſe, which our Eyes behold this Day! Who hath begotten us, and brought up **theſe?** **Theſe**, where had they been, and out of what ſecret Receſſes are they come!

Many thought the Days of our Proſperity, and Opportunities of our Service, had been numbred and finiſhed; and that God had no more *Work* (except *Suffering-work*) for us: When lo, above and beyond the deſponding Thoughts, and unbelieving Fears of our Hearts, we are here this Day in a numerous Aſſembly, with Peace and Liberty, to conſult the Affairs of Chriſt's Kingdom.

Yea, to the Joy of our Souls, we ſee the Plummets and the Lines once more in the Hands of our *Zerubbabels*, as *Zech.* 4. 10. *Who hath deſpiſed the Day of ſmall things? For they ſhall rejoyce, and ſhall ſee the Plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, with thoſe ſeven, they are the Eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro thro' the whole Earth.* Our prudent Repairers Co-working with the Divine Providence, expreſs'd Emblematically by the *Seven Eyes*, will bring weak and contemptible Beginnings, to happy and bleſſed Reſults and Iſſues. What ſhall one now anſwer the Meſſengers of the Churches? That God hath founded *Sion*, and the Poor of his People ſhall truſt in it.

We are met this Day in all hearty **Loyalty** to the Government, and **Peaceableneſs** to the National Church-Eſtabliſhment, to review and conſider the Caſes of our reſpective Congregations, which I doubt we ſhall find too like that Deſcription, *Prov.* 24. 31. all over-grown with Thorns and Nettles, and the Stone-wall broken down.

Thus Ignorance and Error have overſpread the People, and the Wall of Diſcipline greatly decayed. Our Buſineſs is to cleanſe our Churches, and repair their Walls, that ſo they may become Gardens of Delight, and Beds of Spices, for Chriſt to walk and take pleaſure in.

You have ordered this Meeting to be opened with a Sermon, and demandated that Work to my Hand, by your earneſt and unanimous

Call: I wiſh the Work may not ſuffer by your Choice.

When I conſidered the Quality and Occaſion of this Aſſembly, my Thoughts quickly centered themſelves in thoſe Words of our Lord, which I have read unto you. *Who then is a faithful and a wiſe Servant, whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Houſhold, to give them Meat in due ſeaſon?* &c.

Here we find our ſelves in a Parable: A Parable is the Veil of ſome Divine Truth: Whilſt we are embodied and veiled with Fleſh, Truth muſt embody and veil her ſelf too in order to our freer Converſes with it. There's much Truth and Reaſon, in the Obſervation of the Ancient *Cabbaliſts.* * The Supream Light never deſcends without a Covering. Yea, ſaith *Dionyſius*, the ſuppoſed *Areopagite*, † 'Tis impoſſible that a Divine Beam ſhould otherwiſe ſhine to us, except it be covered with variety of Sacred Veils, and Umbrages.

* *Lumen ſupremum nunquam deſcendit ſine indumento.*

† *Impoſſibile eſt nobis aliter lucere radium divinum, niſi varietate Sacrorum velaminum circumvelatum*, Cœleſt. Hier. cap. 1.

Not to ſpend much time about the Order and Relation of the Text; Chriſt had been ſolemnly warning the Diſciples, and all the Chriſtian World, of his moſt certain, (tho' ſecret) coming to Judgment, and therefore to beware of Idleneſs, Luxury, and Security, the Sins of the World; and that all be found at his coming, watchful and diligent in their proper places of Duty. This Exhortation he infers, from what common Prudence would teach any Servant, eſpecially any Steward of an Houſe to do, to whom his Lord hath committed the Care of his Family. 'Tis agreed by all, that the Words have a ſpecial and immediate reſpect to Goſpel Miniſters, the Stewards of Chriſt's Houſe or Church, to whom Chriſt, the 'Οικοδεσπότης, or Lord of the Family, hath truſted the Care and Diſpenſation of the Affairs thereof. And in them we find,

I. An Evangelical Paſtor deſcribed.
II. The Reward of ſuch as Anſwer that Deſcription, propounded.

1. Chriſt's Deſcription of an Evangelical Paſtor, *verſe* 45. which he doth by two excellent and eſſential Properties, or Qualifications, Πιστὸς, ϗ φρόνιμος, *Faithful*, and *Wiſe*; both which make up the Character of a Compleat Goſpel Miniſter: For if he be *Faithful*, he deceives not others; and if *Wiſe*, or Prudent, he is not apt to be deceived himſelf. His *Prudence* ſuffers not Deceivers eaſily to impoſe upon him; and his *Faithfulneſs* will not ſuffer him knowingly to impoſe upon his People. His *Prudence* will enable him to diſcern; and his *Faithfulneſs* oblige him to diſtribute wholeſome Food to his Flock. Theſe two therefore meeting together, make a Paſtor *after God's own Heart*, according to *Jer.* 3. 15.

Both theſe are found in an Interrogative Form of Speech in the Text; but 'tis agreed, that τὶς is put conditionally for εἴ τὶς, and is rather Hypothetical, than Interrogatory. But in this Form of Speech, it inſinuates the rarity and difficulty of finding ſuch a Servant. He is Σπάνιος ϗ δυσεύρετος, as *Theophylact* gloſſeth it. And *Chryſoſtom*, by way of admiration, *Quam rari, & præſtantes eſſent tales!* How rare and excellent would ſuch Servants be! Theſe are their Properties.

2. The *Reward* of thoſe that anſwer theſe Characters, is propounded,

1. In Proper } Terms.
2. In Metaphorical }

1. In *Proper Terms, Bleſſed is that Servant*, v. 46. He is certainly bleſſed of God, whatever his Uſage be from Men. If he be *faithful*, all his *Prudence* will not ſecure him from the Hatred and Perſecution of Men, but it is enough that Chriſt calls and counts him bleſſed; and thoſe whom he bleſſeth, are truly and eternally bleſſed.

2. In *Metaphorical Terms*, ver. 47. *Verily I ſay unto you, That he ſhall make him Ruler over all his Goods.* In alluſion to the Cuſtom of great Kings and Generals, who uſe to prefer and advance diſcreet and faithful Servants to Places of eminent Truſt, Profit, and Honour; as *Daniel* and *Joſeph* were. The Sence thus cleared, runs naturally and eaſily into this

## *DOCTRINE.*

*That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt will amply reward the faithful and prudent Stewards of his Houſe, in the Day of their Account.*

This Point will open it ſelf to you in theſe Three Doctrinal Branches.

1. That Miniſters in a ſpecial Sence are the Stewards of Chriſt's Houſe.
2. *Faithfulneſs* and *Prudence* are the neceſſary Qualifications of Chriſt's Stewards.
3. Where-ever theſe are found, Chriſt will abundantly reward them.

1. *Miniſters in a ſpecial ſence are the Stewards, or chief Servants of Chriſt's Houſe.* So ſpeaks the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. *Let a Man account of us as the Miniſters of Chriſt, and Stewards of the Myſteries of God.* To them he hath committed the Diſpenſation of the Word and Sacraments, which contain the Great Myſteries of the Kingdom of God.

Every private Perſon, who hath received any Talent from God (and to be ſure the meaneſt among us hath one Talent at leaſt) is a Steward, and will be called to an Account for the Employment, or Non-employment of that Talent in the Audit-Day. But Miniſters are Stewards in the ſtrict and ſpecial Sence. Chriſt diſtinguiſhes them from the others, as Porters from the reſt of the Servants, *Mark* 13. 34. Nor may any aſſume that Office, but by Order from Chriſt the Maſter of the Family. But this is too obvious to ſtay longer upon it.

2. We will therefore immediately take into Conſideration the *Properties* or *Qualifications* of the *Stewards* of Chriſt: Which are,

1. Faithfulneſs.
2. Prudence.

And conſider them;

1. Diſtinctly.
2. Conjunctly.

Faithfulneſs,

1. *Faithfulneſs*, an Eſſential requiſite to a *Steward*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 2. *It is required in* Stewards, *that a Man be found* faithful. What ground is there for *Truſt*, where there is no *Truth?* Hence is that ſolemn Charge, 2 *Tim.* 2. 2. to commit that great Truſt of the Miniſtry to *faithful* Men. And *Paul* bleſſeth God, 1 *Tim.* 1. 11, 12. who had accounted him *Faithful*, and put into the Miniſtry. This *Faithfulneſs*, as it reſpects GOD, our Selves, and the Flocks committed to us, includes,

1. Pure and Spiritual Aims and Intentions.
2. Sincerity and Integrity of Heart.
3. Diligence in the diſcharge of Duty.
4. Impartiality in the Adminiſtrations of Chriſt's Houſe.
5. And unſhaken Conſtancy and Perſeverance to the end.

1. *Miniſterial Faithfulneſs* includes *pure and ſpiritual Aims and Intentions for God.* A Servant is Ὁλῶς ἐκεῖνȣ· 'Tis not his own, but his Maſter's Honour and Intereſt, he muſt deſign and aim at. *Fidelity* will not endure Self-ends, diſguiſed with a pretence of Zeal for Chriſt. 'Tis ſaid of the Maſter-workmen of the Temple, 2 *Kings* 22. 7. that there was no Reckoning made with them of the Money collected for that uſe, *becauſe they dealt faithfully*, *i. e.* they had given ſufficient proof that they impropriated not a Farthing to themſelves, but truly applied it to the publick ſacred end and uſe, to which it was given. Oh, let us be all ſuch *faithful Maſter-builders* of the Houſe of our God. Let us ſay, Not *our* Intereſt, but *Chriſt's*; not *our* Glory, but *his*. Pure *Ends* in our Service, will give us abundant Comfort *at the end* of our Service. Have a care, Brethren, of all Artifices and Deſigns, to accommodate carnal Intereſts, under a ſhew of Devotion to God.

*Timothy* is our Pattern in this, of whom *Paul* ſaith, *Phil.* 2. 20, 21. *I have no Man like minded, who will naturally care for your ſtate; for all ſeek their own, not the things that are Jeſus Chriſt's.* Where the word *Naturally* is not oppoſed to *Spiritually*, but to *Artificially*. Others had the Art to cloak Self ends under Chriſt's Honour; but *Timothy* was ignorant of ſuch unfaithful Tricks and Artifices.

Nehem. 9. 8.

2. *Miniſterial Faithfulneſs* imports *Perſonal Sincerity*. So the word ſignifies, where it's ſaid of *Abraham*, that God found his Heart *faithful*; that is, *ſincere* before him. A faithful Miniſter is a *ſincere hearted* Miniſter. And herein, Brethren, Oh herein, or in nothing, let us approve our ſelves the Miniſters of Chriſt. Let this be our *rejoycing, that in all Sincerity, and Godly Simplicity, we have had our Converſations in this World*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. And the rather let us be careful in this, becauſe no Sin is more apt to inſinuate it ſelf into our Hearts and Duties, than Hypocriſie. We of all Men are moſt in danger to be deceived by it: For our Employment lying in, and about Spiritual things, we are on that account ſtiled *Spiritual Men*, *Hoſ.* 9. 7. But it's plain from that very place, that a Man may be *Objectively* a *Spiritual*, and all the while *Subjectively* a *Carnal* Man. Believe it, Brethren, it's eaſier to declaim like an *Orator* againſt a thouſand Sins of others, than it is to mortifie one Sin, like *Chriſtians*, in our ſelves; to be more induſtrious in our *Pulpits*, than in our *Cloſets*; to preach twenty Sermons to our People, than one to our own Hearts.

Believe it, Sirs, all our Reading, Studying, and Preaching, is but trifling Hypocriſie, 'till the things read, ſtudied and preach'd, be felt in ſome degree upon our own Hearts. We tell our People (the Lord help us to tell the ſame to our own Hearts) that there are *ſimilar*, as well as *ſaving Works* of the Spirit, by which their (and why not our own) Souls may be loſt?

3. *Miniſterial Faithfulneſs includes Miniſterial Diligence.* A *ſlothful* cannot be a *faithful Servant*, Mat. 25. 21. *His Lord ſaid unto him, Well done thou good and faithful Servant*, &c. And *ver.* 26. *His Lord anſwered and ſaid unto him*, *Thou wicked and ſlothful Servant*, &c. I may ſay to him that ſnatcheth at the Miniſtry, as *Henry* the Fourth to his Son, that haſtily ſnatch'd at the Crown, *He little knows what an heap of Cares and Toils he ſnatcheth at.* * *The Labours of the Miniſtry will exhauſt the very Marrow from your Bones, haſten Old Age and Death.* They are fitly compared to the Toil of Men in Harveſt, to the Labours of a Woman in Travel, and to the Agonies of Soldiers in the extremity of a Battel. We muſt *watch*, when others *ſleep*.

And indeed it is not ſo much the *Expence* of our Labours, as the loſs of them, that kills us. It is not with us, as with other Labourers: They find their Work, as they leave it, ſo don't we. Sin and Satan unravel almoſt all we do; the Impreſſions we make on our Peoples Souls in one Sermon, vaniſh before the next. How many Truths have we to ſtudy! How many Wiles of Satan, and Myſteries of Corruption, to detect! How many Caſes of Conſcience to reſolve! Yea, we muſt fight in defence of the Truths we preach, as well as ſtudy them to Paleneſs, and preach them unto Faintneſs. But well-ſpent Head, Heart, Lungs, and all; welcome pained Breaſts, aching Backs, and trembling Legs; if we can by all, but approve our ſelves Chriſt's *faithful Servants*, and hear that joyful Voice from his Mouth, *Well done, good and faithful Servants.*

4. Miniſterial Faithfulneſs includes our *Impartiality, in all the Adminiſtrations of Chriſt's Houſe.* He that is partial, cannot be faithful. Oh! with what extraordinary Solemnity doth *Paul* ſet on this Exhortation upon *Timothy*! *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect Angels, that thou obſerve theſe things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by Partiality*; 1 Tim. 5. 21.

Brethren, you will ſhortly appear before an *impartial God*; ſee that ye be *impartial Stewards.* Take the ſame Care, manifeſt the ſame Love, attend with the ſame Diligence, the pooreſt and weakeſt Souls that are committed to your Care, as you do the Rich, the Great, and Honourable.

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* *Labores Eccleſiaſtici ſuccum exhauriunt abimis medullis, ſenium, mortemque accelerant.* Luther.

Remember all Souls are rated at one Value in your Maſter's Book, and your Redeemer paid as much for the one, as for the other. *Civil* Differences muſt be *civilly* acknowledged; but theſe have no place in your Spiritual Adminiſtrations.

5. *Laſtly*, Miniſterial Faithfulneſs includes *Conſtancy* and *Stedfaſtneſs*: A *backſliding*, or *flinching Servant*, Rev. 2. 10. *Be thou faithful*, (*i. e.* Fixt and Conſtant) *to the Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life*. We look for *Happineſs*, as long as God is in *Heaven*; and he expects *Conſtancy*, as long as we are on *Earth*.

Many of us have cauſe to bleſs the Lord, and greatly to rejoyce in his Goodneſs this Day, who enabled us to be ſtedfaſt and unmovable in the Trials that have paſt over us; and when the great Earthquake ſhaked down our Liberties, our Eſtates, and made our Hearts to ſhake; yet our Reſolutions for God and his Truth, ſtood firm and unſhaken. Our Hearts turned not back, nor did our Steps decline, tho' we were broken in the place of Dragons, and covered with the Shadow of Death. This we wholly owe to him, that holds the Stars in his Right-hand: But our Warfare is not yet ended. Our *Faithfulneſs* is not yet *Faithfulneſs to the Death*: We hope it will ſhortly be called ſo, whilſt it thus involves our Self-denial, Sincerity, Diligence, Impartiality, and Conſtancy.

Theſe are the principal things included in the firſt Qualification of *Miniſterial Faithfulneſs*. In the next place let us weigh and value,

2. The Second Qualification in the Text, *viz.* *Miniſterial Prudence.*

*Prudence.*

The Lord's Servant muſt not only be Πιςὸς, *Faithful*; but Φρόνιμος, *Prudent*, *Diſcreet*, and *Wiſe*. Fidelity and Honeſty makes a good *Chriſtian*; but the addition of *Prudence* to Fidelity, makes a good *Steward*. *Faithfulneſs* will fix the Eye upon the right End; but it's *Prudence* muſt direct to the proper Means of attaining it.

If we look into *Rev.* 4. 6, 7. we ſhall there find a ſtately Emblem of true Goſpel-Miniſters. They are Ἄνθρωποι πολυόμματοι, *Men full of Eyes*. They have Eyes looking before them to God for direction, behind them to the Flocks they lead, and within them to their own Hearts; leſt after they have preached to others, themſelves become Caſtaways. They have alſo *ſix Wings*, with two they cover their Faces, manifeſting their deep Reverence of God; with two their Feet, manifeſting the humble Sence of their Infirmities; and with two they fly with chearful expedition in the Service of God: They have not only the Courage of the *Lion*, the Strength of the *Ox*, the Loftineſs of the *Eagle*; but the Face of a *Man*, (i. e.) *Prudence* and Diſcretion.

The uſe of *Prudence* to a Miniſter of Chriſt, is unſpeakably great: It not only gives clearneſs and perſpicacity to the Mind, by freeing it from Paſſions and Corporeal Impreſſions, enabling it thereby to apprehend what is beſt to be done; but enables it in its Deliberations, about the means to make choice of the moſt apt and proper; and directs the Application of them in the fitteſt Seaſon, without precipitation, by too much haſte; or hazard, by too tedious delay. And judge you, Brethren by this, what an Intereſt the Affairs of Chriſt's Kingdom have in this ſecond Qualification.

I know there is a carnal Policy, an unworthy Puſillanimity, that often ſhrowd themſelves under the Name of *Prudence*; I have nothing to do with Mock-graces here. My Buſineſs is to ſhew you in what Particulars true *Miniſterial Prudence* is highly ſerviceable to the Affairs of Chriſt's Houſe, or Kingdom: And this I will briefly diſcourſe in two reſpects. The *Eye* of *Prudence* muſt look,

1. To our own proper perſonal Work, to ſee that be well done.
2. To others who work,
   1. With us as Friends, that we may have Aſſiſtance from them.
   2. Or againſt us as Enemies, that our Work be not ruin'd by them.

1. *Prudence* will direct the Servants of Chriſt *in their own proper Miniſterial Work, that it be well done.* And in order thereto, it will guide them in their Deliberations to the Six following proper Means, and excellent Expedients.

### 1. *Prudential Expedient.*

And Firſt, *Prudence* will direct us *to lay a good Foundation of Knowledge in our Peoples Souls, by Catechiſing and Inſtructing them in the Principles of Chriſtianity, without which we labour in vain.*

Except you have a *knowing* People, you are not like to have a *gracious* People. St. *Paul's* Prudentials lay much in this, 1 Cor. 3. 10. *As a wiſe Maſter-builder, I have laid the Foundation.* And indeed this is the *Maſter-piece* of a *Maſter-builder.* All your excellent Sermons will be daſh'd to pieces, upon the Rock of your Peoples Ignorance. You can never pitch upon a better Project to promote and ſecure the Succeſs of your Labours, than the fruitful way of Catechiſing.

What Age of Chriſtianity ever produced more lively and ſtedfaſt Chriſtians, than the firſt Ages? And then the care of this Duty moſt eminently flouriſhed in the Churches. *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Origen*, *Optatus*, *Baſil*, *Auſtin*, and *Ambroſe*, were all Catechiſts. And it is the Opinion both of *Chemnitius* and *Zanchy*, That that Exerciſe, which Chriſt honoured with his Preſence in his Youth, was a *Catechiſtical* Exerciſe.

We that live in this Age, have as much *Obligation* as they, and God hath furniſhed to our hands the *beſt help* for it, that ever any Age ſince Chriſt enjoyed. As *Chymiſts* extract the Spirits of Herbs and Minerals, into ſome rare *Elixir*: So have our Venerable *Aſſembly* (lately ſitting at *Weſtminſter*, now in Glory) compoſed for us the moſt Judicious and Compendious Syſtem, that ever bleſſed this Age. And to make it yet more uſeful, divers worthy Hands have been employed, ſome in one Method, ſome in another, to make thoſe Compendious Anſwers more intelligible to the People. And yet I am of Opinion, ſomewhat may be further done to advance that great Deſign in a Third Method, that ſhall not only make thoſe Points more intelligible, than in anſwering by *Yea* and *No*; or drawing out the ſubſervient Anſwers to ſuch a length, as too much charges the Peoples Memory, but withal to intermix the moſt uſeful *Practical* Matter with what is *Doctrinal*. If ſuch a Courſe might obtain in all our Congregations, I think it would greatly diſcover our *Prudence*, and turn richly to the Account of our Peoples Profit.

### 2. *Prudential Expedient.*

Miniſterial *Prudence* diſcovers it ſelf *in the choice of ſuch Subjects, as the Needs of our Peoples Souls do moſt require and call for.*

A prudent Miniſter will ſtudy the *Souls* of his People, more than the beſt Humane *Books* in his *Library*: And not chuſe what is *eaſieſt* for him, but what is *moſt neceſſary* for them. Miniſters that are acquainted with the State of their Flocks as they ought to be, will be ſeldom at a loſs in the choice of the next Subject. Their Peoples Wants will chuſe their Text, from time to time, for them.

The greateſt part of our Congregations, are poor, ignorant, and unregenerated People, that know neither their *Miſery*, nor their *Remedy*. This will direct us to the great Doctrines of *Conviction*, *Regeneration*, and *Faith*; and make us to ſit with ſollicitous Minds in our Studies, pondering thus in our Hearts; Lord, what Courſe ſhall we take, and what Words ſhall we chuſe, that may beſt convey the Sence of their Sin and Danger, with the fulneſs and neceſſity of Chriſt, into their Hearts!

Others are withering and decaying in their Affections, or ſtaggering and floating in their Judgments: *Prudence* will enable the Man of God to give to every one his proper Food, or Phyſick, in due Seaſon. This will make us ſpend more Hours in our Studies, and ſet to it with all our might and skill, that thereby we may both ſave our ſelves, and them that hear us.

### 3. *Prudential Expedient.*

This *Miniſterial Wiſdom* will not only direct us thus in the choice of our Subjects, but *of the Language too in which we dreſs and deliver them to our People.*

It will tell you, a *Crucified Stile* beſt ſuits the Preachers of a *Crucified Chriſt*. A grave and proper Stile becomes the Lips of Chriſt's Ambaſſadors. *Prudence* will neither allow us to be rude, nor affectedly gaudy in our Expreſſions. *Tertullian* checks thoſe Preachers, *whoſe Sermons dreſs up Chriſtianity in* **Philoſophical,** *rather than* **Evangelical** *Terms* [*]. *Prudence* will chuſe Words that are *ſolid*, rather than *florid*: As a *Merchant* will a Ship by a *ſound Bottom*, and *capacious Hold*, rather than a *gilded Head* and *Stern*. Words are but Servants to Matter. An *Iron Key* fitted to the Wards of the Lock, is more uſeful than a *Golden* one, that will not open the Door to the Treaſure.

Some of Chriſt's Miniſters excel in a neat and pleaſing plainneſs of Language. For this *Auſtin* was ſo affected with the Stile of *Ambroſe*; *With his ſweet Words, which I loved, came into my Mind the Duties which I neglected* [*]. And *Zanchy* ſaith of *Viret*, *I admired his Eloquence, and the force it had in moving the Affections* [†].

*Prudence* will caſt away a thouſand fine Words, for one that is apt to penetrate the Conſcience, and reach the Heart. This made *Baſil* look upon the famed *Allegories* of his time, with a compaſſionate Smile, ſaying [*], *We take them for pretty* Witticiſms, *but things of little uſe or value in the Miniſtry.* Who in the laſt Age was ever honoured with more Succeſs in his Miniſtry, than bleſſed Mr. *Burroughs*? and who ever excelled him in Skill, to bring down the ſublime Myſteries of the Goſpel to the meaneſt Capacity?

### 4. *Prudential Expedient.*

Miniſterial *Prudence* will ſhew us of what great uſe our own *Affections* are for the moving of others. And will therefore adviſe us, That as ever we expect the Truths we preach, ſhould operate upon the Hearts of others, we firſt labour to work them in upon our own Hearts. Such a Preacher was St. *Paul*; he preached with Tears accompanying his words, *Phil.* 3. 18. An *hot Iron*, tho' blunt, will pierce ſooner than a *cold* one, tho' ſharper.

And why, my Brethren, do we think, God hath Commiſſionated us, rather than *Angels*, to be his Ambaſſadors? Was it not, among other Reaſons, for this: Becauſe we having been under the ſame Condemnation and Miſery our ſelves, and felt both the Terrors and Conſolations of the Spirit, (which Angels experimentally know not) might thereby be enabled to treat with Sinners more feelingly and affectionately, in a way more accommodate to them, and therefore more apt to move and win them?

### 5. *Prudential Expedient.*

Miniſterial *Prudence* will direct the Servants of Chriſt (who highly value and earneſtly long for the ſucceſs of their Labours) *to be careful by the ſtrictneſs and gravity of their Deportment, to maintain their Eſteem in the Conſciences of their People.*

In your Pulpits you are carrying on a Treaty of Peace betwixt God and them; and therefore it will not allow you to do any thing out of your Pulpits, to make the Breach wider, or hinder the happy Cloſe between him and them. The Fowler that ſpreads his Net to take the Birds, will not leave a Feather, or make the leaſt Noiſe, to ſcare the Bird he intends to take. Let not them who aim no higher than a Bird, be more prudent and cautious, than you that are ſet to catch immortal Souls. Remember that of *Solomon*, Prov. 11. 30. *He that winneth Souls, is wiſe. Prudence* will not allow the Miniſters of Chriſt to immix themſelves with vain Company, and take the ſame liberty they do in vain Jeſts, and idle Stories. Nor will it allow on the other ſide, a moroſe Reſervedneſs, and diſcouraging Auſterity; but temper Gravity with condeſcending Affability.

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[*] *Qui Platonicum Chriſtianiſſimum procudunt Chriſtianis.*

[*] Veniebant in animum meum ſimul cum verbis, quæ diligebam, etiam res, quas negligebam.

[†] Singularem eloquentiam, & in commovendis effectibus efficacitatem admirabar.

[*] Ὡς κεκομψευμένον μὲν τ͂ λόγον ἀποδεχόμεθα.

To you that are Juniors and Candidates for the Miniſtry, I will aſſume the Boldneſs to addreſs one ſeaſonable Word of Advice. And it is this: Have a care of that light and airy Spirit which ſo much obtains every-where in this unſerious Age. It was the Charge of God againſt ſome Miniſters of old, that they were *light Perſons*, Rev. 3. 4. And yet I cannot but think, comparatively ſpeaking, with ſome of our times, they might paſs for grave and ſerious. The People have Eyes to ſee how we walk, as well as Ears to hear what we ſay. It will be our Wiſdom and great Advantage to be able to ſay, as St. *Paul* did, *Phil.* 4. 9. *The things which you have both heard and ſeen in me, do.*

### 6. *Prudential Expedient.*

*Miniſterial Prudence will ſend you often to your Knees to ſeek a Bleſſing from God upon your Studies and Labours, as knowing all your Miniſterial Succeſs entirely depends thereupon,* 1 Cor. 3. 7.

Thoſe are the beſt Sermons that are obtained by Prayer. Bleſſed *Bradford* ſtudied upon his Knees. *Luther* obtained more this way, than by all his Studies. If an honeſt Husbandman could tell his Neighbour, That the Reaſon why his Corn proſpered better than his, was, becauſe he ſteeped the Seed in Prayer, before he ſowed it in the Field; we may bluſh to think how much more precious Seed we have ſown dry and unſteeped in Prayer, and by this neglect have fruſtrated our own Expectations. Thus *laying our Foundations in the Knowledge of Principles, chuſing our Subjects by the Peoples Neceſſities, handling them in apt Language, working them firſt upon our own Affections, enforcing them by ſtrict Converſations, and ſteeping this holy Seed in Prayer,* we ſhall approve our ſelves the *Prudent* Miniſters of Chriſt.

2*dly*, Having ſaid thus much of *Prudence*, with reſpect to our ſingle Perſonal Concernment in the Work of the Miniſtry; I come next to ſhew its great Uſefulneſs with reſpect to others, who are concerned either,

1. With us, as Friendly Aſſiſtants in our Work.
2. Or againſt us as Enemies, who labour to obſtruct and fruſtrate our Work.

1. As to our *Brethren* and *Fellow-workers in the Lord: Prudence* will dictate and enjoyn it upon us, that by the firmeſt Union with them, we make their Gifts and Graces as uſeful as is poſſible, for the furtherance and advancement of our great and difficult Work. We cannot be ignorant how much Satan hath gained, and Chriſt's Intereſt hath ſenſibly loſt by thoſe unhappy Diviſions and Alienations amongſt Brethren, and Fellow-labourers in the Work of the Lord. Chriſt hath ſhed down variety of glorious Aſcenſion-gifts upon them, which are not capable of a full Improvement, but in union and conjunction with each other. Gifts are improved in us by Prayer and Study; but the Benefits of thoſe Gifts are ſhared among us by Love and Unity. Love and Union bring every Man's Gifts and Graces into the Common Bank, and inſtead of Monopolies, they drive a free and open Trade, to the great enriching of the Church.

There is not a greater or more pleaſant Variety of Qualities, Smells, and Colours, among the Herbs and Flowers, with which the Earth is variegated and decked for the Delight and Service of Man, than there is in the Gifts and Abilities of Miniſters, for the Uſe and Service of the Church. One hath quickneſs of Parts, but not ſo deep and ſolid a Judgment. Another is grave and ſolid, but not ſo ready and preſential. One is wary and reſerved: Another open and plain. One is melancholy and timorous: Another chearful and couragious. When theſe different Gifts and Qualities ſhine together in the Church-Heavens, what a Glorious Conſtellation do they make! And what ſweet benign Influences do they ſhed down upon the Lord's Heritage! All theſe Miniſterial Gifts and Graces are improvable for Chriſt,

1. More Privately, } by Brotherly Union.
2. More Publickly, }

1. *More Privately:* When God caſts the Lot of two, or more, Fellow-labourers, in the Goſpel, upon the ſame City, Town, or Neighbourhood, what a bleſſed advantage have they beyond ſolitary Miniſters, to carry on the Work of the Lord chearfully, vigorouſly, and ſucceſsfully! Whilſt Love cauſes their Hearts to claſp and cloſe, how muſt their Work be facilitated, ſweetned, and proſpered in their Hands! But if once Jars and Jealouſies get in amongſt them; if Pride, Envy, or carnal Intereſt, diſſolve the Bond of Brotherly Love; if inſtead of *planting* for Chriſt, they once begin to *ſupplant* one another; no Words are able to ſhew what a Train of Miſchief and Sins will now break in amongſt them, to the great Diſhonour of Chriſt, and Obſtruction of the Goſpel.

I do therefore in the Name of Chriſt, as upon my bended Knees, earneſtly entreat and beſeech my Brethren, by all the regard they have to the Honour of Chriſt, the Souls of their People, their own Comfort, or the Succeſs of their Labours; that no Envyings, or Strifes, no Supplantings, or Detractions, be once admitted or named among them. Methinks it is ſcarce imaginable, that thoſe who have ſo lately and ſeverely ſmarted, ſhould fall again into the ſame Follies, for which God hath chaſtiſed them.

2. And as *Prudence* directs us in to the way of our Profit and Comfort by this more private Improvement of our Gifts and Graces, ſo into a more excellent way by a *General Union* and Coalition with all our Brethren, farther diſtant in place from us. It calls upon us to bury and forget henceforth the factious Names of Diſtinction, growing out of our different Apprehenſions about ſmaller Diſciplinary Points. How many fervent Prayers have been poured out! How many excellent *Irenicums* have been written by thoſe excellent Miniſters that are now at perfect Unity in Heaven! Tho' *they* did not, yet I hope *we* and *our Children* ſhall reap the bleſſed Fruits of thoſe pious Endeavours. God hath ſpoken with a ſtrong Hand to our pious and prudent Brethren, in and about the Great City of this Kingdom; they have

moſt wiſely and ſeaſonably projected this Great and Glorious Deſign: They have followed it cloſe with unwearied Diligence, admirable Patience, Chiſtian Humility and Condeſcenſion; and by the good Hand of the Lord with them, have brought it at laſt to a comfortable Iſſue.

The happy reſult of their fervent Prayers, and frequent Brotherly Conſults (all Praiſe to the God of Love and Peace for it!) are now in our Hands in thoſe bleſſed Sheets, called *Heads of Agreement:* Wherein God hath ſignally helped them to evidence their Wiſdom in the choice of Words, and their Humility and Charity, in mutual and neceſſary Conceſſions. They have by the Mouth of an *Eminent Brother,* (whoſe Praiſe is in the Goſpel, and whoſe Hand hath eminently aſſiſted in this Service) chearfully offered up their Praiſes to *Jehovah-Shalom,* for making the two Sticks of *Judah* and *Ephraim,* to become *one Stick in his own Hand.*

And now, Brethren, they wait; yea, give me leave to ſay, Chriſt waits as well as they, for our explicit Conſent, and chearful Suffrages. We have heard the joyful Sound of our Brethrens Praiſes: Shall we not Eccho to it, and ſay *Hallelujah,* and again *Hallelujah?* *Ephraim* ſhall no more envy *Judah,* nor *Judah* vex *Ephraim;* our Swords are turned into Plow-ſhares, and our Spears into Pruning-hooks: The Lord hath this Day rolled away our Reproach. Thus Prudence will direct us to carry it with Love and Unity towards our Brethren, that labour in the Work with us.

2. Let us next ſee what Direction it gives us, *with reſpect to our Enemies, who endeavour to obſtruct and hinder the Work of the Lord in our Hands.* If we be heartily engaged in the Service of Chriſt, we muſt expect many Adverſaries, and ſtrong Oppoſitions; Men that will raiſe Clouds of Reproaches to darken our Reputation among the People; Men that will repreſent us to them as Ignorant and Unlearned, Factious and Seditious, Erroneous and Enthuſiaſtical. Prudence in this Caſe will reſtrain us from rendring Reproach for Reproach, and propound to us the beſt Project in the World for the Vindication of our Names, and Succeſs of our Labours; and that is, that we ſo *preach the Goſpel,* that the People may feel the Power of Chriſt in our *Doctrine;* and ſo *live,* that they may ſee the Beauty of Chriſt in our Converſations; and ſo preaching and living, we ſhall bear down all the Prejudices of the World before us. Such Doctrine, ſeconded with ſuch a Converſation, like the Sun in the Heavens, will not only break up and ſcatter all Clouds of Reproach; but ſhed down their enlighning and enlivening Influences upon the Hearts of the People.

I neither do, nor dare ſuggeſt and inſinuate any thing in this Diſcourſe, againſt any Party or Body of Men, being convinced, that amongſt thoſe who differ from us, there are many Learned, Pious, and Peaceable Men, who can heartily rejoyce to ſee the Work of Chriſt carried on by thoſe that follow not them. But ſome there are almoſt in every place, who are more concerned for a Ceremony, than for the Subſtance of Religion; for a Tile upon the Roof, than a Stone in the Foundation: Whoſe Envy, if it cannot reach others by Imitation, will be reſtleſs 'till it meet them by Calumniation. In this Caſe Miniſterial Prudence will carefully ſhun all Occaſions of Exaſperation; and if that Care be not ſufficient to *avoid* them, it will furniſh us with that Patience and Conſtancy, which will be ſufficient to *bear* them.

Thus we ſee the Neceſſity and Excellency of *Miniſterial Faithfulneſs* and *Prudence diſtinctly conſidered:* Let us next,

2. View them conjunctly in ſome ſpecial Parts of our Work, whereinto they ſhed down their joint and commixed Influences. And theſe, among ſome others, are the Duties of,

1. Defending Truth againſt Error.
2. Reproving Offenders.
3. Dealing with diſtreſſed Conſciences.

1. There is great need of *Faithfulneſs and Prudence, in defending the Truths of Chriſt, againſt the Errors of the Times.* Our *Faithfulneſs* indeed, will oblige us to do it; but Prudence muſt direct us how to do it. The eſtabliſhment of our People in the Truth, is one ſpecial end of the Inſtitution of the Miniſtry, *Eph.* 4. 11. But without the aſſiſtance of both theſe Graces, that end is never like to be attained. A faithful Miniſter dares not be ſilent, where the Souls of his People are concerned; yet all his Endeavours to ſecure them will be to little purpoſe, if *Prudence* be wanting in the management of that Deſign. *Prudence* muſt both time our Contentions, and regulate the manner of them. 'Twill neither ſuffer us to appear too ſoon, nor too late; not too ſoon, becauſe Errors are ſometimes beſt cured by neglect, and in a little time grow weary of themſelves: Not too late, leſt they get head, and be paſt retrieve. Haſty Contenders, like young Faulconers, let fly the Hawk with her Hood on. Upon the other ſide, if Friendſhip, or Relation to Seducers ſtop our Mouths too long, we may in a few Days be entertained by them, (as *Thyeſtes* was by his Brother *Atreus*) with the Limbs of our own (Spiritual) Children. *Prudence* will not ſuffer our Pulpets to ring with Invectives againſt Seducers, 'till the more private and gentle Methods have been tried in vain; and then neither *Prudence,* nor *Faithfulneſs* will admit of longer delay. But yet when they both adviſe us to engage, *Prudence* muſt regulate the manner of the Contention, and commands us to urge *hard Arguments,* with *mild and ſoft Language:*

*Erroriſts* are uſually hot and paſſionate, proud and daring Perſons. Moſt true is that of *Nazianzen,* Φύσεις θερμαὶ ϗ μεγάλαι ταύτης τῆς ταραχῆς αἴτιον. Hot and haughty Spirits are the Cauſes of Troubles and Diſtractions in the Church: Hot to hot will never do well. Theſe heights and heats are beſt taken down and cooled by ſtrong and mild Reaſonings: *The Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God.*

2. The joint commixed Influences of both theſe Graces, muſt be found in all our *Miniſterial Reproofs.*

*proofs.* Reprove we muſt, or we cannot be faithful; and prudently too, or we cannot be ſucceſsful. He that is ſilent, cannot be innocent; and yet 'tis a meaſuring Caſt, whether Cowardly Silence be more prejudicial to the Reprover, than indiſcreet Zeal may be to the Reproved. Faithfulneſs is loth to loſe the Soul of another for want of Reproof; Prudence is jealous of loſing it by the ill management of the Reproof. Faithfulneſs ſaith, 'Tis better to loſe the Smiles, than the Souls of Men; Prudence ſaith, To ſave both is beſt. Reprehenſion is Χειρουργία τῶν παθῶν, The Chyrurgery of the Paſſions; and Cutting-work is no eaſie or pleaſant Work. Sick and pained Men are wayward and pettiſh; but Prudence will caſt Fetters upon their Paſſions, and make them lie quiet, whilſt Faithfulneſs probes and ſearches their Wounds to the bottom. Prudence can ſometimes convey a Reproof ſo effectually and inoffenſively, that the Conſcience of the Reproved ſhall ſenſibly feel it; and yet his Paſſions not be awakened by the leaſt injurious Touch. Faithfulneſs conſiders and urges the neceſſity of the Duty; Prudence conſiders the Quality of the Perſon, Time, and Manner of Application: It will reach the Sin, and yet (if poſſible) avoid the Offence of the Sinner. It ſometimes directs us to convict an Offender, by transferring the Offence by way of Suppoſition to our ſelves; ſometimes by relating a ſuitable Hiſtory, or folding down a remarkable Scripture-Threatning or Example, as it were accidentally to meet them. How prudently did *Nathan* prepare *David*, before he came to touch the quick, with, *Thou art the Man?* Above all, Prudence adviſeth us to keep our ſelves pure from thoſe Sins we reprove in others; and when we muſt apply the precious Oil of Reproof to them, that we work it in with the warm, ſoft, gentle hand of Love and Compaſſion; and then the Reproof is like to do good, and the Reprover receive Thanks for his kindneſs. *Let the Righteous ſmite me, it ſhall be a Kindneſs: Let him reprove me, it ſhall be an excellent Oyl, which ſhall not break mine Head*, Pſal. 141. 5.

3. Once more, their Joynt-influences muſt alſo meet *in all our Dealings, with diſtreſſed Conſciences.*

Conſcience is a very tender thing, and when ſick and diſtreſſed, needs to be handled both judiciouſly and tenderly. The Wound muſt be ſearched, ſaith Faithfulneſs. It muſt be ſearched ſkilfully, ſaith Prudence. He that can ſo ſearch and cure it, deſerves that excellent Encomium, *One among a Thouſand*, Job 33. 23. What expert and dexterous Perſons at this Work, were our *Greenham, Crook, Dod, Ball*, and *Burroughs!* Every Emperick can skin over a Wound; but a faithful Miniſter will ſearch it throughly, and a prudent Miniſter will heal it warily, *Ne*

*Vulnus in antiquum redeat, male firma Cicatrix.*

leſt it feſter at the bottom, and break out again with greater danger. It requires a great meaſure of both theſe Graces, to bring general confuſed Troubles to ſettle upon the right bottom; to direct a Sin-ſick Soul to Chriſt, in the true Goſpel-Method; to furniſh the tempted Chriſtian with a proper Weapons againſt Satan's Aſſaults; and teach him how to manage them. To diſſolve the Doubts, and remove the Scruples, which ariſe almoſt in every ſtep of his way to Chriſt: And ſo to ſettle the fluctuating Soul in a ſweet and ſure dependance upon him by Faith. Theſe things (I ſay) require much faithful Prudence, and prudent Faithfulneſs. And thus we ſee the manifold uſefulneſs of both theſe Graces in the Servants and Stewards of Chriſt. Of ſuch I may ſay, as Chriſt in the Text, *Who then is a faithful and wiſe Servant? Hi nuncii (inquit Piſcator) rari ſunt, ità ut ex mille hominibus vix unus reperiatur, qui munere illo recte fungi poſſit.* Chriſt hath not many ſuch Servants; yet bleſſed be God, ſome ſuch there are: And,

3. *Whoever, or where-ever ſuch faithful and wiſe Servants be, Chriſt will abundantly reward them in the Day of their Account.* Which caſts me upon the third and laſt Doctrinal Head I promiſed to ſpeak to. The Glory prepared for, and promiſed to ſuch Servants of Chriſt, is elegantly laid out in ſhining Terms, by the Prophet *Daniel*, Dan. 12. 3. *And they that be wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever and ever.* A Promiſe which points directly to faithful and wiſe Miniſters. What a beautiful Sight is the Azure Canopy of Heaven, when it's about to ſhut it's beautiful Eye-lids in a ſerene Evening! And much more, when it is about to open them with a Smile or Bluſh in the Dawning of the ruddy Morning! And how is that Beauty again outvied by the Glory of the Stars, where the pleaſant Light ſports and twinkles! And how doth one Star excel another in Glory! Yet thus, and more than thus, even above the brightneſs of the Sun it ſelf, ſhall the Servants of Chriſt ſhine, who by their *Faithfulneſs and Prudence* have *inſtrumentally turned many unto Righteouſneſs.*

The Queſtion about Degrees of Glory in Heaven is not neceſſary, but Problematical. We reject with abhorrence the Popiſh Doctrine of Diverſity of Glories, as founded in the Diverſity of Merits: Nor is it queſtioned among the Orthodox, whether there be an equality of Glory as to the Eſſentials; but only in reſpect to the Accidentals and Concomitants: Amongſt which they place the additional Glory and Joy of ſuch Miniſters, whoſe faithful and prudent Labours God hath bleſſed and crowned with the Converſion and Edification of many Souls. And of this the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 Theſſ. 2. 19, 20. *For what is our Hope, or Joy, or Crown of Rejoycing? Are not even ye in the Preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his coming? For ye are our Glory and Joy.* Where we find a very remarkable Gradation. He calls his *Theſſalonian* Converts, *his Hope, his Joy, nay, his Crown of Rejoicing. His Hope*, that is, the Matter of his Hope, that they ſhould be ſaved. *His Joy*, as they had already given him abundant Cauſe of Joy, in their Converſion to Chriſt by his Miniſtry. And *the Crown of his Rejoycing in the preſence of Chriſt at his coming.* This is an high Strain indeed! The meaning I ſuppoſe is, That the fruit and ſucceſs of his Miniſtry among them, would add to his Crown, and redound to his Glory in the Day of Chriſt.

O Brethren! who would not ſtudy and pray, ſpend and be ſpent in the Service of ſuch a bountiful Maſter! Is it not worth all our Labours and Sufferings, to come with all thoſe Souls we inſtrumentally begat to Chriſt, and all that we edified, reduced, confirmed, and comforted in the way to Heaven, and ſay, *Lord, here am I, and the Children thou haſt given me.* To hear one Spiritual Child ſay, Lord, this is the Miniſter by whom I believed. Another, This is he by whom I was edified, eſtabliſhed, and comforted. This is the Man that reſolved my Doubts, quickned my dying Affections, reduced my Soul, when wandring from the Truths! O bleſſed be thy Name, that ever I ſaw his Face, and heard his Voice! What think we of this, Brethren? But far beyond this; What will it be to hear Chriſt, the Prince of Paſtors, ſay in that Day, *Well done, good and faithful Servant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things; I will make thee Ruler over many things: Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord*, Mat. 25. 21. O Sirs! we ſerve a good Maſter, who is not unrighteous to forget our Work, and Labour of Love for his Name-ſake: He keeps an exact Account of all your fervent Prayers, of all your Inſtructive and Perſwaſive Sermons; and all your Sighs, Groans, and Pantings, with every Tear and Drop of Sweat, are placed like Marginal Notes againſt your Labours in his Book, in order to a full Reward.

But I have far out-run my own Intention, and (I doubt) your Patience too in the Doctrinal part: I conſider to whom I ſpeak, and ſhall be the ſhorter in the Application; which I ſhall diſpatch apace, in Three Uſes.

1. For Information.
2. For Reprehenſion.
3. For Exhortation.

### USE I.

And firſt for our Information briefly in two or three Conſectaries.

#### 1. *Conſectary.*

By this it appears *Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed an Order and Government in his Houſe, which none muſt violate.* The Church is a well-ordered Family, or Houſhold, whereof Chriſt is the Head, Chriſtians Members, Miniſters Stewards, the Ordinances Food to be diſpens'd by them in Seaſon. Every one is to keep his own Place and Station. Paſtors muſt faithfully feed and govern the Flocks of Chriſt, *Acts* 20. 28. People muſt know, honour, and obey thoſe that are over them in the Lord, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 12. *Heb.* 13. 17. The one muſt not impoſe, nor the other uſurp; but each walk according to the Rule of Chriſt, with a right Foot, ordinately and comely.

Ὃν κατέστησεν ὁ κύριος.

This Order is the Church's Beauty, *Col.* 2. 5. And truly we may expect ſo much of Chriſt's Preſence, as we have of his Rule and Order amongſt us, and no more. Oh, that the Rules and Orders of his Houſe were better known and obſerved! Then Miniſters and People would clearly underſtand what they are to expect from each other in the way of Duty, and each Perſon keep his proper Station. Miniſters would not invade the Civil Callings of the People; nor the People the Sacred Calling of the Miniſtry; but all things would more ordinately, *Secundum, ſub & ſuprà.* The pleaſure of ſuch a ſight would as much tranſport gracious Souls with Joy and Pleaſure, as the Order of *Solomon*'s Houſe did the Queen of the South.

#### 2. *Conſectary.*

*In the Light of this Truth, we may alſo read our Duty, how we ought to govern our ſelves in the Ordination of Men to the Miniſterial Office.* This Office is to be committed unto faithful and able Men, 2 *Tim.* 2. 2. Not to Novices, 1 *Tim.* 3. 6. I know the Neceſſities of the Churches are great; but no more haſte (I beſeech you) to ſupply their Wants, than good ſpeed. *Satis celeriter fieri quicquid commode geritur.* That's ſoon enough, that's well enough. 'Tis a leſs hazard to put an ignorant Ruſtick into an Apothecary's Shop, to compound and prepare Medicines for Mens Bodies, than to truſt a Man deſtitute both of Faithfulneſs and Prudence, with the Diſpenſation of Chriſt's Ordinances to Mens Souls.

Some Men are moved by pitiful low Ends, 1 *Sam.* 2. 36. *Put me into the Prieſts Office, that I may eat a piece of Bread.* Some by Ambition, conceiting themſelves as able and holy as the beſt, *Numb.* 16. 3. What Mens ſecret Ends are, we cannot know: But their Qualifications for that Work, we may, and ought to know. We are ſolemnly charged to lay Hands ſuddenly upon no Man, 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. In *Solomon*'s time the Jews were exceeding careful and wary in admitting Proſelites, becauſe they were then in a flouriſhing and proſperous State; not ſo cautelous in time of Adverſity, as *Joſephus* obſerves. I would diſcourage none that appear to have pious Inclinations, match'd with competent Qualifications. Many be uſeful, that cannot be excellent. Weaker Gifts rooted in a gracious Heart, will grow by uſing: But nothing grows without a Root. I think the plaineſt Men have done the greateſt Service in the Church of Chriſt; [redacted]. But ſtill Fidelity and Prudence are indiſpenſible Qualifications.

#### 3. *Conſectary.*

If there be ſuch Rewards in the hand of Chriſt for all his faithful and wiſe Servants, *Then we have no juſt Cauſe or Reaſon to repent of our choice of this Office, whatever Sufferings and Reproaches it hath, or yet may expoſe us to.* I believe none of us ever yet felt ſuch Straits, endured ſuch Miſeries, or ſuſtained ſuch Labours as the Apoſtle mentions to have befallen him, 2 *Cor.* 11. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

And yet he heartily thanks the Lord Jeſus Chriſt (for all that) who had counted him faithful, and put him into the Miniſtry.

Brethren, we have ſerved a good Maſter, and have cauſe to admire his Care over us, and Bounty to us; and whatever we have ſuffered, we may ſay to them that ſhall ſucceed us, as *Toſſanus* to his Children and Kindred in his Laſt Will and Tement *: ‘I charge you, my dear Children and Relations, That ye never be aſhamed of the Evangelical Truth, either for the ſake of Offences ariſing from within the Church, or of Perſecutions from without it. Truth may labour, but cannot be ſuppreſſed: And I have often found by Experience, the Lord to be wonderfully preſent with them, that walk before him diligently and uprightly. Oh, he hath been a good God to us! he hath covered us in Days of Danger, made Proviſion for us and ours; and yet his beſt Rewards are behind. Let none ſcare at the Reproaches and Perſecutions that attend the Goſpel.

## USE II.

This Point caſts an ireful Countenance upon all unfaithful and imprudent Miniſters, who give their People the Chaff for the Wheat, and Stones for Bread; who glory in the Title, and live upon the Profits, but neither feed the Flock, nor mind the Account. They Preach, they Pray, becauſe they muſt do ſo; but none are the better for their Prayers or Preaching. They ſeem to labour an hour or two in a Week; but their Labours turn to no account. Nor can be expected to turn to any good Account, whilſt they are neither animated by Faithfulneſs, nor guided by Prudence.

*Agricola* writing *de Animantibus Subterraneis*, tells us of a certain kind of Spirits that converſe in Minerals, and much infeſt thoſe that work in them. They ſeem to buſie themſelves according to the Cuſtom of Workmen. They will dig and cleanſe, melt and ſever the Metals. Yet when they are gone, the Workmen do not find that there is any thing done. I came not hither (I confeſs) to deal with this ſort of Men; and therefore ſhall leave them to conſider the Words immediately following my Text, which like a Thunder-clap from the Mouth of Chriſt, diſcharge Woes and Threatnings upon them, *Verſe* 48. *ad finem, If that evil Servant ſhall ſay in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and ſhall begin to ſmite his Fellow-ſervants, and to eat and drink with the Drunken; the Lord of that Servant ſhall come in a Day that he looketh not for him, and in an Hour that he is not ware of; and ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint him his Portion with Hypocrites; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth.* Who can aggravate their Miſery more, than theſe Words of Chriſt have done?

But I am principally concerned at this time about our own Defects both in Faithfulneſs, and in Prudence; tho' neither of theſe (I hope) be totally wanting in us, yet our Defects and ſhort Comings, may, and muſt greatly humble us. Our vain Expence of much precious time; our ſhuffling haſte in ſo weighty a Study as the Salvation of our People is. Our ſinful Silence, when Conſcience ſaith, *Reprove*. Our Coldneſs and Dead-heartedneſs. Our unſerious and unprofitable Converſes. Our Pride and Oſtentation of Gifts. Our neglect of Perſonal Conferences. All theſe evidently diſcover, that both our Brains and Bowels need more ſtrength and tenderneſs. I will not inſiſt here upon theſe Particulars (let us do that in our Studies) but haſten to Exhortation, and therein to the Cloſe of this Diſcourſe.

## USE III.

Are Faithfulneſs and Prudence the eſſential Requiſites of the Servants and Stewards of Chriſt's Houſe? And will he ſo amply reward them in whomſoever he finds them? *Then let it be our care and ſtudy to approve our ſelves to him, ſuch as he here deſcribes and encourages.*

But who am I, to manage ſuch a Work as this, among Men every way above me! However, you have called me to this Service, and Chriſt hath directed me to this Subject. And ſhould I now ſilently paſs over this part of my Work, how ſhall I approve my ſelf either a faithful or a wiſe Servant to him that ſent me?

I deſpair of ever having ſuch another Opportunity. I ſee many Faces in this Aſſembly, whom I ſhall never ſee any more in this World. I ſpeak to the Miniſters of Chriſt, the Guides and Paſtors of ſo many Flocks. May I be in the leaſt inſtrumental to quicken them to their Duties, their reſpective numerous Congregations will reap the benefit of it.

My Brethren, this is the Day I have often wiſhed for, when in the ſad and ſilent Years that are paſt, I have been ſearching my own Heart, and enquiring into the Cauſes of God's Indignation (as I doubt not you alſo have done); I have bewailed the forementioned Defects before the Lord, and engaged my Soul by ſolemn Promiſe to him, that if he would once more open the Door of Liberty, I would through his Grace labour to reform, and do my utmoſt to perſwade all my Brethren, to exerciſe more Miniſterial Faithfulneſs and Prudence.

And now I am where my Soul hath long deſired to be, and the Vows of God are upon me. Suffer therefore (dear Brethren); yea, ſuffer from unworthy me, *this Word of Exhortation: Take heed to your Miniſtry, that you fulfil it: Take heed to your ſelves, and to the Flocks over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers.* Let us ſo Study and Preach, let us ſo Pray and Converſe among our People, that we may both ſave our ſelves, and them that hear us. Let us frugally and induſtriouſly husband our Time and Talents for Chriſt. Let us prudently contrive, zealouſly and unanimouſly execute our holy Contrivances, for the advancement of his Kingdom, and Intereſt, in the World. Theſe are Plotting-times, wicked Men are every-where plotting to diſturb the Civil Peace. Let us have our Plot too, an honeſt Plot, how to advance the Intereſt of Chriſt in the Souls of our People; wherein we ſhall alſo promote and ſecure the Civil Peace of that happy Government we live under. Let us learn Prudence from our paſt Follies, and Conſtancy from our paſt Experiences. I look upon you that are aged Miniſters, as ſeaſoned Timber, that hath lain out near thirty Years in the Weather, yet neither warped, raned, nor rotten. I confeſs in all this time, the Sun hath not much tried the force of his Influence upon us, tho' the Storms have. I ſuſpect our greateſt danger will be in the Sun-ſhine of Liberty. If we hold it now, and manage this Trial by Liberty, with eminent Faithfulneſs and Prudence, Humility and Peaceableneſs, Zeal and Diligence; Chriſt may account us fit Materials to build his Houſe. Let us now redeem our many ſilent Sabbaths, by double and treble Improvements of thoſe we enjoy. Let none of us dare to bring our old Sins into our new Pulpits. Then will the Prince of Paſtors delight to uſe us here, and crown our prudent Faithfulneſs with a full Reward hereafter. In order whereunto give me leave to hint (for I can do no more than hint) theſe Three Things by way of Motive, which are worth thinking on:

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* *Obteſtor vos liberos & generos chariſſimos, ne illius veritatis Evangelicæ unquam vos pudeat, vel propter ſcandala domi, vel propter perſecutiones, quæ foris excitantur. Poteſt enim laborare, ſed non vinci veritas. Et non ſemel expertus ſum Dominum Deum mirabiliter adeſſe iis, qui coram ipſo ambulant, & in ſuâ vocatione ſedulò & integrè verſantur,* &c. Melch. Adam in Vitâ Toſſani, *p.* 720.

We have a Solemn Charge given us by Chriſt.

We have a Solemn Account to paſs ſhortly with Chriſt.

We have now a great Opportunity to improve for Chriſt.

1. *We have a ſolemn Charge given us by Chriſt*, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his Kingdom; preach the word, be inſtant in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long ſuffering and doctrine.* It muſt be a powerful Opiate indeed, that can ſo benumb and ſtupifie the Conſcience of a Miniſter, as that he ſhall not feel the awful Authority of ſuch a Charge.

The precious and immortal Souls of Men are committed to us; Souls about which God hath concerned his Thoughts from Eternity; for the purchaſe of which Chriſt hath ſhed his own Blood; for the winning and eſpouſing of which to himſelf, he hath put you into this Office; at whoſe Hands he will alſo require an Account of them in the Great Day.

2. *We have a ſolemn Account at that Day to paſs with Chriſt*, Heb. 13. 17. *We watch for their Souls, as thoſe that muſt give Account.* And what can more powerfully excite to faithful Diligence in the diſcharge of Duty, than the Conſideration of that Day! When the Apoſtle had mentioned in 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. this awful appearance before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, he immediately infers, *Verſe* 11. *Knowing therefore the Terror of the Lord, we perſwade Men.*

Oh, Brethren, let us beware of committing, or of neglecting any thing, that may bring us within the compaſs of the Terrors of that Day. Let our Painfulneſs and Faithfulneſs, our Conſtancy and Seriouſneſs, compel a Teſtimony from our Congregations, as the Apoſtle did from his, Acts 28. 26. *That we are pure from the Blood of all Men.*

3. *We have a great Opportunity to improve for Chriſt*; which if we do, we ſhall fulfil his Charge, and eſcape the Terrors of his Judgment in that Great Day.

We have now (if I miſtake not) the faireſt Seaſon we ever enjoyed, ſince we firſt preached Chriſt: If this be loſt, I queſtion whether we may ever expect the like. There's great Odds betwixt our preſent Circumſtances at our return to our Flocks, and our paſt Circumſtances when we left them; and that both upon our own Account, and upon theirs.

1. *Upon our own Account*: We were then young, and (comparatively) unexperienced Miniſters to what we are now. Tho' we have too many Defects and Weakneſſes ſtill to lament; yet I am perſwaded we have not ſpent ſo many Years among Trials, Fears, and Sufferings, in vain. Theſe things, I am perſuaded, have greatly improved our Acquaintance with God, and our own Hearts: It will be as ſad, as ſtrange, if they have not. God hath been training us up in Faith, Humility, Patience, and Self-denial in this School of Affliction. When we could not *preach the Doctrine of Faith*, we were reduced by a bleſſed neceſſity, *to live the Life of Faith.* The Rules of Patience, Humility, and Satisfaction, in the Will of God, we were wont to preſcribe from our Pulpits to the People, we were neceſſitated to practice and apply to our ſelves in our ſad Solitudes, and various Diſtreſſes, through which the Lord hath led us. So that now we come better furniſhed to the Work, than ever before. And I hope I have ground for you, Brethren, to ſay, as the Apoſtle, of his coming to the *Romans*, That you come among them *in the fulneſs of the Bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt.*

2. *There's great Odds upon the Peoples Account*: Many of them were full-fed, and wanton, when we left them: They are hungry and ſharp-ſet at our return to them. An hungry Appetite appears in the People in many places, not without great cauſe and reaſon. They are willing to take any Pains: Your Words now drop upon them as the Clouds upon the clefted Earth. Oh, what an Opportunity doth this give to accompliſh the Great Ends of our Miniſtry among them!

Lift up your Eyes, and behold the Fields, Are they not even white unto the Harveſt? Let Huſbandmen rather loſe their Seed-time and Harveſt, than we loſe ſo precious a Seaſon, ſo great, ſo rich an Opportunity as this.

I have finiſhed what concerneth you, my Reverend and Dear Brethren, and Fellow-Labourers in the Lord's Harveſt: A word or two remains to be ſpoken to the People, and I have done.

You have heard what variety of Duty lies upon us, and what difficulty in every part thereof; yet all our Labours would be light, and our Pains pleaſant, might we ſee more Fruits and Succeſs of them amongſt you.

Your Barrenneſs and Unperſwadeableneſs, your Diviſions and Inſtability coſt us more, than all our other Pains in our Studies and Pulpits. How eaſily and ſweetly would the Plow go, would you but ſet both your Hands of Prayer and Obedience to aſſiſt us in that Work.

You have now as bleſſed an Opportunity as your Souls can deſire; yea, that very Seaſon of Mercy ſome of you have a long time anxiouſly deſired. You have confeſſed to God, that you once ſinned us out of our Pulpits; God forbid you ſhould next ſin us into our Graves.

If you be wanton Children at a full Table, our Enemies are not ſo far off, but God can quickly call them in to cure your Wantonneſs, by taking away the Cloath.

The Stewards of Chriſt provide choice Diſhes for you, even Feaſts of Fat Things full of Marrow; and ſerve it into your Souls upon the Knee of Prayer in due Seaſon. Have a care of deſpiſing it, if at any time the Diſhes be not garniſhed as you expect, with curious Figures, and Flowers of Rhetorick.

The Lord give you hungry Appetites, ſound Digeſtions, and thriving Souls; then ſhall ye be our *Crown of Rejoycing*, and we yours in the Day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: To the Word of whoſe Grace I commend you all, which is able to build you up, and give you an Inheritance among them that are ſanctified.

A

# A Double Scheme, or Table:

Containing in the Firſt Colume,

## The SINS moſt incident to the Members of Particular Churches, plainly forbidden in the Word, and for which GOD ſets Marks of his Diſpleaſure on them.

And in the Second,

## The DUTIES enjoined on them in the Scripture; in the Conſcientious Diſcharge whereof, they receive ſignal Fruits of his Favour.

I. *Sin.* THE Firſt and more General Sin of Church-Members, is, A Defect in their Care and Circumſpection, to prevent all juſt Offences to them that are without; forbidden *Col.* 4. 5. *Walk in Wiſdom towards them which are without.* By a careleſs diſregard of this Rule, we harden the Wicked in their Sins, bring Guilt upon our ſelves, and Reproach upon the *Name and Ways of God.*

II. *Sin.* The Second and more Particular Sin of ſome Church-Members, is, Idleneſs, and Neglect of their Civil Callings; againſt the expreſs Rule, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 11, 12. *There are ſome which walk among you diſorderly, working not at all: Such we command and exhort by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that with quietneſs they work, and eat their own Bread.* This brings Poverty on Themſelves, and Scandal on Religion.

III. *Sin.* The Third Sin is Tale-bearing, and revealing the Secrets of Families, and Perſons; whence many Strifes ariſe, to the cooling and quenching of mutual Love; expreſly forbidden, Lev. 19. 16. *Thou ſhalt not go up and down as a Tale bearer among thy People.* And 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. *Not only idle, but Tatlers alſo, and Buſie-bodies, ſpeaking things which they ought not.*

IV. *Sin.* The Fourth Sin is an eaſie Credulity of private Whiſpers, and raſh Cenſures thereupon. This we ought not to do againſt the meaneſt Member, 2 *Cor.* 12. 20. *Leſt there be debates, envyings, wraths, ſtrifes, back-bitings, whiſperings,* &c. Much leſs againſt Church-Officers, 1 *Tim.* 5. 19. *Againſt an Elder receive not an Accuſation, but before two or three Witneſſes.* This ſtrikes at the Bond of Peace.

V. *Sin.* Their Fifth Sin is in their neglect of God's Ordinances upon ſlight Diverſions, when they are neither diſabled by Works of Neceſſity or Mercy; contrary to *Heb.* 10. 25. *Not forſaking the aſſembling of our ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is.* Trivial Occaſions ſhould divert no Chriſtian from attending upon God's Ordinances.

VI. *Sin.* The Sixth Sin is a defect in Zeal for God's Ordinances, manifeſt in their Dilatory Attendance; contrary to *Pſal.* 122. 1. *I was glad when they ſaid unto me, Let us go into the Houſe of the Lord.* And unſuitable to their firſt Practice, *Gal.* 4. 15. *Where is then the Bleſſedneſs?* &c.

I. *Duty.* THeir Firſt Duty, is, To be often together in Acts of Chriſtian Communion, *Mal.* 3. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to another,* &c. Such Meetings for Prayer, Repetition of Sermons, and Chriſtian Conference, greatly conduce to mutual Edification; which is the Principal Intention of Chriſtian Fellowſhip, *Eph.* 4. 15, 16.

II. *Duty.* Their Second Duty, is, To follow and back the great Deſign of the Goſpel into the *World,* and therein aſſiſt the Publick Miniſtry, by their private and prudent helping on the Converſion of the carnal and careleſs World, *Phil.* 4. 3. *Help those Women that laboured with me in the Goſpel,* &c. *For the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, and for the love of the Spirit, ſtrive together with me,* Rom. 15. 30.

III. *Duty.* Their Third Duty, is, Humble Condeſcention to the Infirmities of their weaker Brethren, and denying themſelves in what they can, without Sin, that they give them no offence, *Rom.* 15. 1. *We then that are ſtrong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe our ſelves.* And *Verſe* 2. *Let every one of us pleaſe his Neighbour for his good to edification.*

IV. *Duty.* Their Fourth Duty, is, To be exceeding tender of the Churches Unity, both in Judgment, Love, and Practice; avoiding (as much as may be, and as far as the Goſpel Rule allows) all Cauſes and Occaſions of Diviſion and Separation, Rom. 16. 17. *Mark them which cauſe Diviſions and Offences, and avoid them.* And *Phil* 2. 1, 2. *If there be any Conſolation in Chriſt,* &c. *be ye like minded.*

V. *Duty.* Their Fifth Duty, is, A reſpectful Carriage towards the meaneſt Chriſtian, and to have higher eſteem of others than themſelves. External things make no difference with Chriſt, *Rom.* 12. 10. *In honour preferring one another.* Gal. 3. 28. *Ye are all one in Chriſt Jeſus.* Yet a Decorum is to be kept ſuitable to Civil Differences, Eph. 5. 21. *Submitting your ſelves to one another in the fear of God.*

VI. *Duty.* Their Sixth Duty, is, Meekly to receive Reproofs from each other for their Sins, eſpecially when the matter is juſt, and the manner of delivering it regular, *Pſal.* 141. 5. *Let the righteous ſmite me, it ſhall be a kindneſs: And let him reprove me, it ſhall be an excellent oyl,* &c.

VII. *Sin.* The Seventh Sin is Irreverence, and want of Seriouſneſs under Ordinances; contrary to *Pſal.* 89. 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of the Saints: And to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.* And this is manifeſt in vain Attires, 1 *Cor.* 11. 10. *The Woman ought to have power on her Head, becauſe of the Angels.* And unſeemly Poſtures and Geſtures, *Eccleſ.* 5. 1. *Keep thy Foot, when thou goeſt to the Houſe of God; and be more ready to hear, than to give the Sacrifice of Fools.*

VIII. *Sin.* The Eighth Sin reprovable in them, is, The neglect of giving and taking due Reproofs each from other; contrary to *Lev.* 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him.* And Chriſt's own Rule, *Mat.* 18. 15. *Go, and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone.* And ſo for taking, ſee *Pſal.* 141. 5. *Let the Righteous ſmite me,* &c.

IX. *Sin.* The Ninth Sin, is, Mutual Strifes and Animoſities, not ſeaſonably and prudently compoſed among themſelves, but ſcandalouſly expoſed to the View of the World; contrary to the Apoſtle's Rule, 1 *Cor.* 6. 5, 6. *Is there not a wiſe Man among you?* &c. *But Brother goeth to Law with Brother, and that before the Unbelievers? Now therefore, there is utterly a Fault among you.*

X. *Sin.* Their Tenth Sin, is, The Privateneſs of their Spirits, centring too much in their own Concerns; expreſly condemned, *Phil.* 2. 21. *All ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſt's.* And contrary to Scripture-Example, 2 *Cor.*11.29. *Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?*

VII. *Duty.* Their Seventh Duty, is, To communicate their Spiritual Stock of Gifts, Graces, and Experiences, not interfering with Publick Offices, nor by ſinful Partiality including ſome, and excluding many others (to whom it is as due, and who may have more need) from the Benefit thereof, 1 Pet. 4. 10. *As every Man hath received the Gift, even ſo miniſter the ſame one to another.* 1 Tim. 5. 21. *Obſerve theſe things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.*

VIII.*Duty.* Their 8th Duty is,chearfully to communicate their outward Good Things for the Relief of their Brethren, Heb. 13. 16. *To do good, and to communicate forget not.* And the better to enable them hereunto, to be diligent in their Callings,Eph.4.28. *Working with his hands, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* And eſpecially to make comfortable Proviſion for their Miniſters, not by way of Courteſie, but Duty, 1 Cor.9.14. *Even ſo hath God ordained, That they which preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel.*

IX. *Duty.* Their Ninth Duty, is, Not only to relieve the diſtreſſed Members of Chriſt, but to ſeek out, and viſit them; to know their Spiritual and Temporal Wants, in order to the full Diſcharge of that Duty, James 1. 27. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God, and the Father, is this, To viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their affliction,* &c.

X. *Duty.* Their Tenth Duty, is, To put charitable Conſtructions upon doubtful Words and Actions; and if either will admit a double Sence, always to take it in the faireſt, according to the Law of Charity, 1 Cor. 13. 7. *Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth allt hings, endureth all things.* And ſuch a Charity will defend and maintain Church-Peace and Unity.

## *Six* BENEFITS *of Walking by theſe* RULES.

I. *Ben.* STrict and heedful Attendance to theſe Rules, will put a Luſtre upon Religion before the World, and make it glorious in the Eyes of ſuch as now deſpiſe it, Tit. 2. 10. *Adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.* Which he here ſpeaks, to encourage all to *ordinate Walking.*

II. *Ben.* This will allure and win the World over to Chriſt, and wonderfully proſper and further the Deſign of the Goſpel, Phil.2.15,16. *That ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the Sons of God without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Nation,* &c. *That I may rejoyce in the Day of Chriſt, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*

III. *Ben.* This will effectually ſtop the Mouths of all the detracting and blaſpheming Enemies of Religion, 1 Pet. 2. 15. *For ſo is the Will of God, that with well doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men.*

IV. *Ben.* This will eminently glorifie God; which is the ultimate End of our Beings, Mat. 5. 16. *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.*

V. *Ben.* This will fill the People of God (by way of Evidence) with much inward Peace, Gal. 6. 16. *And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God.*

VI. *Ben.* This will ſecure the Preſence of God with, and among us; whence reſults both the Efficacy of Ordinances, and the Stability and Glory of the Churches: For Chriſt walks among the Golden Candleſticks, and threatens the Churches, in caſe of Defection from Goſpel-Rules, *to remove the Candleſtick out of his place, except they repent,* Rev. 2. 1, 5.

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